

# Establishing a WAZA/IZE Education Committee

by **Laura Mumaw** WAZA EDUCATION COMMITTEE LIAISON | MELBOURNE-PARKVILLE | AUSTRALIA

Laura with a wombat.



At the WAZA meeting in 2006 in Leipzig, IZE President Chris Peters and I discussed making changes to the structure of the WAZA Education Committee, which we then discussed at the Committee meeting. These changes were to reflect the role of IZE in representing zoo educators worldwide, the role of WAZA in globally uniting zoos, aquaria, and like-minded organisations to live sustainably and conserve biodiversity, the partnership between the IZE and WAZA, and the challenges of maintaining momentum on our shared objectives through the year.

A draft charter setting out the function and membership of a new, joint WAZA/IZE Committee was presented at the IZE Pretoria meeting for further input and then to WAZA Council at the WAZA Council 2007 mid-year meeting.

Like the IZE Board, the WAZA Board welcomed the Charter as a means of clarifying the nature of the IZE/WAZA relationship and identifying specific areas of shared activity.

We are now in a position to finalise the Charter (see highlighted box) in discussion with the IZE Board and establish our first WAZA/IZE Education Committee.

A specific recommendation from the WAZA Board was that we better describe what we mean by “education”, in the broad sense we understand it to be, in the preamble of the Charter.

I look forward to finalising the draft Charter soon with IZE Board members. Education is arguably the strongest strand of our efforts to create a sustainable future rich with life and diversity. Establishing the WAZA/IZE Education Committee is another powerful step in effectively harnessing our efforts and securing continuity and momentum to achieve our shared vision.

## The Children’s Zoo in Chiba Zoological Park

by **Hiroyuki Takahashi** REGISTRAR AND KEEPER | CHIBA ZOOLOGICAL PARK | JAPAN

Chiba Zoological Park was established in 1985. It is 33 hectare, and the collection of animals is about 150 species and 780 specimens. The Children’s Zoo of Chiba Zoo was renewed in 2002. The theme of our Children’s Zoo is “Let’s feel it – the connection with life –”. This area is about 7,500m<sup>2</sup>. It has about 30 species including domestic animals such as horses, donkeys, miniature-pigs, goats, sheep, mice and guinea-pigs, and wildlife such as Humboldt penguins, capybaras, macaws, Aldabra giant tortoises and prairie-dogs.

The features of the Children’s Zoo are:

1. A school program: the elementary school, kindergarten, nursery school and the school of handicapped children use this area as contact with animals. This program is very popular with pupils and infants.
2. A hands-on exhibit: “the comparison of animal’s babies sizes”, “the comparison of animal’s footprints”, and “the comparison of characteristics of animal’s bodies”. The children enjoy touching and turning over the panels, so this type of hands-on exhibit is really fun for them.

# Draft Charter for WAZA/IZE Education Committee

## Recognising that

- Zoos and Aquariums have a unique and powerful role in educating and empowering communities to live sustainably and conserve biodiversity;
- Note: Define Education;
- Education of all kinds is highly determined by cultural and contextual factors;
- IZE represents zoo educators worldwide and as such is an education arm of WAZA;
- WAZA unites, at a global level, zoos, aquaria, associations and like-minded organisations and individuals to achieve a sustainable future and in-situ conservation of biodiversity.

## The WAZA/IZE Education Committee will provide a global forum to:

- Facilitate communication and linkages between individual zoos, aquaria and regional and national zoo associations in education programs;
- Support the development of education policies in all member zoos, aquaria, regional and national associations, and share information about them;
- Support and stimulate innovation and best practice in our education programs in zoos and in communities;
- Support and facilitate best-practices training and development for zoo and aquarium educators, especially in the developing world, including IZE membership and attendance at IZE conferences;
- Develop, assist and promote initiatives to assist people in living sustainably;

- Develop, assist and promote education initiatives and programs which support in-situ conservation of biodiversity, particularly those linked to conservation programs recommended as priorities by CIRCC, WAZA's Conservation Committee and CBSG;
- Support and develop methods to evaluate the effectiveness of formal, informal and community based conservation education programs;

## Membership of the Core Group of the Committee will include:

- Nominated WAZA Council Member (Co-Chair)
- IZE President (Co-Chair)
- Interested WAZA and IZE representatives
- Regional Association representatives

## Membership of the Committee will include:

- Interested WAZA, IZE and regional association members, some of whom are in the "core group"

Meetings would be held in association with IZE, WAZA and regional association meetings, as determined annually by the core group. ♦

3. The letter to the animals: there is a post, to which the children write a letter to the animals that they touched or got interested in. The children's letters are posted on a wall for all to read. Their letters reveal what they have learned, how they feel about their experience and what the children particularly enjoyed. These letters prove to be a very important source of information on the children's experience, which we incorporate in the redesigning of our educational programs.

The 21st century zoo should carry out the function of an environmental education, especially education for sustainable development, so the roll of the Children's Zoo is all the more important as a place of communicating to the sense of wonder of life!! ♦

The "contact corner" at the Children's Zoo.



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