HANDBOOK ON FACILITY ENGAGEMENT

Part I: Facility Engagement in Animal Programs (pg. 2)

Part II: Facility Engagement in Conservation Programs (pg. 46)

ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

PART I:
Facility Engagement in Animal Programs

Created by the
AZA Animal Population Management Committee
AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department

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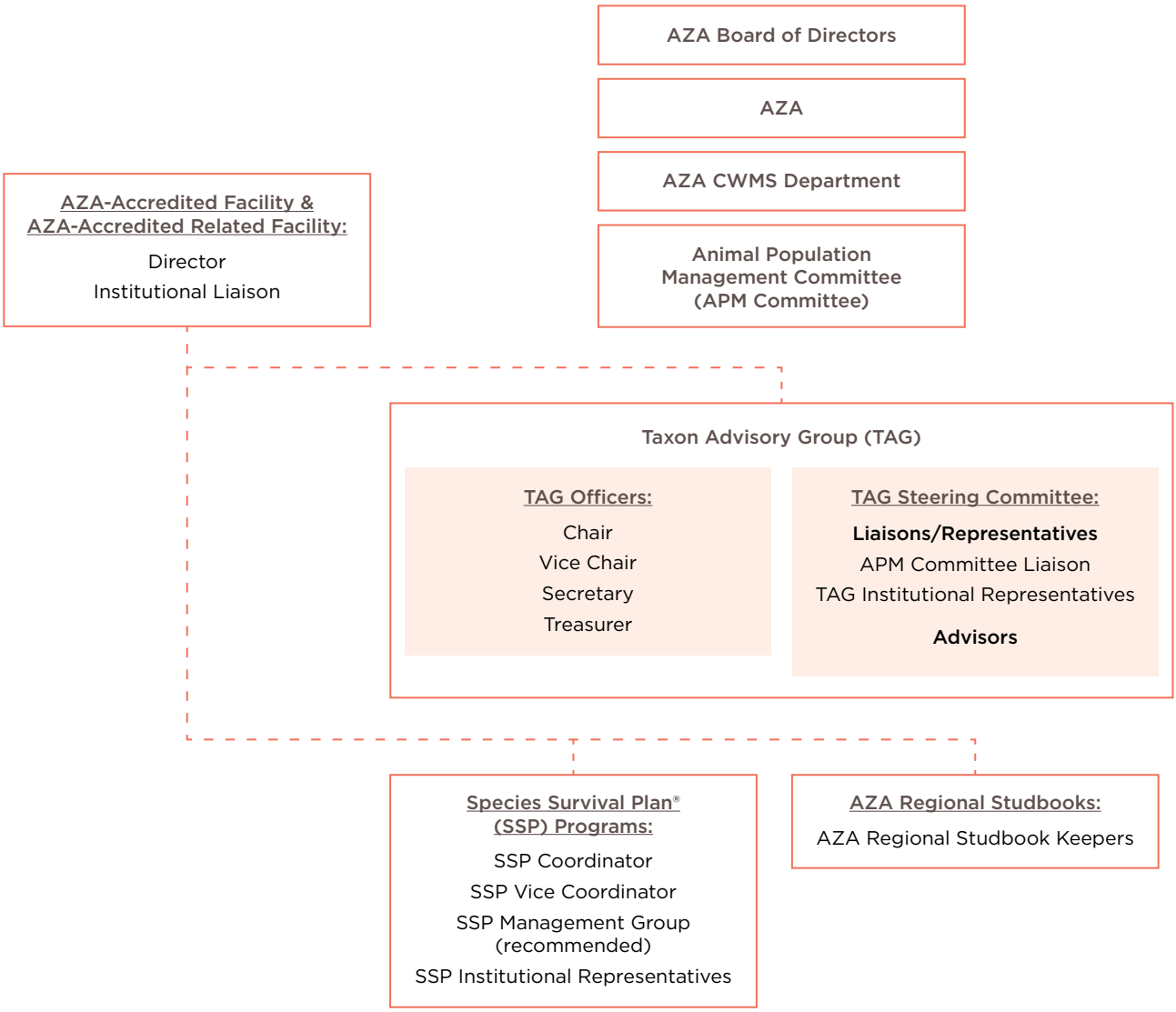
Chapter 1. Introduction to AZA Animal Programs

Animal Programs Structure

Animal Programs

AZA Animal Programs (APs) include ***Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs)***, ***Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs***, ***Studbook Programs***, and ***Larval Programs***. APs are responsible for the extraordinary leadership, development, oversight, promotion, evaluation and support of AZA's cooperative animal management, conservation, and scientific initiatives. Management tools, databases, reference materials, policies, and management plans have been developed to facilitate exceptional AP collaboration within and amongst AZA-accredited facilities.

Animal Programs Overview



AZA Board of Directors

The affairs of the ***Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)*** are managed by an elective Board of Directors that consists of four officers and nine other members. The Directors may adopt rules and regulations for the conduct of business they deem advisable, with limits of the Charter and Bylaws. The Directors may also establish standing and special committees to assist in the management of the Association's affairs, including the affairs of Animal Programs.

AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences (CMWS) Department

The ***Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department (CMWS)*** of AZA is committed to providing services advancing the initiatives of member institutions related to conservation, animal management, and animal welfare. The CMWS Department works alongside the Animal Population Management Committee to manage the affairs of Animal Programs.

Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee)

The ***Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee)*** works collaboratively with other Committees and is responsible for facilitating the professional and scientific management of the animals cared for in AZA-Accredited zoos and aquariums, Accredited Related Facilities, and Approved Non-Member Participants. Committee members serve up to two consecutive three-year terms. The APM Committee develops, oversees, promotes, evaluates, and supports the cooperative animal management, sustainability, and scientific initiatives of AZA affairs.

Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs)

The mission of an ***Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Taxon Advisory Group (TAG)*** is to support the sustainable management of animal populations in partnership with AZA facilities, advance husbandry and welfare programs for these species, and support conservation and education efforts related to these taxa. Each TAG coordinates, facilitates, and reviews progress toward goals identified for its cooperative animal management programs. The TAG works under the supervision of the APM Committee to manage the AZA Animal Programs within its purview, advise holders of the taxa on husbandry issues and actively advance husbandry skills for those taxa, and coordinate with other regional (e.g. ***Saving Animals From Extinction [SAFE]***, see Part II) and international conservation programs to lead, develop, oversee, promote, evaluate, and support the cooperative animal management and scientific initiatives of the TAG.

TAGs are composed of expert ***advisors*** who help to identify, manage and support AZA's cooperative animal management programs. TAGs develop ***Regional Collection Plans (RCPs)*** that recommend taxa for cooperative management among AZA-accredited facilities, ***Sustainability Partners***, and ***Accredited Related Facilities (ARFs)***, recommend Animal Program management designations, and work with Program Leaders to develop Animal Program goals and essential actions. Equally important, TAGs serve as AZA experts by both advising upon the husbandry, veterinary care, research priorities, ethical considerations, and other issues applicable to their taxa as well as developing means to elevate standards, skills, and performance in these areas. For example, TAGs may organize workshops or online materials to train individuals in husbandry techniques and organize multi-institutional research studies to address husbandry challenges.

Each TAG has ***Institutional Representatives (IRs)*** assigned from AZA member facilities, as well as individuals with special expertise, such as AZA ***SSP Coordinators*** and ***Studbook Keepers*** (AZA Regional and International Studbook Keepers employed within AZA member facilities). Serving as expert Advisors, TAGs use the SSP assessment process to identify and categorize species for cooperative management as official AZA SSPs, monitor population dynamics and interactions among species in AZA facilities in their purview, and provide a forum for discussing husbandry, veterinary, ethical, and other issues that apply to entire taxa. Through the RCP, the TAG communicates each Animal Program's management designation (Signature SSP, Provisional SSP, AZA Regional Studbook, or Larval Program) among AZA member facilities and ensures that each Animal Program operates under the appropriate management guidelines. TAGs advise other zoo- and aquarium-based programs, define Animal Program goals and objectives, and identify research and husbandry priorities. TAGs also examine Animal Program management techniques based on scientific studies and assist ***Program Leaders*** (e.g., SSP Coordinators and Regional Studbook Keepers) in developing animal care and husbandry guidelines through the publication of taxa-specific Animal Care Manuals (ACMs). TAGs also work with Program Leaders and holders to identify, assess, and address husbandry challenges by offering training opportunities and conducting research.

TAGs must ensure that the appropriate ***AZA Board approved policies*** are followed in all aspects of Animal Program management. All AZA member facilities and Animal Programs, regardless of management designation, must adhere to the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management (formerly the AZA Acquisition & Disposition Policy), as well as the AZA Code of Professional Ethics. All SSP Programs must also adhere to the ***Animal Program Engagement Policy*** in the SSP Program and all SSP Programs must adhere to ***Sustainability Partner*** policies.

For more information on Taxon Advisory Groups, please visit the Animal Programs Handbooks webpage to find the TAG Handbook.

Species Survival Plans®

The mission of an AZA cooperatively managed ***Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program*** is to manage an ***ex situ*** species population with the interest and cooperation of AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, Accredited Related Facilities, and Sustainability Partners. An AZA SSP Program is identified through documented demand and potential sustainability within the AZA community; is selected by Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) through the RCP process; and develops a Breeding and Transfer Plan that identifies population goals and recommendations to manage a genetically diverse, demographically varied, and biologically sound population. Success is achieved when SSP animals are available to meet Program goals and come from biologically sound populations as a result of a shared commitment to cooperative populations and program management.

There are two types of SSPs: ***Provisional SSP*** and ***Signature SSP***. Criteria for SSPs include robust measures of viability and consideration of member interest. The APM Committee will work closely with TAGs to determine which type of program best fits each population via the SSP assessment process.

For more information on Species Survival Plans, please visit the Animal Programs Handbooks webpage to find the SSP Handbook.

AZA Regional Studbooks

ZA Regional Studbook Programs document the pedigree and entire demographic history of each individual in a population. These are compiled and maintained by an AZA Regional Studbook Keeper and are valuable tools to track and manage each individual as part of a single, *ex situ* population. All AZA Regional Studbook Keepers work directly with the associated TAG, all AZA facilities, approved Sustainability Partners, the APM Committee, and the AZA CMWS Department. For designated SSP programs, the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper must also work closely with the associated SSP Coordinator (if the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper is not the SSP Coordinator), and the PMC or a PMC Adjunct to complete an updated, and accurate AZA Regional Studbook for use in demographic and genetic analyses relevant for creating a Breeding and Transfer Plan (BTP).

All AZA Regional Studbooks track individuals for population management purposes; however, population planning resources are prioritized for SSPs and relevant SAFE Programs. All Animal Programs that are designated as an SSP Program must have an associated AZA Regional Studbook (or an International Studbook).

For more information on AZA Regional Studbooks, please visit the **Animal Programs Handbooks** webpage to find the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook.

Larval Programs

AZA's Larval Programs, under the oversight of the Aquatic Collections Sustainability Committee, strategically leverage the achievements in aquaculture and larval fish rearing within the AZA community. These programs aim to establish collaborative networks and sustainable sources specifically focused on marine ornamental species that are considered critically imperative to the AZA community. The production facilities are AZA members that specialize in rearing one or multiple species, and assume a pivotal role as the primary suppliers to other AZA facilities. This approach directly addresses welfare challenges related to wild collection, transport, and other stressors, ultimately improving the wellbeing of these select species.

The community at large gains substantial benefits from these programs, including financial support for research, training, and production expenses. Moreover, the Larval Programs contribute to continuous improvement through avenues such as professional development, dedicated research and development initiatives, and well-coordinated population planning efforts. It is a comprehensive strategy that not only ensures the sustainability of these species but also fosters collective growth and advancement within the AZA community.

More information on Larval Programs will be available soon on the AZA website.

AZA Science Centers

Population Management Center (PMC)

The AZA PMC, hosted by the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, was established in 2000 to provide scientific guidance to AZA Program Leaders by conducting demographic and genetic analyses and preparing Breeding and Transfer Plans with SSPs and some SAFE Programs. The AZA PMC also includes Adjunct Population Biologists based at and supported by various AZA-related facilities. For more information on the PMC, Adjuncts, and its role in AZA Animal Programs, please visit the PMC webpages on the **AZA website** and the **Lincoln Park Zoo website**.

AZA PMC Functions

PMC staff provide many services for AZA Animal Programs including:

- Producing Breeding and Transfer Plans (BTPs) with all SSP Programs and those SAFE Programs that are approved to receive this support
- Researching unknown or partially-known pedigrees
- Creating analytical assumptions for AZA Regional Studbooks
- Supporting software development to improve methods of population management
- Advising on data conventions and entering abnormal data
- Troubleshooting problems with population management software (e.g., PopLink, PMx, ZIMS for Studbooks, PMCTrack).
- Maintaining the Survival Statistics database and AZA web page.
- Supporting International Studbook Keepers GSMPs with Conveners based in the AZA region
- Teaching AZA Program Leaders in AZA Population Management I and II courses
- Assisting AZA Regional Studbook Keepers with AZA Regional Studbook publication
- Assisting with SSP Assessments as part of the TAG's RCP process
- Conducting and/or supporting population biology-related research

AZA PMC Animal Program Population Biologists

AZA Animal Program Population Biologists fall into two APM Committee-approved categories:

- PMC Population Biologists are employed by and working at the AZA Population Management Center at Lincoln Park Zoo.
- PMC Adjunct Population Biologists are trained by the PMC, have a signed MOU with the PMC and AZA office, and should be paid employees at an AZA member facility (AZA-Accredited Facility, Accredited Related Facility, SSP Sustainability Partner, and Conservation Partners). Most often, Adjuncts are responsible for advising the AZA Animal Programs that have Program Leaders based at their supporting facility/facilities. There are a few exceptions to this, which must be discussed with and approved by both the Adjunct's supervisor and AZA PMC Director.

Reproduction Management Center (RMC)

The ***AZA Reproductive Management Center (RMC)***, hosted at the Saint Louis Zoo, provides science-based information to AZA facilities on reproductive management to support animal population viability and sustainability. The RMC includes scientists, veterinarians, and animal managers with research and management expertise in wildlife contraception as well as methods for improving reproductive success. The AZA RMC and the ***European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA)*** Reproductive Management Group, our European counterpart, jointly manage a Contraception Database that contains over 50,000 records of animals treated with contraception. The RMC uses these data to make taxon- and species-specific contraceptive recommendations and provide advice on the safety, effectiveness, and reversibility of these contraceptive products. AZA institutions can use these recommendations to make informed decisions on how to sustainably manage their animal collections. Contraception is an essential, proven, and humane tool for reproductive management while still allowing individuals to live in natural social and family groups. It allows managers to maximize available space by preventing births from animals that are not high priorities for breeding or animals that are not currently recommended for breeding but will be in the future. **Contraceptive recommendations** are available at the Saint Louis Zoo website.

The RMC also organizes workshops, creates demonstration videos, and carries out research projects on topics related to increasing reproductive success, addressing infertility and mate compatibility, as well as contraception. We carry out Reproductive Viability Analyses (RVAs) that seek to identify what inherent biological and reproductive characteristics of animals in breeding pairs and the pairs themselves correlate with successful reproduction. We also collaborate with SSP Coordinators to carry out a variety of multi-institutional research projects focused on contraceptive efficacy and/or reversibility, reproductive suppression, and reproductive health.

The RMC relies on feedback from the zoo community to improve reproductive management. While safety and efficacy are vital components of a contraceptive suitable for zoo animals, reversibility is the third integral element that has far-reaching consequences for sustainable population management. The RMC's goal is to produce reversibility data for different contraceptives so that managers are well-informed and know what to expect from a particular product. These are often the most challenging data to collect because pregnancies and births can occur years after treatment or at a different facility than the one at which the contraceptive was administered. It is essential that details be reported, not only during treatment to obtain efficacy parameters but also after treatment is stopped and breeding is desired. The RMC asks that animal managers notify the vet staff or whoever is responsible for updating the **contraception website** at their institution to let us know when animals are given mate access following contraception and when births occur throughout the year so they can use this information to update to the contraception website. The RMC can be reached by emailing **contraception@stlzoo.org**.

Chapter 2. Facility Roles and Expectations in Animal Programs

Directors, Institutional Liaisons, and Institutional Representatives play pivotal roles in adhering to the AZA Animal Program policies and processes (e.g., Responsible Population Management, and Animal Programs Full Engagement Policy) and AZA Accreditation Standards (standard 1.8). This chapter underscores the required expectations for each institutional role, fostering effective collaboration within the institution and the Animal Programs community.

Director

Position Overview

The Director/CEO (Director moving forward) is the person with the authority and responsibility for the operation of their facility. The Director must be responsible for the day-to-day management of the institution, including animal acquisition, transfer, welfare, euthanasia, reintroduction, paid and unpaid staff, and programs. The Director is also responsible for assuring their facility is fully engaged with those Animal Programs in which they have agreed to participate. This means that the facility and individuals, with Animal Program roles (TAG Chair, SSP Coordinator, AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, IL, and IR), are accountable, adhere to Animal Program policies, and complete all breeding and transfer recommendations assigned to the facility.

Expectations

The Director:

- Must understand the expectations and guidelines for AZA Animal Programs, and the Director is ultimately responsible for all population management decisions and transactions.
- Must understand the purpose and function of TAG Regional Collection Plans
- Must designate an Institutional Liaison (IL). The Director must serve as the IL if one is not designated.
- If Program Leaders are employed at their institution, they must adhere to the Statement of Institutional Support and ensure that each Program Leader's manager/supervisor understands the expectations.
    - » The Statement of Institutional Support is located in the select Program Leader applications on the AZA **Program Leader and Officer Applications** webpage.

Institutional Liaison

Position Overview

The default Institutional Liaison for a facility is the institutional Director, however, they may appoint an alternate IL for the facility if desired.

The IL ensures that there is effective communication and participation between the facility and AZA's TAG and SSP Programs. It is assumed that all decisions/votes made by the IL are approved by the facility Director.

Eligibility Requirements

The Institutional Liaison must:

- Be a paid employee of the facility they represent. The term "paid" refers to hourly or salaried. The intent of this requirement is to assure that The IL is fully integrated with their facility, serves a vital and consistent role within the facility that is outside of their role as an IL, and has the facility's full support to serve in this role. Payment of a minimal amount to an IL who is no longer integrated with their facility outside of their role as IL does not fulfill this eligibility requirement.
- Be the CEO/Director or be designated by the CEO/Director of their facility.
- Be an individual member of AZA: Professional Affiliate or Professional Fellow.
- Have access to and understand how to use PMCTrack.
- Understand the expectations and guidelines for SSPs, Studbooks, and TAGs.
- Understand the purpose and function of TAG Regional Collection Plans (RCPs).
- Have the ability to make decisions about his/her facility's animal populations, or be able to communicate with those who make decisions about these populations.
- Have proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet programs, utilizing AZA web resources, and have email access. In an effort to be as green as possible, most documents will be sent electronically or be available for download from the AZA website, and the IL must be able to view and download documents.
- Have the capability to disperse documents to the appropriate institutional personnel.

Functions

The IL must:

- Communicates all AZA recommendations, Accreditation standards, and Animal Program information and updates out to facility staff when requested.
- Designate Institutional Representatives (IRs) to appropriate TAG and SSP Programs with consideration as to who would be the most appropriate staff member to represent the needs of the species and the wishes of the facility when communicating with Program Leaders, and work with the Program Leaders on developing plans for building sustainable populations.
- Act as the IR to any SSP Program if there is no designated IR, or the IR is unable to perform their functions.
- Facilities must participate in SSP Programs for each SSP species that they house and own.
- Review and update their IR list via the AZA website on a regular schedule to assure currentness.
- Provide Animal Program documents to IRs upon request if the IR is not an individual AZA member and does not have access to documents through the AZA website.
- Assure that deadlines, including those for review of draft RCPs and SSP Breeding and Transfer Plans, completion of TAG space surveys, and PMCTrack surveys, are met by each IR.
- Use PMCTrack to review IR performance (e.g., answering surveys) and facility compliance with SSP recommendations.

- Provide a copy of the PMCTrack Accreditation Report[1] for inclusion in their facility's accreditation application.
- Respond to initial inquiries of Program Leaders and IRs in a timely manner.
- Understand and adhere to the SSP Program Breeding and Transfer Plan process (see below)

For more information, please visit the AZA **Online Training Modules** webpage to find online tutorials such as *How to be an Institutional Liaison* and *PMCTrack for Institutional Liaisons*.

Institutional Representative

Position Overview

The IR is the primary contact between the facility and a Program Leader of a TAG and/or SSP Program to which they have been designated. The IR is responsible for maintaining open communication between the TAG and SSP Program and the facility, communicating to the Program Leader on behalf of the facility, and participating in TAG and SSP Program communications and activities.

Facilities are encouraged to manage in-house commitment forms to ensure that Institutional Representatives are familiar of the responsibilities and expectations of the IR role. See Appendix II for an example of a form that can be used.

Eligibility Requirements

The Institutional Representative must:

- Be a paid employee of the facility they represent. The term "paid" refers to hourly or salaried. The intent of this requirement is to assure that The IR is fully integrated with their facility, serves a vital and consistent role within the facility that is outside of their role as an IR, and has the facility's full support to serve in this role. Payment of a minimal amount to an IR who is no longer integrated with their facility outside of their role as IR does not fulfill this eligibility requirement.
- Be designated by the IL of the facility on the **AZA website**.
- Serve as the facility's IR for the TAG if they serve as a TAG Chair.
- Be familiar with the species/taxa they represent. It is understood that there will not always be a staff member who specializes in a particular taxon or species. In these situations, the position should fall to the person on staff who is the most logical point of contact for the Animal Program.
- If they are an IR for an SSP, have access to and understand how to use PMCTrack to respond to surveys from their SSP.
- Have access to and understand how to use PMCTrack.
- Have the ability to make decisions about the facility's animal collections, or be able to communicate with those who have the ability to make decisions about the collections.

[1] This report will be available in December 2023 and is not required for the 2024 accreditation standards cycle, but is recommended to be included in the application.

- Have proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet programs, utilizing AZA and PMCTrack web resources, and have email access. Most documents will be sent electronically or be available for download from the AZA website, and the IR must be able to view and download documents in Microsoft Word and PDF formats.
- Have the capability to disperse documents to the appropriate facility personnel.

Functions

The Institutional Representative must:

- Communicate with and disseminate information among Animal Programs, Program Leaders, the IL, the institutional Director, the Ambassador Animal staff, and the animal care staff.
- Respond to and fulfill inquiries by TAG, SSP, and AZA Studbook Programs in a timely manner, including responding to SSP surveys via PMCTrack.
- Vote in all Steering Committee/Management Group elections.
- Communicate Animal Program participation and recommendations with the IL.
- Request Animal Program documents from the IL if the IR is not an individual AZA member and does not have access to documents through the AZA website.
- Must understand their expectations for SSPs and TAGs.
- Must understand the purpose and function of TAG Regional Collection Plans
- Must understand and adhere to the SSP Program breeding and transfer planning process, which includes formal planning meetings, interim recommendations, etc. (see below).

Program Leaders

Program Leaders play pivotal roles in the success of AZA Animal Programs, each contributing their unique expertise to specific taxa. Understanding the values and dedication of Program Leaders are integral to realizing the profound impact they have on the broader mission of population sustainability within the AZA community. For more detailed information on each Program Leader role, refer to the respective handbooks available on the AZA **Animal Programs Handbooks** webpage.

TAG Chair

The TAG Chair position holds important responsibilities that are critical to the success of AZA's Animal Programs. The TAG Chair serves as the primary contact and AZA expert for the taxa and abides by the duties and responsibilities as defined in the AZA TAG Handbook.

Primary responsibilities:

- Ensure the completion and distribution of an RCP with assistance from TAG Officers, Steering Committee members, and Program Leaders.
- Provide leadership of the TAG and organization of its members, advancing husbandry, and oversight.

- Maintain consistent communication with all Animal Program participants within the TAG's purview and report to the APM Committee. Participants include:
  - » SSP Program Leaders
  - » AZA Studbook Keepers
  - » Larval Program participants
  - » Institutional Liaisons
  - » Institutional Representatives

It is important for the TAG Chair to work closely with the AZA CMWS staff and its ***APM Committee Liaison*** in all matters related to the TAG's ongoing operations.

For more information on the TAG Chair role, visit the AZA Taxon Advisory Group Handbook which can be found on the **AZA website**.

SSP Coordinator

An SSP Coordinator performs various duties to lead and support the AZA SSP Program. The SSP Coordinator serves as the primary contact and AZA expert for their species and abides by the duties and responsibilities set forth by the AZA, APM Committee, and the TAG.

The SSP Coordinator collaborates with IRs, the Vice Coordinator, the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, the TAG, the APM Committee, and the AZA CMWS Department, as well as any associated governmental agencies, to develop, oversee, promote, and support the cooperative animal management, research, husbandry, and educational initiatives of the SSP Program.

Primary Responsibilities:

- Complete and publish a Breeding and Transfer plan for the SSP population on a recurring basis
- Provide leadership and organization to the SSP Program, building and appropriately managing a sustainable population
- Provide consistent communication of recommendations and guidelines to the appropriate stakeholders

For more information on the SSP Coordinator role, visit the AZA Species Survival Plan Handbook which can be found on the **AZA website**.

Studbook Keeper

The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper is responsible for maintaining an accurate record of the histories of all individual animals in an *ex situ* population for population management. This is an important responsibility because the global zoo and aquarium community depends on the maintenance of accurate Studbook records to manage populations and fulfill the goal of long-term sustainability.

Ideally, the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper also serves as that Program's SSP Coordinator or the SSP Vice Coordinator, and the Regional Studbook data will be used to create the SSP Program's BTP. The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper works directly with the associated TAG and SSP Program to complete an updated and accurate AZA Regional Studbook to be used for demographic and genetic analyses relevant to the SSP Program's population management.

The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper serves as a contact and AZA expert for the species and abides by the duties and responsibilities set forth by the AZA, APM Committee, SSP Program (if relevant), and the TAG.

If the Studbook is a WAZA International Studbook, and the International Studbook Keeper is employed in an AZA member facility, the Studbook Keeper is held to the same accountability requirements as an AZA Regional Studbook Keeper with regards to the AZA Regional Studbook data.

For more information on the Studbook Keeper role, visit the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook which can be found on the **AZA website**.

Chapter 3. Administration of Facility Engagement in Animal Programs

Animal Programs Database

Description

The AZA Animal Programs Database allows anyone to access Animal Program Documents (RCPs, BTPs, and Studbook Reports), general information about AZA's TAGs, SSP Programs, and Studbooks and view Program Leaders, Officers, Institutional Representatives, and Advisors. Individual AZA members can log into the **AZA Animal Programs Database** to have additional access:

- Search for contact information for all Program participants, including Program Leaders, Officers, and Advisors
- View the relationships between related TAGs, SSPs, and Studbooks, as well as the individual species covered by these Animal Programs
- Download IR lists for each TAG and SSP Program
- Save copies of Animal Program documents including Regional Collection Plans, Breeding and Transfer Plans, Studbooks, and Animal Care Manuals (ACMs).

Tutorial documents on navigating the Animal Programs Database can be found on the **Animal Programs Database webpage**.

A video tutorial for navigating the Animal Programs Database can be found on **the Online Training Modules webpage**.

MyAZA

Facility IR list

Institutional Liaisons can manage their facility's IR list by logging into **MyAZA**. The IL can add, remove, change IR assignments to a TAG or SSP. There are *ex situ* managed SAFE Programs where IRs will need to be assigned. To assign an IR to an *ex situ* SAFE Program, please email **AnimalPrograms@aza.org**.

Tutorial documents on managing a facility's IR list can be found on the **Animal Programs Database** webpage.

AZA Network

The AZA Network is an online social networking community for professionals working in zoos and aquariums. It's the place to go to connect with colleagues of like interests, discover libraries of resources and tools, and share ideas and lessons-learned within targeted communities.

The AZA Network allows for constant connection to the zoo and aquarium community. Communities can be closed, where members must be invited to join, or open, where anyone interested may join the community.

TAG Communities

The TAG Secretary is required to develop an open AZA Network Community for the TAG. These communities will serve as a discussion board, TAG related list serv, and document repository, as appropriate. Open and closed network groups may be formed for the TAG (e.g., a group just for officers and steering committee and a group open to all IRs as well as officers/steering committee).

SSP Communities

The SSP Coordinator is encourage to create an AZA Network Community for their SSP to facilitate communication and serve as a repository for documents and information.

Information on navigating the AZA Network can be found in the Membership Benefits & AZA Network Tutorials Handbook on AZA's **Member Resources & Benefits** webpage.

PMCTrack

PMCTrack is a website that assists Facilities with monitoring the SSP Programs in which they participate. Instructional videos on PMCTrack use for each role are available here.

Directors

Directors use PMCTrack for a high-level overview of staff participation in AZA Animal Programs and how their facility completing breeding and transfer recommendations.[2]

Institutional Liaisons

ILs use PMCTrack to monitor how their facility participates in AZA Animal Programs at a finer-grained scale. They can track accountability deadlines for Program Leaders based at their facility, monitor the outcomes of breeding and transfer recommendations given to their facility, and monitor how their IRs are responding to surveys. A video tutorial on PMCTrack for Institutional Liaisons can be found on the AZA **Online Training Modules** webpage.

Institutional Representatives

IRs use PMCTrack to respond to Wants and Needs and Outcomes Surveys from SSPs and view more information about scheduled planning meetings for the SSPs they liaise with. A video tutorial on PMCTrack for Institutional Representatives can be found on the AZA **Online Training Modules** webpage.

[2] Director access in PMCTrack will be available in December 2023

Chapter 4. PMCTrack

In 2023, PMCTrack became a required component for SSPs during the Breeding and Transfer Plan process. All SSPs and SSP participants must use its survey and other tools. Rare exceptions are granted by the AZA's Animal Population Management Committee. This change will help standardize the process for the collection of the facility's planning-related information as well as create tools to better monitor member engagement and accountability.

PMCTrack may also be used with SAFE programs that have an *ex situ* component and are approved for PMC services; SAFE programs are not required to use its tools, however, as they may or may not fit well within the confines of the SAFE *ex situ* management structure.

PMCTrack for IRs and ILs

PMCTrack is a website created by Lincoln Park Zoo and the AZA PMC with collaboration from AZA, the Reproductive Management Center, the APM Committee, Tracks Software, Inc., and countless AZA community members over the years since its release in 2011.

The main goal of PMCTrack is to improve the ability of AZA Animal Programs to sustain healthy populations in zoos and aquariums by:

- Enhancing efficiency
- Streamlining communications
- Increasing transparency
- Making it easier to identify solutions to population management challenges for Animal Programs.

Access to PMCTrack for Directors, ILs, and IRs

PMCTrack provides restricted access to each user; the subset of information each user can view is based on their role, program, and facility affiliations, which ensures the privacy and appropriate use of the information gathered.

PMCTrack imports its people/role data from the AZA database and syncs data multiple times per week. If an IL makes an update on the AZA website, it may take a day or two to be visible on PMCTrack's system.

When a Director, IR, or IL is assigned a role within PMCTrack for the first time, or when a new role is added (e.g. an IR with existing roles gets a new IR role for an additional SSP), users receive an email from **noreply@pmctrack.org** with more instructions on login and how to access help content for their role.

If users are having trouble logging in or remembering their password, they can go to **https://www.pmctrack.org/Public/Login** and use the Forgot/Create Password link. If they continue to run into challenges, they may email **pmctrack@lpzoo.org for assistance**.

Overview – How PMCTrack Supports SSPs and Facilities in the PMC Planning Process

PMCTrack in the SSP Planning Process

During the planning process, PMCTrack is used to prepare a Breeding and Transfer Plan with each SSP's Program Leader and a PMC or PMC Adjunct Population Biologist. PMCTrack is used to:

- Verify the IR List: by checking the AZA IR list against the current holders in the studbook, the system identifies any potential IR errors and emails them to ILs so they can be manually updated on the AZA website.
- Calculate recommendation outcomes: by comparing the previous set of breeding and transfer recommendations to the updated studbook and survey data, PMCTrack gives a standardized assessment of whether facilities completed the recommendations.
- Assess the reasons that recommendations do not occur as requested: SSPs send Outcomes Surveys to all IRs that have unfulfilled recommendations; an IR's response provides valuable reasons why a recommendation was unfulfilled, and may also provide details that result in their score being changed to "fulfilled" or "attempted", giving full credit to a facility for their efforts on behalf of an SSP.
- Improving SSP/IR communication and the planning process: SSPs send Wants/Needs Surveys to all IRs to gather each facility's perspectives on their needs for the upcoming Breeding and Transfer Plan; using a standardized, centralized survey improves SSP preparedness for PMC planning meetings and is a transparent source of accountability information on facility responsiveness for SSP planning.

PMCTrack Following a Breeding and Transfer Plan Publication

After an SSP produces its Breeding and Transfer Plan, PMCTrack can be:

- A reference for information for current recommendations and interim recommendations that an SSP issues in between formal plans.
- Used to access information on upcoming planning meeting dates, and use PMCTrack's repository of previous data from the planning process.

PMCTrack for ILs

Institutional Liaisons can use their dashboard (main homepage) and the reports within PMCTrack to:

- View their Active Recommendations[3], with access to the most recent Breeding and Transfer Plan or interim recommendations for the Animal Programs at their facilities, so they can be sure that their staff are making progress towards completing recommendations.
- Monitor accountability deadlines and planning status for the SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers based at their facility, including whether their SSP Coordinators are using PMCTrack's required tools; this information can be used proactively to make sure their staff are on track to meeting deadlines, and retroactively as documentation of employee performance.

[3] This functionality is being released in December 2023

- Track their overall survey response rate as well as how individual IRs are responding to SSP surveys, which ensures that their facility has a voice in each SSP planning process. This information can be used proactively to make sure IRs have the information they need to inform the planning process, and retroactively as documentation of employee performance.
- Confirm that they have the appropriate IRs assigned for SSPs, and know which SSPs are coming up for planning with the PMC or a PMC Adjunct.
- Monitor outcomes of breeding and transfer recommendations given to their facility, including whether the recommendations they receive were fulfilled or attempted, with the ability to compare their outcomes to AZA peers.
- Manage their facility settings[4] which allows them to identify which months they'd like to have the Director's Report[4], a quick summary of key PMCTrack data on their facility, emailed out to them and their Director.
- Download an Accreditation Report for inclusion in their Accreditation packet[5]. This report summarizes their facility's PMCTrack data over a five-year accreditation cycle; an IL can submit it along with a cover letter, if desired, describing any nuances they would like their accreditation team to be aware of.
- ILs may request that additional people in their facility receive similar, "IL" access to PMCTrack by contacting **pmctrack@lpzoo.org**.
- PMCTrack sends multiple emails to ILs with useful information about their programs, including:
  - » On the 1st Monday of each month, the "IL Monthly Planning Meetings" email lists all the upcoming SSPs scheduled for planning in the next two months and which IRs are assigned. ILs can use this as a quick check of IR assignments for their facility.
  - » IR verification emails: when an SSP is preparing to plan, the comparison of the AZA IR list and the studbook shows facilities that *are not* holders but *have* assigned IRs, as well as facilities that *are* holders but *do not* have an IR assigned. The IL receives an email in either case to request verification/IR assignment. If they are holders and do not assign an IR, the IL will be assigned to the IR role for that SSP.
  - » The IL is CC'ed on any final (3rd) reminder emails that are nudging IRs about responding to surveys; if the IL receives this email they should make sure the IR takes the survey or immediately go to the AZA website and assign a new IR (or assign themselves as IR) so the survey can be completed.
  - » On their designated frequency, the Director's Report (see above)

[4] This functionality is being released in December 2023

[5] The Accreditation Report will be released in December 2023 and available to ILs and Directors. It is not a required component of the Accreditation application in 2024 but is strongly recommended. It is being provided to all facilities ahead of a potential requirement so that all can become familiar with how their facility's data are presented.

PMCTrack for Directors[4]

Directors have access to the same dashboard and reports as ILs, but only receive the Director's Report email, not any of the others listed above. Some directors may choose to frequently log on to the website and review information; others may be satisfied with receiving the emailed Director's Report that is sent based on the settings on the IL dashboard. Directors can use this information as a starting point for internal conversations on staff accountability, SSP priorities to breed or transfer species in their zoo, and collection planning.

The PMCTrack dashboard reports show compliance in managed Animal Programs. Directors can see how their facility and their programs are performing in real time.

A pattern of non-engagement from a facility will rise to the level of an accreditation concern as outlined in the accreditation standards under Participation/Support. Inspection teams and the Accreditation Commission will refer to this report for inspection visits and hearings and will be prepared to take action if the standards are not followed.

Directors may request that additional people in their facility receive similar, "IL" access to PMCTrack by contacting **pmctrack@lpzoo.org**.

PMCTrack for IRs

IRs for SSPs have access to PMCTrack and actions to take within the system. A facility's IRs for TAGs do not, unless they have another role within the AZA population management system.

IRs for SSPs use PMCTrack in several ways:

- Responding to Wants/Needs Surveys: SSPs typically launch Wants/Needs surveys 3–6 weeks before their PMC planning meeting. IRs respond to these surveys to make sure that their facility has a voice in the planning process with this survey. Wants/Needs Surveys have the same standardized format across all SSPs making serving multiple IR roles simpler; the surveys can also include some customized questions from SSPs, to ensure that the surveys are detailed enough to help with the diversity of SSPs needing management.
- Responding to Outcomes Surveys: SSPs typically launch outcomes surveys 3–6 weeks before their PMC planning meeting. An IR will receive an outcomes survey for each animal currently at their facility that had an 'unfulfilled' recommendation as determined by PMCTrack's initial outcomes calculation. This survey response allows IRs to provide feedback on why a fulfilled recommendation did not occur as requested; their response *may* sometimes update the final outcome for that recommendation to "fulfilled" or "attempted".
- Use PMCTrack's reports to view summarized responses for all surveys their facility has submitted (Wants/Needs and Outcomes) for that Animal Program.
- Use the IR dashboard to know at a glance when planning meetings for their Animal Program are scheduled with the PMC.
- IRs get two types of emails from PMCTrack:
    - » Initial alerts when surveys are waiting to be responded to in their "Tasks" list.
    - » Reminders of survey deadlines for upcoming planning meetings if they haven't responded to surveys.

An IR's survey responses provide invaluable information to the SSP and PMC on preparing a strong breeding and transfer plan, and help the AZA community better understand what is working and not working within SSP recommendations.

Help with PMCTrack

PMCTrack has an active repository of help content for each user and role. Context-specific help pages can be accessed within the website by selecting the '?' icon that is typically on the upper right of any screen element. The full help library, organized by role, can also be accessed here: **https://www.pmctrack.org/Help/ViewAllHelp/**.

In addition, there are online introductory modules for each role, as well as more in depth guidance on different site features that can be accessed here: **https://www.aza.org/online-training-modules?locale=en**.

Finally, users can email **pmctrack@lpzoo.org** if they have additional questions that can't be addressed with the available online help.

Chapter 5. Program Leader Management

Overview

Effective Program Leader management at a facility is imperative for Animal Programs' success. In addition to designating and monitoring IRs, it is the onus of the IL to oversee the responsibilities of facility-based Program Leaders. This includes ensuring that Program Leaders meet their deadlines (PMCTrack Surveys, RCPs, BTPs, and Studbooks) and approving extension requests if deadlines are not met, and reporting facility Program Leader changes to AZA CMWS Department. For more information on Animal Programs deadlines, please visit the **AZA Animal Programs Deadlines** webpage.

Responsibility by Role

Director
It is the responsibility of the Director to ensure their facility's Program Leaders meet the deadlines for their associated Animal Programs and ensure the facility meets all expectations and policies for Animal Programs.

Institutional Liaison
It is the responsibility of the IL and the Director to ensure their facility's Program Leaders meet the deadlines for their associated Animal Programs.

Communication: For successful Animal Program collaboration, communication is pivotal across Animal Programs members and participants. It is critical for facility Directors, ILs, and IRs to ensure that consistent communication between the facility and programs (TAGs, SSPs, Studbooks, and Larval Programs) is maintained.

TAG Chair
TAG Chairs are required to develop an RCP, which recommends species for cooperative management on a 5-year cycle. The current RCP process lists each Animal Program's management designation as a Signature SSP Program, Provisional SSP Program, Studbook or SAFE Program and identifies population goals. TAGs may also identify populations the TAG is monitoring, including species managed as consortia.

It is the TAG Chair's responsibility to ensure that all Program Leaders and participants within their purview are actively engaged with updating current or developing new Animal Care Manuals.

More information on Animal Care Manuals can be found on the AZA **Animal Care Manuals** webpage.

Please visit the TAG Handbook on the AZA website for more information on RCPs.
For the RCP Deadline Schedule, please visit the **AZA Animal Programs Deadlines** webpage.

SSP Coordinator

SSP Coordinators are required to develop a Breeding and Transfer Plan typically on a 3-year cycle. The current BTP process lists the overall population status, breeding and transfer recommendations, population management strategies, and a directory of IRs.

ILs and SSP Coordinators can view the BTP deadlines on their **PMCTrack** dashboards.

Studbook Keeper

AZA Regional Studbook Keepers are required to publish a Regional Studbook Report on a 3-year cycle. The current Studbook process lists the current and historical standing of the population of a particular species.

ILs can view the Studbook deadlines on their **PMCTrack** dashboards.

Accountability

Accountability refers to the processes by which Animal Program participants including Directors, Program Leaders, Institutional Representatives (IRs), and Institutional Liaisons (ILs) are responsible for engaging in the AZA population management process by producing and reviewing documents, and communicating among appropriate individuals. Accountability of Animal Programs includes meeting deadlines, requesting extensions if needed, maintaining communication with all individuals, and adhering to the AZA's Animal Programs Facility Engagement Policy and the requirements outlined in this handbook.

Automated Email Reminders from APM Committee

Automated deadline reminders are emailed by the Chair of the APM Committee as a courtesy to remind the Program Leader, and other associated parties, of upcoming deadlines. Each email includes the appropriate instructions, relevant contact information, and links to the **Animal Programs Deadlines** webpage on the AZA website. These automated emails are administered by programs as follows:

Regional Collection Plans

- Prior to reaching the accountability deadline
  - » Four, Three, Two, One year(s), and 6 months prior to the deadline – Sent to:
    - Program Leader
    - TAG Chair
    - AZA CMWS Department
  - » One month prior – Sent to:
    - Program Leader
    - TAG Chair
    - Program Leader's Institutional Liaison
    - APM Committee Chair
    - APM Committee VC of TAGs

        - APM Committee Liaison
        - AZA CMWS Department
- Upon reaching the accountability deadline and after
    - » Deadline reached – Sent to:
        - Program Leader
        - TAG Chair
        - Program Leader's Institutional Liaison
        - APM Committee Chair
        - APM Committee VC of TAGs
        - APM Committee Liaison
        - AZA CMWS Department
    - » Two weeks past – Sent to:
        - Program Leader
        - TAG Chair
        - Program Leader's Institutional Liaison
        - APM Committee Chair
        - APM Committee VC of TAGs
        - APM Committee Liaison
        - AZA CMWS Department

Breeding and Transfer Plans and AZA Regional Studbook

- Prior to reaching the accountability deadline
    - » One year and 6 months prior to the deadline – Sent to:
        - Program Leader
        - TAG Chair
        - AZA CMWS Department
    - » One month prior – Sent to:
        - Program Leader
        - TAG Chair
        - Program Leader's Institutional Liaison
        - APM Committee Chair
        - APM Committee Liaison
        - APM Committee VC of SSPs and Studbooks
        - AZA CMWS Department

- Upon reaching the accountability deadline and after
  - » Deadline reached – Sent to:
    - Program Leader
    - TAG Chair
    - Program Leader's Institutional Liaison
    - APM Committee Chair
    - APM Committee Liaison
    - APM Committee VC of SSPs and Studbooks
    - AZA CMWS Department
  - » Two weeks past – Sent to:
    - Program Leader
    - TAG Chair
    - Program Leader's Institutional Liaison
    - APM Committee Chair
    - APM Committee Liaison
    - APM Committee VC of SSPs and Studbooks
    - AZA CMWS Department

Automated Emails From PMCTrack

Automated emails are delivered by PMCTrack as a courtesy to remind those in Animal Program roles (TAG Chair and SSP Coordinator) and Facility roles (Director, IL, and IR) about various aspects of the SSP planning process. These emails come from **noreply@pmctrack.org** or **no-reply@pmctrack.org**; please make sure these addresses are on your Safe Senders list.

Director

Subjects Line:

- Director's Report for [Your Facility]
  - » Content: A report containing summarized information on the facility's participation in AZA Animal Programs.
  - » Frequency: The 1st of each month, selected on the IL/Director dashboard in the Facility Settings section, with a default setting of once a year on January 1st.
  - » Note: This report can be accessed by the Director/IL at any time through PMCTrack dashboard, Reports menu.

Institutional Liaison

Subject Lines:

- Please Verify Your Institutional Representative
  - » Content: Reminder to update IR roles if needed
  - » Frequency: A program is preparing for planning and the facility has an IR assigned, but does not hold the species based on the studbook.
- Please Designate a [Program] IR ASAP
  - » Content: Reminder to update IR roles if needed
  - » Frequency: A program is preparing for planning and the facility does not have an IR assigned, but holds the species based on the studbook
- Reminder – Please Respond to [Program] Survey(s) by [Due Date]
  - » Content: [IR] Instructions to responding to surveys
  - » Frequency: IL only receives this if the IR has not responded to their surveys 3 days before due date
- Upcoming PMC Planning Meetings
  - » Content: A list of upcoming planning meetings and assigned IRs
  - » Frequency: Monthly on the first Monday of the month
- Director's Report for [Your Facility]
  - » Content: A report containing summarized information on the facility's participation in AZA Animal Programs.
  - » Frequency: The 1st of each month selected on the IL/Director dashboard in the Facility Settings section, with a default setting of once a year on January 1st.
  - » Note: This report can be accessed by the Director/IL at any time through PMCTrack dashboard, Reports menu.

Institutional Representative

Subject Lines:

- A New Interim Recommendation for [Program Name]
  - » Content: A new interim recommendation; IRs receive this message if they are in the Starting or Destination Facility for the recommendation, or if they were an original holder of the individual at the last Breeding and Transfer Plan
  - » Frequency: Anytime a new interim recommendation added by the SSP Coordinator
- Please Respond to [Program] Outcomes Survey(s)
  - » Content: Instructions for responding to surveys
  - » Frequency: When surveys are launched and 17 days before the survey due date

- Please Respond to [Program] Wants/Needs Survey
  - » Content: Instructions for responding to surveys
  - » Frequency: When surveys are launched and 17 days before the survey due date
- Reminder – Please respond to [Program] Survey(s) by Due Date
  - » Content: Instructions for responding to surveys
  - » Frequency: Only sent if IR has not responded to surveys
    - 10 days before the survey due date
    - 3 days before the survey due date (IL copied on email)

TAG Chair

Subject Line:

- A New Interim Recommendation for [Program Name]
  - » Content: A new interim recommendation for a program in their TAG
  - » Frequency: A new interim recommendation is added by the SSP Coordinator

SSP Coordinator

Subject Lines:

- A New Interim Recommendation for [Program Name]
  - » Content: A new interim recommendation
  - » Frequency: A new interim recommendation is added by the SSP Coordinator
- We're Checking Your IRs (No Action Needed)
  - » Content: Provides notice that PMCTrack is running its Studbook Holder/IR Comparison that will launch emails to ILs in preparation for planning
  - » Frequency: When a program is preparing for planning
- Please Launch [PROGRAM] Outcomes Surveys
  - » Content: Instructions for launching Outcomes Surveys
  - » Frequency: When a program is preparing for planning
- Please Launch [PROGRAM] Wants/Needs Surveys
  - » Content: Instructions for launching Wants/Needs Surveys
  - » Frequency: When a program is preparing for planning

Note that the SSP Coordinator will receive additional emails about the planning process generated by PMC staff.

Extension Requests

Program Leaders are accountable for submitting their documents before the given deadlines. Every effort should be made to meet these deadlines as AZA facilities and members rely on up-to-date information and documents from TAGs to inform their decision making.

Regional Collection Plans

Prior to the accountability deadline date:

- In extenuating circumstances, the TAG Chair may request an extension prior to the deadline by contacting the APM Committee Vice Chair for TAGs, TAG's APMC liaison, and the AZA Director of Population Management Strategy to discuss the situation.

After the accountability deadline has passed:

- Failure to meet an accountability deadline will likely result in the removal of the TAG Chair by the APM Committee.
- If an extension request was not made prior to the RCP deadline, and the TAG Chair misses an RCP deadline but wants to maintain their role as Program Leader, the **Director or IL of the Chair's institution must REPLY ALL to the automated accountability deadline email within 2 weeks of the missed deadline** to discuss the reason for the missed deadline, and to request a new due date. The APM Committee Chair, Vice Chairs, APM liaison, and AZA Director of Population Management Strategy will deliberate, and if the group determines that the reason for the missed deadline is valid, a new RCP deadline will be set. The AZA Director of Population Management Strategy will communicate the new date to the TAG Chair. If the new deadline is not met, the TAG Chair and/or additional TAG officers and Steering Committee members will likely be removed.
- For further information on this process, please read the **TAG Handbook**.

Breeding and Transfer Plans and AZA Regional Studbook

Prior to the accountability deadline date:

- The SSP Coordinator/AZA Regional Studbook Keeper may request an extension to complete their document prior to the due date by contacting their TAG Chair, if the TAG has a current, approved RCP.
    - » If deemed appropriate, the TAG Chair must contact the AZA CMWS Department with the approved new deadline.

After the accountability deadline has passed:

- If the SSP Coordinator/AZA Regional Studbook extension request was not made prior to the deadline but the Program Leader wishes to maintain their position, the IL or Director of the Program Leader's facility must REPLY ALL to the automated accountability deadline email within 2 weeks of the missed deadline to discuss the reason for the missed deadline, and request a new deadline.
- The APM Committee Vice Chair for SSPs & Studbooks will determine if the reason for the missed deadline for the completion of the Breeding and Transfer Plan/AZA Regional Studbook is valid, and if so, a new deadline will be set. They may discuss the situation with the APM Executive Committee, TAG Liaison or others as needed.

- The Vice Chair and APM Committee may consider previous extension requests, ongoing issues with the Program or Program Leader or other concerns in considering extensions. These issues may further be discussed with the TAG Chair. In some cases, the Program Leader may be asked to resign their role.
- For further information on this process, please read the **SSP and Studbook Handbooks**.

Program Leader Vacancy

When a Program Leader decides to step down from their role, they must report their decision to the TAG Chair and the AZA CMWS Department (**animalprograms@aza.org**). All TAG, SSP, and Studbook Program Leader vacancies must be advertised in the monthly Animal Programs Update and must be posted on the AZA **Program Leader Vacancy** webpage for 30 days.

Program Leader Changes

Resignations

- Program Leaders must provide written notice of resignation to the TAG Chair or the APM Committee Vice Chair of SSPs and Studbooks/ TAGs, and AZA CMWS Department via email to **animalprograms@aza.org**.
- A planned resignation date may be identified to allow for an election and the mentoring of a new SSP Coordinator. This process must be discussed with the TAG to ensure consistency. Two individuals may not be designated as the Program Leader for a program at the same time.
- Departing Program Leaders are required to uphold TAG, SSP, and Animal Program business confidentiality and provide all relevant TAG and SSP documents to the TAG Chair/APM Committee and their replacement.

New Program Leaders

If there are individuals at the facility who are seeking to get involved with Animal Programs, a list of program leader vacancies may be found on the AZA **Animal Program Leader Vacancy** webpage. If they decide to apply for a position, application may be found on the AZA **Animal Programs Applications** webpage.

It may also be beneficial to reference a document *What is an AZA Program Leader and Are you Ready to Become One?* This document gives a description of each Program Leader role and necessary skills to be a successful Program leader. The document can be found on the AZA **Animal Programs Resource Documents** webpage.

Election Process

SSP Coordinators and AZA Regional Studbook Keepers at your facility are elected by the TAG's Steering Committee or by the APM Committee if there is not an active TAG Chair present. TAG Chairs are elected by the APM Committee.

If individuals at your facility have questions regarding the Program Leader election process, more information can be found in the related **Handbook**.

Program Leader Onboarding

Once elected, the Program Leaders will receive onboarding materials via email from the AZA CMWS Department. The Institutional Liaison will be copied for awareness. As the IL, please assist your new Program Leaders to make introductory connections with their related APM liaison or TAG Chair:

- TAG Chairs: will be assigned an APMC Liaison
- SSP Coordinators: Should reach out to their TAG Chair
- Studbook Keepers: Should reach out to their SSP Coordinator and TAG Chair

A list of TAG Chairs and APM Committee Liaisons can be found on the AZA **Animal Programs Contact Information** webpage.

Program Leaders Facility Changes

When Program Leaders move to a new AZA member facility, ILs and Directors should be aware that Program Leaders must:

- Have their new facility's Director sign a new Statement of Commitment and Support within 90 of departure from their original facility, and submit it to the TAG Chair, copying CMWS Department (**animalprograms@aza.org**) to the email. The Statement of Commitment and Support form can be found within the Program Leader Application form on the AZA **Animal Programs Applications** webpage.
- Update their new contact information, including facility, phone, fax, and email by:
  - » Notifying the TAG Chair (if SSP Coordinator or Studbook Keeper) or APM Committee Liaison (if TAG Chair)
  - » Notifying **Membership@aza.org**
  - » Updating their information on the AZA website by logging into their account on "**My AZA**."
- If the Program Leader takes a permanent position at a non-AZA accredited facility, leaves and/or retires from the zoo and aquarium field, please inform them that they must immediately resign as Program Leader by sending a resignation letter with official end date to the TAG Chair (if SSP Coordinator or Studbook Keeper) or APM Committee Liaison (if TAG Chair) and copy the AZA CMWS Department (**animalprograms@aza.org**). Program Leaders who do not resign under these conditions will be removed.

Loss of AZA Accreditation Status

- If a Program Leader's facility loses accreditation or certification, they must communicate this to the TAG and AZA CMWS Department via email to **animalprograms@aza.org**.
- Program Leaders have 6 months to re-gain employment with another AZA member facility before they must surrender their position.
- Departing Program Leaders are required to uphold SSP and Animal Program business confidentiality and provide all relevant SSP documents to the TAG Chair and their replacement.
- Program Leaders who do not resign under these conditions will be removed by the TAG or APM Committee.

Chapter 6. Program Leader Support

Expectations Surrounding Program Leader Support at Their Facility

- The Director must adhere to the Statement of Institutional Support for each AZA Program Leader at their facility.
- IL must follow up with Program Leaders, or the Program Leader's supervisor/manager, who are approaching their accountability deadline for their Animal Program documents (e.g., RCPs, Breeding and Transfer Plans, and Studbooks). ILs are copied into automated accountability reminder emails at the 1 month, deadline reached, and 2 weeks past reminder emails. Accountability deadlines can also be viewed on the PMCTrack IL dashboard.
- IL must follow up with AZA Regional Studbook Keepers, or the Studbook Keeper's supervisor/manager, who are approaching their Population Management I course accountability deadlines; ILs are copied on reminder emails sent from the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department. Accountability deadlines can also be viewed on the PMCTrack IL dashboard.
- If the Director does not assume this responsibility, the IL must issue and communicate Program Leader extension approvals and denials to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department if the Program Leader misses their accountability deadline.
- Must supply an explanation and request an extension, if desired, for Program Leaders who have missed their program's accountability deadline.

Statements of Commitment and Support

The Statements of Commitment and Support can be found in the Program Leader application forms. Two statements are involved: The ***Statement of Individual Commitment (SIC)*** is a signed statement by the potential new Animal Program (AP) officer to show that the individual is willing and able to meet the commitments and responsibilities of the AP and leading the group in its mission. The ***Statement of Institutional Support (SIS)*** is a signed statement by the potential new Animal Program (AP) officer's facility to show that the facility is willing and able to support this individual in meeting the commitments and responsibilities of the AP and leading the group in its mission.

This commitment must include:

- A paid AZA individual membership (required to be a program leader).
- Access to computers and software necessary for database and program management, communication via email, and other electronic meeting formats whenever possible. At minimum, this includes access to Microsoft Office suite and Adobe, and virtual meeting software.
- Allowance of some time within routine work schedules to work on Animal Program related responsibilities as outlined in the Animal Program Handbooks.
- Funding and professional time to attend Population Management I course, if supporting an AZA Studbook Keeper.

This commitment should include:

- Funding and professional time to attend Population Management II course, if supporting an AZA SSP Coordinator.
- Funding and other professional time for travel to professional meetings, workshops, and other professional development opportunities.

These statements can be found in the Animal Program Leader applications found on the **Animal Programs Application** webpage.

Recommended and Required Courses

TAG Chair

Below are the required and recommended courses for all Program Leaders by role. More information about course details can be found on the AZA **Professional Development Courses** webpage.

Required Course: TBA

Recommended Courses:

- Population Management I: Data Management and Processing
- Population Management II: Data Analysis and Breeding Recommendations

SSP Coordinator

Required Course: TBA

Recommended Courses:

- Population Management I: Data Management and Processing
- Population Management II: Data Analysis and Breeding Recommendations

Studbook Keeper

Required Course:

- Population Management I: Data Management and Processing

Recommended Courses:

- Population Management II: Data Analysis and Breeding Recommendations

Necessities for Successful Program Leaders

AZA Animal Program Leaders hold numerous responsibilities and are expected to portray particular qualities as an AZA leader. Current program leaders provided a list of qualities and skills necessary for individuals to possess to be a successful program leader. Please visit the AZA **Animal Programs Resource Documents** webpage to find the document *What is an AZA Program Leader and Are you Ready to Become One?*

Chapter 7. Facility Collection Planning

Institutional Collection Planning Guidelines

It is an accreditation requirement for AZA Accredited Facilities to follow an ***Institutional Collection Plan (ICP)***, which guides the management of animal populations for the individual zoo or aquarium, promotes sustainable populations across the Association in its cooperative animal management programs, and encourages prioritization of species based on objective criteria that each facility establishes for itself. The *Institutional Collection Planning Guidelines* will guide members to develop their ICP.

Please visit the AZA **Institutional Collection Plan** webpage to find the guidelines and further information on ICPs and examples.

SSP Sustainability Reports Search Portal

The SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal were developed to collect population and species care information from Program Leaders for every AZA Species Survival Plan® (SSP). The Sustainability Search Portal is designed to connect Program Leaders with their SSP Sustainability Reports, and to facilitate collection planning searches for institution directors, curators, and others in a collection planning team. A variety of different search criteria can be combined to identify potential animals that would work for the space a facility has available or is planning for. Specific information about the sustainability and goals/needs of the population are included to show where facilities can make the biggest impact to help the population. The project was IMLS-funded, and represents the community-wide effort to enhance collection sustainability of our managed populations.

Please visit the **SSP Sustainability Reports Search Portal** to find the **FAQ Sheet** for further tutorial information.

Animal Programs Database

The AZA Animal Programs Database allows AZA members to access general information about AZA's Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs, and Studbooks and view Program Leaders, Officers and Advisors.

Individual AZA members can log in to the AZA Animal Programs Database to:

- Save copies of Animal Program documents including Regional Collection Plans, Breeding and Transfer Plans, Studbooks, and Animal Care Manuals (ACMs)
- Search for contact information for all Program participants, including Program Leaders, Officers, and Advisors
- View the relationships between related TAGs, SSPs, and Studbooks, as well as the individual species covered by these Animal Programs
- Download IR lists for each TAG and SSP Program

Regional Collection Plans

Regional Collection Plans (RCPs) are documents that specify the optimal manner in which the *ex situ* populations should be managed. A TAG RCP identifies a list of species recommended for management in AZA-accredited institutions, the level at which each should be managed, detailed explanations for how those recommendations were developed, and an evaluation of how much facility space is needed to effectively manage a population long-term.

The RCP includes:

- TAG action or strategic plan description
- TAG operating structure description and succession plan description
- Full Contact Information List
- TAG Taxa Description
- TAG Taxa Table
- Capacity and Commitment Population Size (CPS) or Trend (CPT) assessment descriptions and results
- SSP Assessment description and results
- Advised Population Size (APS) description and table (if relevant)
- Animal Program Roles, Goals, and Essential Actions for all Managed Programs

For a full description of required RCP elements, please visit the AZA **Animal Programs Handbooks** webpage to view the Taxon Advisory Group Handbook.

Using an RCP to Align ICP with Association Priorities

TAGs develop Regional Collection Plans (RCPs) to recommend species for cooperative management among AZA organizations, determine the long-term sustainability goals for each recommended AZA Animal Program within its purview, identify essential actions (number of spaces, founders, etc.) needed to meet these goals. This information is relevant to facility's long-term collection plans, can help guide facility's in which species to invest in, and assure adherence to AZA's animal management and conservation goals. RCPs are found on TAG pages in the AZA Animal Programs Database.

Breeding and Transfer Plans

The Breeding and Transfer Plans (BTPs) are documents that share the collaborative management strategies to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse, and demographically stable *ex situ* population of a particular species in AZA Animal Programs. Facilities are required to engage in the process of creating BTPs (see Chapter 8). BTPs may also be a good resource for facilities to learn about the status and management of an SSP, if they are interested in joining the SSP. SSP programs are required to produce a BTP at least every three years.

The BTP includes:

- Demographic status of population and future demographic goals
- Genetic status of population and future genetic goals
- Advised Population Size (APS) (if relevant)

- Target Population Size (TPS)
- Contraception and reproductive health information
- Management strategies
- PMCTrack recommendation fulfillment outcomes
- Specific breeding and transfer recommendations for each facility
- Life tables
- Mean Kinship lists
- Directory of Institutional Representatives

Collection Planning Resources

Animal Exchange

The ***Animal Exchange*** is a listing service that allows representatives from AZA-Accredited Facilities, Accredited Related Facilities, and Approved Non-Member Participants to advertise or solicit surplus animals. Species that are involved in SSPs must have SSP Coordinator approval to be posted on the Animal Exchange.

Acquiring Access

To access Animal Exchange, the user must be logged in to the AZA website and have Animal Exchange privileges assigned to their individual record in order to use this feature. Any employee from an AZA member facility may request access to Animal Exchange to offer or solicit animals for institutional collection planning. Please contact **AnimalExchange@aza.org** to request access. Once provided access and logged into the AZA website, please visit the **Animal Exchange webpage** to list a species.

Posting Non-Essential Animals

- Notes:
  - » To post SSP animals, please be sure to communicate with the SSP Coordinator and request approval before posting on Animal Exchange.
  - » Please use Animal Exchange to advertise animals non-essential to the managed population.
  - » Advertising available animals on the AZA Network is prohibited. Please visit the **AZA Network** to view further details on the AZA Network Code of Conduct
- Available Animal Posting Process:
  - » Before beginning, please make sure that you have access to post on the Animal Exchange. Follow 'Acquiring Access' above to request access.
  - » Visit the AZA website and log into **My AZA**.
  - » Once logged in, navigate to the **Animal Exchange** webpage from the AZA Homepage > Animal Management > Animal Exchange.
  - » Click 'View My Institution's Listings' and then 'Add Listing.' This will allow you to post your animals.

» Fill out the animal's information.

  - If the species name is not listed in the species dropdown, please email AnimalExchange@aza.org and request the species be added to Animal Exchange. Please be sure to provide the common name and scientific name in the email request. It is important to provide clear information of the species to reduce confusion and ensure the correct animal is added into the database.

» Click 'Save.'

Animal Care Manuals

Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) are a compilation of animal care and management knowledge that has been gained from recognized species experts, including AZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plan® Programs (SSPs), biologists, veterinarians, nutritionists, reproduction physiologists, behaviorists and researchers. Content is based on the current science, practice, and technology of animal management. The manual assembles best practices, animal care recommendations and AZA accreditation standards to maximize capacity for excellence in animal care and welfare and is updated every 5 years. All ACMs are peer reviewed, widely valued, and acclaimed by other regional associations. All TAGs are required to coordinate the publication of ACMs for the taxa within their purview.

As stated in the Accreditation Standards, a member facility must review and provide access for all paid and unpaid animal care staff, to all AZA ACMs that have been approved and that apply to species at the facility. Guidelines outlined in the ACMs should be followed.

AZA member facilities should consult AZA RCPs, Animal Program Leaders, and ACMs when making acquisition and transfer decisions.

Available Animal Care Manuals can be found on the **AZA Animal Care Manuals** webpage.

Ambassador Animal Guidelines

AZA Ambassador Animal Guidelines (AAG) provide a compilation of knowledge provided by recognized animal and education experts based on the current science, practice, and technology of ambassador animal management and presentation. Each AAG assembles basic requirements, best practices, and animal care recommendations to maximize capacity for excellence in animal care and welfare of ambassador species.

Ambassador Animal Guidelines and further information can be found on the AZA **Ambassador Animal Guidelines** webpage.

Chapter 8. Animal Programs Related Policies and Guidelines

Animal Programs Engagement Policy

AZA members are committed to managing robust animal populations in zoos and aquariums to assure that animals are available to meet individual program goals and fulfill our collective mission. Successful population management relies on highly collaborative, communicative, and engaged relationships among AZA members and Animal Programs (i.e., Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plans® (SSPs), and AZA Studbooks). Therefore, all AZA member facilities must fully engage with and participate in each SSP that pertains to an animal that the facility owns or is part of their collection. Further, each Animal Program Leader (i.e., TAG Chair, SSP Coordinator, and Studbook Keeper) must fully engage with each facility that is part of their Animal Program as described in the associated Animal Program Handbooks.

A pattern of non-engagement from a facility will rise to the level of an accreditation concern as outlined in the accreditation standards under Participation/Support.

Defining Full Engagement in TAG Programs

- IL must update the IR list on the AZA website.
- IR must complete and return TAG Space Surveys within the designated time frame
- IR must assure that all Draft RCPs are read and that all recommendations included within them are approved by each IR during the comment period.
- Facility should use RCP for collection planning decisions.
- IR should respond to other inquiries and requests from the TAG, such as surveys, research requests, etc.

Defining Full Engagement in SSP Programs

- IL must update the IR list on the AZA website.
- IR must complete all PMCTrack surveys (Wants and Needs, Outcomes) for each SSP during the designated time frame prior to SSP planning.
- IR should provide representation to attend SSP Program Breeding and Transfer Plan meetings.
- IR must review draft BTP and provide feedback to SSP Coordinator during the 30-day comment period. Lack of communication implies agreement to the recommendations.
    - » If the facility is unable to comply with, needs clarification, or has questions regarding their recommendation(s) then they must communicate this to the SSP Coordinator during the 30-day comment period.
    - » Communication must continue among parties until an agreed upon recommendation has been made.
    - » If an agreement cannot be made, the APMC Vice-Chair of Engagement must be contacted for assistance.

- Facility must adhere to all agreed-upon recommendations in the Final SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan, and all interim recommendations.
    - » If the facility does not adhere to the agreed-upon recommendation, the APMC Vice-Chair of Engagement must be contacted for assistance.

Defining Full Engagement in AZA Regional Studbook Programs

- IRs must ensure that data are current and provided to AZA Studbook Keepers as requested. For AZA Regional Studbooks that are not associated with SSPs, a process is currently under development by the APM Committee.
- The IL, Studbook Keeper, AND TAG Chair must ensure that studbook databases not maintained in ZIMS for Studbooks by AZA Regional Studbook Keepers at their facility are archived at the AZA PMC.

Acquisition and Transfer of SSP Program Species

- In general, facility must not transfer any SSP Program species, within AZA or outside of AZA, without good faith effort to gain approval from the SSP Program.
    - » There may be situations where transferring animals without SSP approval is appropriate, and addressing these situations will occur on a case by case basis. In these cases, the APMC Vice-Chair of Engagement must be contacted for assistance.
- In general, must not acquire any SSP species from outside AZA without a good faith effort to gain approval from the SSP Program.
    - » There may be situations where acquiring animals without SSP approval is appropriate, and addressing these situations will occur on a case by case basis. In these cases, the APMC Vice-Chair of Engagement must be contacted for assistance.

Sustainability Partner Policy

Sustainability Partners are facilities, approved by AZA APM Committee, that regularly exchange animals with AZA-Accredited Facilities and Accredited Related Facilities, typically as part of the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Breeding and Transfer Plan or other SSP Program management process. For more information on Sustainability Partners and the application process, please visit the AZA **Animal Programs Resource Documents** webpage.

In accordance to AZA's Responsible Population Management Policy, AZA members are to ensure that SSP animals from AZA member institutions and certified accredited facilities are not transferred to individuals or organizations outside of the AZA membership without ensuring that the receiving institution is an approved SSP Sustainability Partner or that the animal is deemed non-essential to the SSP population.

Please see the AZA Responsible Management Policy and other related policies on the AZA **Board-Approved Policies and Position Statements** webpage.

Animal Programs Reconciliation Process

The success of cooperative breeding programs depends on all institutions and program participants supporting SSP recommendations and overall collaboration. As effective collaboration is crucial to the progress and success of SSPs, the Animal Population Management Committee has developed a Communication and Conflict Toolkit to address impediments in the SSP process including but not limited to a lack of compliance, lack of communication, and other conflicts. The Communication and Conflict Toolkit can be found on the AZA **Animal Programs Resource Documents** webpage. It is highly encouraged that Directors, ILs, IRs, and Program Leaders are familiar with this process and understand what to expect when faced with a conflict.

Chapter 9. Animal Programs Resources

Animal Programs Database

Animal Programs Database pages

Animal Programs Database pages for TAGs, SSPs, and AZA Regional Studbooks may include:

- Contact Information
  - » Program Leader
  - » Program Officers
  - » Program Advisors
  - » Institutional Representatives
- Documents
  - » Regional Collection Plans
  - » Breeding and Transfer Plans
  - » AZA Regional Studbook Reports
- Other Documents
  - » Mate Rx
  - » Population Viability Analyses (PVAs)
  - » AZA Endorsed Documents

AZA Website

Animal Program Handbooks

Resources on this webpage includes:

- Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Handbook
- Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Handbook
- AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook
- Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) Handbook

Resource Documents Webpage

Resources on this webpage includes:

- General Resources for Program Leaders and Participants
- Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs
- AZA Regional Studbooks
- Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs)
- Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs)
- PMCTrack

Online Training Modules

The AZA's CMWS Department has developed several online training modules for Animal Program Leaders, Institutional Representatives, Institutional Liaisons, collection planners, research scientists, and individuals interested in becoming involved in AZA's Animal Programs. The AZA's Population Management Center has also put together online training modules to help Program Leaders manage their populations using PMCTrack.

Please visit this webpage to find resources on the following:

- SSP Sustainability Reports Search Portal Tutorials
- Animal Program Population Management Tutorials
- Getting More Involved Tutorials
- Population Management Center: PMCTrack Tutorials

Chapter 10. Program Leader Resources

Animal Programs Contact Information

Please visit the AZA **Animal Programs Contact Information** webpage for the following contact lists:

- AZA CMWS Department
- Animal Population Management Committee and APM Liaisons
- AZA Taxon Advisory Group Chairs
- AZA Population Management Center
- AZA Small Population Management Advisory Group TAG Liaisons
- AZA Reproductive Management Center
- AZA Institutional Liaisons (IL)
- SSP/TAG Veterinary Advisors

AZA Web Resources

Please click the following links to visit respective webpages:

- **AZA Board Approved Policies**
- **Animal Exchange**
- **Animal Programs Database**
- **SSP Sustainability Reports Search Portal**
- **AZA Network**
- **Animal Programs Resource Documents**
- **Accountability Information and Instructions**
- **PMCTrack**
- **Population Management Center**
- **Reproductive Management Center**
- **ZIMS for Studbooks**
    - » Email: **support@species360.org**
    - » Resource Documents:
        - **A Reference Guide to ZIMS for Studbooks for Animal Program Leaders**
        - **Starting a New AZA Studbook in ZIMS for Studbooks**
        - **AZA Guidelines for I. Roles and Access to ZIMS for Studbooks, and II. Sharing Studbook Data**
        - **Working Together in a Shared Studbook Database**

PART II:
Facility Engagement in Conservation Programs

Created by the
AZA Wildlife Conservation Committee
AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department

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Chapter 1. Annual Report on Conservation Science (ARCS)

Overview

As part of accreditation, facilities must submit data to AZA's ***Annual Report on Conservation and Science*** (ARCS)-related surveys each year, after which AZA reports the cumulative conservation activity of accredited AZA member facilities, including their education programming, field conservation, natural resource conservation and sustainability/green business practices, and scientific research.

For individual members, the lists of programs and projects submitted to AZA may serve as evidence that the institution is following its accreditation-required conservation action plan/strategy.

Submitting Programs, Projects, and Data to ARCS-related Surveys

AZA member facilities should identify an employee to be responsible for submitting data to each of the four ARCS-related surveys. This may be the same person for all of the surveys, or different people based on subject matter. Only contacts assigned to an ARCS survey can view, edit, and enter data for their organization. Submissions to ARCS are done via AZA's website, so once the point of contact has been identified, that person should create an account from AZA's homepage (**My AZA**) and notify AZA's Conservation, Management, and Welfare Science Department (**conservation@aza.org**) so that AZA can assign the appropriate survey-specific permissions. Individual AZA membership is not required. Contact AZA's CMWS Department with questions regarding access to ARCS surveys or changing the facility's points of contact.

Once the appropriate permissions have been assigned, the point of contact can access the database by logging to their My AZA account and navigating to the appropriate survey listed in the left-hand menu.

Submission Timeline

The database is available year-round, and people may enter or edit data at any time. All data that relates to activities from the previous calendar year should be entered by the end of February to be included in community-wide, year-specific publications such as ARCS ***Highlights***. AZA begins communications with ARCS contacts in early December and will send reminders until the deadline.

Submissions entered after the deadline will still be used! Data are queried year-round for social media, research, and accreditation compliance.

ARCS publications, such as ARCS *Highlights*, can be found on AZA's **ARCS** webpage.

Resources

ARCS-related available resources can be found on the AZA **Resources for the ARCS Survey** webpage.

Please use the following descriptive definitions to maximize reporting consistency. Members of AZA committees may also review submissions for adherence to the definition. Providing robust project descriptions assists with review and consistency.

- **Education Programs**
- **Field Conservation**
- **Green Practices**
- **Mission-focused Research**

Materials are available to answer frequently asked questions about the surveys, and to provide additional guidelines and examples of effective, high-quality submissions:

- **Field Conservation FAQs & Guidelines**
- **Green Practices Survey FAQs**
- **Mission-Focused Research FAQs & Guidelines**

User manuals are available to help people navigate the surveys on AZA's website:

- **Education Programs**
- **Field Conservation**
- **Green (Sustainable) Business Practices**
- **Mission-Focused Research**

Members can download previous years' data by logging into their My AZA account, navigating to the specific survey, and exporting the data for specific years. They may then share these spreadsheets with colleagues and request year-specific updates. Spreadsheets with all of the fields are also available to help members collect the data from their peers and facilitate data entry:

- **Education Programs Data Collection** (.xlsm)
- **Field Conservation Data Collection** (.xls)
- **Green Practices Data Collection** (.xls)
- **Mission-Focused Research Data Collection** (.xls)

Viewing Data

Some of the data are available for public review. Visit **Members' Conservation and Science Activities** or view projects and programs of interest using the search portal. Additional queries and questions can be directed to the CMWS Department (**conservation@aza.org**).

- **Conservation and Research Search**
- **Education Programs Search**
- **Green Practices Search**

Chapter 2. SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction

SAFE Overview

The mission of AZA ***SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction*** is to combine the power of zoo and aquarium visitors with the resources and collective expertise of AZA members and partners to save animals from extinction, with the vision that together we are saving the most vulnerable wildlife species from extinction and protecting them for future generations. As AZA's signature conservation brand, SAFE brings AZA-accredited facilities together, along with field-based partners to enhance the probability of conservation success in the wild for threatened species or a group of related taxa. SAFE species programs help AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums do more and better long-term conservation. Stories from these programs help the public recognize and support the conservation efforts of AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

As part of accreditation, AZA member facilities should participate in SAFE species programs.

Launched in 2015, SAFE species programs are collaboratively proposed and managed by AZA members to:

- Protect threatened animals in the wild
- Build on established recovery plans and track records of commitment
- Prioritize collaboration among AZA member institutions and field-based partners
- Implement both strategic conservation and stakeholder engagement activities
- Measure and report conservation progress

One of the strategies of SAFE species programs is to follow the principles of the IUCN CPSG **One Plan Approach** and consider all populations of a species, across the spectrum from intensively managed to least managed, in an integrated, stakeholder-inclusive, science-based process. SAFE species programs bring together multiple AZA members and field-based partners (***Program Partners***) to address the conservation needs of a threatened species or a group of related taxa in the wild. Each program builds upon the historic commitment of AZA members and others to implement aspects of existing recovery or action plan(s). AZA members working on a designated SAFE species assess the existing plan(s), and develop a program plan that identifies an array of conservation actions to be addressed by AZA members. The intention of the program plan is to prioritize actions by AZA members that complement and unify conservation efforts in the context of an existing recovery or conservation action plan. The group identifies a Program Leader who champions the efforts and will help coordinate, facilitate, and review progress toward program plan goals. Program Leaders and Program Partners serve the AZA community as experts on the conservation needs, challenges, and opportunities of the target species or taxa.

The programs work in partnership with ***AZA's Wildlife Conservation Committee (WCC)***. The WCC develops, oversees, promotes, evaluates, and supports AZA's cooperative conservation initiatives. Program Partners include two or more AZA-accredited facilities that have conducted or supported conservation work on the target species or group of related taxa for a minimum of two years and are committed to advancing an existing recovery or conservation plan. While the Program Leader must be an individual AZA member and work for an AZA-accredited facility, Program Partners do

not need to be AZA members and may be comprised of a diverse membership of private entities, government agency representatives, other NGOs, universities, etc., as appropriate, for the program. In addition, each program may be complemented by Advisors, who serve as experts in various fields, and may be members of an associated AZA Committee or Scientific Advisory Group (SAG), or an external expert, such as a representative from an IUCN SSC Specialist Group. The program should strive to engage additional AZA members; ideally five or more new Program Partners within the cycle of the program plan.

Proposing a SAFE Species Program

AZA members wishing to create a SAFE species program should confirm that the species or group of related taxa meet the eligibility requirements, complete the proposal, and submit it to AZA's Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences (CMWS) Department (**safe@aza.org**). Proposal materials are available in Microsoft Word format from AZA's website. The proposal should specify which existing conservation plan (e.g., recovery plan, biodiversity management plan, population habitat viability assessment [PHVA] action plan) the SAFE program plan will complement and provide an overview of how AZA Animal Programs and/or individual AZA institutions have supported the target species' conservation.

The proposal should also include a list of Program Partners, along with the contact information for the individual serving as the Program Partner Representative and a Statement of Institutional Support for each listed AZA-accredited Program Partner.

Joining a New or Existing SAFE Species Program

When submitting a Statement of Institutional Support, the facility should summarize their intended resource commitment to the SAFE species program and briefly describe how the commitment relates to their organization's conservation priorities, and the SAFE species program's written or expected (for new programs) objectives.

If a Program Partner Representative leaves an organization, the Program Partner should identify a new Representative and submit an updated Statement of Institutional Support to that SAFE Program's Leader and to AZA's Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Per **AZA's SAFE Species Program Handbook**: Funding expectations of Program Partners should be clearly articulated by each SAFE species program, based on their goals and objectives. AZA suggests that Program Partner participation be valued at a minimum of $1500 per year in direct financial and/or in-kind support, but specific expectations for meaningful participation should be defined by each program, as appropriate for their program plan and species' needs.

Please visit the **AZA SAFE Program Resources** webpage to find the SAFE Species Program Handbook and other resources.

A SAFE style guide, logos, and graphics are available for use by Program Partners to promote SAFE and their facility's engagement in SAFE Species programs at: **https://bit.ly/SAFEAssets**.

Eligibility Criteria for SAFE Species

Each of the following criteria must be met in order to be eligible to become a SAFE species.

- The species is threatened with extinction
  - » Threatened (VU, or EN, or CR, or EW) according to IUCN's Red List; or
  - » Equivalent threat level according to relevant government agencies (e.g., US or non-US federal/state/provincial); or
  - » Listed as protected under CITES I or II; or
  - » Demonstrates science-based evidence that the species population is under extreme distress and has not yet been listed under recognized threat levels.
- The species has established conservation plan(s) (e.g., recovery plan, biodiversity management plan, PHVA action plan) in place. The SAFE species program can be either holistic or can be more targeted (e.g., regional, focused on one sub-species) as long as the program is clearly tied to a larger conservation plan.
- Appropriate stakeholders (e.g., IUCN SSC Specialist Groups, USFWS recovery teams, range state wildlife offices, other NGOs, researchers focused on relevant taxa or issues) are identified and/or engaged.
- Two or more AZA-accredited member facilities have an established commitment for conducting/supporting active conservation work on this species for a minimum of two years.
- If accepted as a SAFE species program, its members agree to:
  - » Develop a three-year plan within twelve months for the program's activities that includes measurable conservation objectives that will advance the established conservation plan(s), such as objectives focusing on field activities, stakeholder engagement, fundraising, public awareness, etc.
  - » Increase member involvement in the conservation of the species to at least five AZA facilities.
  - » Follow the SAFE species processes, protocols, and deadlines.

Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. The Wildlife Conservation Committee (WCC) will approve or provide questions to the submitters within one month of receiving the proposal. Once the program is accepted, AZA's CMWS Department will send an official notification via email to the Program Leader(s). Public notification will be done via AZA's member magazine, *Connect*, at conference general sessions, on AZA's website, and over other AZA communication channels, as appropriate.

Proposal submission and approval dates are tracked by AZA's CMWS Department. AZA's CMWS Department also maintains records of approval notifications and reviewer comments for proposals denied.

Outputs

Each SAFE species program is responsible for developing and maintaining specific outputs including a program plan and an annual report. All program plans should be SAFE-branded, reviewed by members of AZA Board-level Committees, and content selected for public view will be published on various AZA communications platforms, including the AZA website, *Connect* magazine, and social media, as appropriate. Annual reports will be made available to AZA by the SAFE species programs and contain material that is appropriate for internal and external communications.

The Cornerstone of a SAFE Species Program: The Program Plan

Working with Program Partners, Program Leaders are responsible for drafting and submitting three-year program plans within twelve months of acceptance of the SAFE species program. The primary goal of a program plan is to articulate and guide how the AZA community will advance an established conservation plan (e.g., recovery plan, biodiversity management plan, PHVA action plan). Since the SAFE program plan is linked to a published recovery plan, Program Partners that use it to guide their conservation actions may be confident that those activities are considered essential in the recovery of the species and will be valued by stakeholders. This connection and subsequent reporting increases awareness of, and transparency around, the program's efforts.

The program plan will identify a medium- or long-term (e.g., 10-year) vision and a goal for the duration of the program plan. The plan's goal should describe the appropriate effect of actions that would be necessary to achieve the program's vision. The plan will also include specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound (SMART) objectives (i.e., formal statements of the outcomes or results necessary to attain the goal) and related actions.

Program plans should articulate its conservation targets (also defined in the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation* [found on the **Conservation Standards** website] as biodiversity targets; the specific, tangible entities the project seeks to conserve) and the threats, challenges, and/or pressures contributing to the species' decline. The connection between the inputs available to AZA members, the proposed actions, the anticipated change resulting from those actions (i.e., outputs, metrics), the expected objectives accomplished because of those outcomes, and the intended effect (i.e., impact or goal) of the program on the threats and/or targets should be clear.

The program plan should provide AZA member institutions with guidance for how to become involved in its implementation. All information and details included in the plan should be sufficiently clear for colleagues not familiar with the species' or taxon group's conservation status and their needs to understand how and why these related inputs, actions, and objectives are being recommended.

SAFE species programs advance existing recovery plans and build on the histories of engagement that AZA members have dedicated for the target species' or taxa's conservation. The program plan should also incorporate background information, some of which will have been included in the proposal for becoming a SAFE species, regarding: 1) the *ex situ* population within the AZA community, 2) existing conservation and research activities by AZA members and of other regional zoological associations, as appropriate, 3) the current *in situ* population status from the global IUCN Red List assessment to facilitate conservation planning across *in situ* and *ex situ* populations (i.e., the One Plan Approach)1, and 4) the citation for the recovery or conservation action plan being advanced by the SAFE species program.

SAFE Program Structure

All AZA SAFE Species programs should be composed of the ***WCC Liaison***, a Program Leader and Vice Program Leader, a Steering Committee, Program Partner Representatives, and Advisors in order to incorporate an extensive and diverse amount of experience and expertise. The program may design its operating and organizational structure as best it sees fit and may differ for programs comprised primarily of AZA members compared to those primarily comprised of non-AZA participants.

For example, programs that are largely constituted of AZA members may consider including additional officer positions beyond the Program Leader and Vice Program Leader, such as Secretary and Treasurer. Steering Committees generally include 5-15 participants and would be composed of representatives from Program Partners; for groups with a large number of partners, the Steering Committee should be elected from among the Program Partners. Officers, with the exception of the Program Leader, should be elected from the Steering Committee and the Steering Committee should form the electorate for that vote.

Some programs may be based upon existing groups that are composed of many non-AZA participants, such as a government-led Recovery Team. In this case, the AZA members of the Recovery Team may apply for designation as a SAFE Species program. The responsibilities of the Program Leader would still be the same, including communication and engagement with AZA and other AZA members. In developing an appropriate SAFE program structure that is sensitive to an existing structure, the Program Leader should consult with their WCC Liaison or the WCC Vice Chair of SAFE.

Learn more on how to join an existing SAFE species program or to propose a new program by visiting the AZA **SAFE** webpage or contact AZA's Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department at **SAFE@aza.org**.

Appendices

Appendix I: Glossary

Accountability – Accountability refers to the processes by which Animal Program participants including Directors, Program Leaders, Institutional Representatives (IRs), and Institutional Liaisons (ILs) are responsible for producing and reviewing documents, and communicating among appropriate individuals. Accountability of Animal Programs includes meeting deadlines, requesting extensions if needed, maintaining communication with all individuals, and adhering to the AZA's Animal Program Full Engagement Policy and the Species Survival Plan® Animal Management Reconciliation Policy.

Advisor – An advisor is a non-voting participant of an AZA Animal Program (AP) that provides advice to the AP in their efforts to identify, develop and implement goals related to their species. An advisor may also provide input on Animal Care Manuals and assist with the development of education materials and research projects related to the Advisor's area of expertise.

Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) – Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) are a compilation of animal care and management knowledge that has been gained from recognized species experts, including AZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plan® Programs (SSPs), biologists, veterinarians, nutritionists, reproduction physiologists, behaviorists and researchers. Content is based on the current science, practice, and technology of animal management. The manual assembles best practices, animal care recommendations and AZA accreditation standards to maximize capacity for excellence in animal care and welfare and is updated every 5 years. All ACMs are peer reviewed, widely valued, and acclaimed by other regional associations. All TAGs are required to coordinate the publication of ACMs for the taxa within their purview.

Animal Exchange – The Animal Exchange allows representatives from AZA-Accredited Facilities, Accredited Related Facilities and Approved Non-Member Participants to list and search for individuals of a species that can be exchanged to meet the goals of their Institutional Collection Plan (ICP) or the Regional Collection Plan (RCP).

Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) – The Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) works collaboratively with other Committees and is responsible for facilitating the professional and scientific management of the animals cared for in AZA-Accredited zoos and aquariums, Accredited Related Facilities, and Approved Non-Member Participants. Committee members serve up to two three-year terms and consist of Directors, Vice Presidents (VPs), curators, and registrars. APM Committee develops, oversees, promotes, evaluates, and supports the cooperative animal management, conservation, sustainability, and scientific initiatives of the AZA.

Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) Liaison – Each Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) is assigned one member of the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) who serves as a liaison for that TAG. APM Committee members typically serve as a liaison for 3 TAGs. They communicate with the TAG regularly and serve a crucial advisory role for any policy, procedure, or processes questions the TAG may have, and act as the primary contact and mentor during the TAG's Regional Collection Plan (RCP) developmental and review process.

Animal Programs Database – The AZA Animal Programs Database allows anyone to access general information about AZA's Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs, Studbooks, the individual species included in these AZA Animal Programs (APs), and view Program Leader, Officer and Advisor contact information. AZA members can log in to the AZA Animal Programs Database to gain access to more detailed AP information and have the ability to download Institutional Representative (IR) lists and associated final and draft documents.

Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) – Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of accredited zoos and aquariums in the areas of animal care, wildlife conservation, education and science. AZA is America's leading accrediting organization for zoos and aquariums and accredits only those facilities that have achieved rigorous standards for animal care, education, wildlife conservation and science.

AZA Animal Program – AZA Animal Programs (APs) include Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs and Studbook Programs. APs are responsible for the extraordinary leadership, development, oversight, promotion, evaluation and support of AZA's cooperative animal management, conservation, and scientific initiatives. Management tools, databases, reference materials, policies, and management plans have been developed to facilitate exceptional AP collaboration within and amongst AZA-accredited facilities.

AZA Brand/Branded – The signature for the Association of Zoos & Aquariums is a unique piece of artwork that has been designed specifically for our brand. Consisting of the AZA wordmark and the AZA ampersand symbol, the signature is an extremely valuable asset and the most concise visual representation of our brand.

AZA Board Approved Policies – AZA policies may be drafted by AZA Committees, Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs), and Animal Programs (APs) in collaboration with their AZA Staff and Board Liaisons but all AZA-related policies must be approved by the AZA Board of Directors before being finalized, published, or distributed. AZA policies may cover topics such as animal management, animal programs, conservation, ethics, health, husbandry and welfare, research and technology, and safety.

AZA Mission – The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) provides its members the services, high standards and best practices needed to be leaders and innovators in animal care, wildlife conservation and science, conservation education, the guest experience, and community engagement.

AZA Network – The Association of Zoos & Aquariums' online private social networking tool.

AZA Policy on Animal Program Full Engagement – AZA members are committed to managing robust animal populations in zoos and aquariums to assure that animals are available to meet individual program goals and fulfill our collective mission. Successful population management relies on highly collaborative, communicative, and engaged relationships among AZA members and Animal Programs (i.e., Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plans® (SSPs), and AZA Studbooks). Therefore, all AZA member facilities must fully engage with and participate in each SSP that pertains to an animal that the facility owns or is part of their collection. Further, each Animal Program Leader (i.e., TAG Chair, SSP Coordinator, and Studbook Keeper) must fully engage with each facility that is part of their Animal Program.

Breeding and Transfer Plans – Breeding and Transfer Plans (BTPs) summarize the current demographic and genetic status of a Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program, describe the SSP Program management designation, and recommend breeding pairs/groups and transfers. Breeding and Transfer Plans are designed to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse and demographically stable population.

Accredited Related Facilities – Previously Accredited Related Facilities- Organizations holding wildlife that are not commercial entities, and are not open to the public on a regularly scheduled, predictable basis. The facility shall be under the direction of a professional staff trained in animal husbandry, and shall be further defined as having conservation and preservation as part of its mission—a mission that shall have a beneficial, tangible, supportive impact on the zoological and aquarium professions. This includes wildlife ranches, wildlife refuges or rehab centers, research facilities, survival centers, breeding farms, and/or similar organizations.

Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences (CMWS) – The Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department (CMWS) of Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is committed to providing services advancing the initiatives of member institutions related to conservation, animal management, and animal welfare.

Externally Managed Populations – Externally managed populations are any cooperatively managed program where final authority of breeding, transfers, husbandry, or reintroductions of animals managed in AZA facilities falls to an external (i.e. non-AZA) entity. These populations do not qualify for SSP status, but may qualify to become a SAFE Program.

Ex situ – Species outside of their native habitat.

Global Species Management Plan (GSMP) – GSMPs are formal, international population management plans among a minimum of two regional zoological associations, and are overseen by WAZA. GSMPs are a valuable partnership when population goals for increasing sustainability cannot be met within a single region. A GSMP provides an opportunity to combine several regional populations, thus improving the genetic and demographic management potential by increasing the population's size, carrying capacity, and other resources.

International Studbook – The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (WAZA) Committee of Population Management (CPM) administers and provides oversight to International Studbooks. International Studbooks provide a valuable service to the zoological community by offering the most complete and accurate global data on the *ex situ* population's pedigree and demography, if possible including husbandry and veterinary guidance, and enhancing management of the *ex situ* population through analysis of the International Studbook data.

Institutional Liaison (IL) – The Institutional Liaison (IL) assures that there is effective communication and participation between the facility and AZA's Animal Programs (APs). The IL designates Institutional Representatives (IRs), keeps the facility's IR list current, and is responsible for updating IR contact information on the AZA website. The IL serves as the default IR for any AP which does not have an IR assigned and is required to respond accordingly. The IL works with Program Leaders and IRs to assure that their facility fully participates in all associated Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) and Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs, and if necessary, will meet in conflict resolution processes.

Institutional Representative (IR) – The Institutional Representative (IR) is the primary contact between their facility and the Program Leader of the Animal Programs (APs) to which s/he has been designated. The IR is responsible for maintaining open communication between the AP and the facility, communicating to the Program Leader on behalf of the facility, and participating in the AP communications and activities.

Management Group – At a minimum, the Management Group is composed of the Coordinator, Vice Coordinator, and AZA Regional Studbook Keeper. The Management Group serves as the voting body for Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program business and all members are integrally involved in the SSP Program appointments, publications, and meetings. Management Group members must be elected from the SSP Program's Institutional Representative (IRs).

Monthly Animal Programs Update – AZA's Monthly Animal Programs Update contains information about the most recent news pertaining to Animal Programs (APs), Professional Development Courses, workshops, conferences, meetings, funding and award opportunities, new Program Leaders, Program Leader vacancies, new publications, and information regarding Breeding and Transfer Plans.

Officer – Officer positions for an Animal Program (AP) include the Program Leader Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Vice Chair or Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Vice Coordinator, TAG or SSP Secretary, and if any financial components are incorporated into the Animal Program, a TAG or SSP Treasurer. Officers, with the exception of the TAG Chair or SSP Coordinator, are elected from the TAG Steering Committee or SSP Management Group and the Steering Committee/ Management Group forms the electorate for that vote.

PMC Adjunct – PMC Adjunct Population Biologists are advisors that are trained by the PMC, have a signed MOU with the PMC and AZA office, and advise AZA Animal Programs from their home institutions. PMC Adjuncts provide many services for AZA Animal Programs including producing Breeding and Transfer Plans, providing informal genetic or demographic advice between plans, investigating unknown or partially-known pedigrees, developing pedigree assumptions and creating analytical studbooks, conducting research and supporting software development to improve methods of population management, and troubleshooting software problems.

PMCTrack – PMCTrack is a website designed to evaluate the outcomes of breeding and transfer recommendations made through the AZA Animal Programs (APs) such as Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs. PMCTrack provides the necessary tools and data to understand, monitor, and improve AZA's cooperative population management system. PMCTrack includes survey functionality to request additional information from institutions on the information needed for preparing for SSP Breeding and Transfer Plans (wants/needs, reasons for unfulfilled outcomes).

Population Management Center (PMC) – The **AZA Population Management Center** (PMC) hosted by Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, is responsible for conducting demographic and genetic analyses needed to develop and distribute population management recommendations for all SSP Programs and those SAFE Programs that are approved to receive this support. PMC staff, including Population Biologists, Planning Coordinator, PMCTrack Coordinator, and Research Assistant, also include PMC Adjuncts, which all assist each SSP in the development of their population management plans by making sure the data are accurate, determining the current population status, predicting the future population status, identifying specific breeding

and transfer recommendations, and distributing the plan to all participating AZA-accredited institutions. In addition, the PMC contributes valuable information for AZA SSP Sustainability Reports and Regional Collection Plans (RCPs).

Population Sustainability – Success is achieved when SSP-managed animals are available to meet program goals and animals come from biologically sound populations as a result of a shared commitment to cooperative populations and program management.

Population Viability Analysis (PVA) – A PVA is a computer model that projects the likely future status of a population. PVAs are used for evaluating long-term sustainability, setting population goals, and comparing alternative management strategies. Several quantitative parameters are used in a PVA to calculate the extinction risk of a population, forecast the population's future trajectory, and identify key factors impacting the population's future.

Program Leader – Program Leaders include Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Chairs, Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Coordinators, AZA Regional Studbook Keepers, and Candidate Program Leaders.

Provisional SSP – Populations that have the potential to meet the Animal Programs Sustainability Criteria and be sustainable will be given a defined timeline to improve sustainability and will be reconsidered in the next RCP. If those goals are met, the program will become a Signature SSP. If the goals are not met, they will no longer be an SSP.

Publish – An SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan, AZA Regional Studbook, Population Viability Analysis, MateRx, or a TAG Regional Collection Plan is considered published once the document is posted on that Animal Program's page in the AZA Animal Programs Database.

Regional Collection Plan (RCP) – Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) develop Regional Collection Plans (RCPs) to recommend species for cooperative management among the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) member institutions, determine the sustainability goals for each recommended Animal Program (AP) within its purview, identify objectives relevant to their long-term collection plans, and assure adherence to AZA's animal management and conservation goals.

Reproductive Management Center (RMC) – The **AZA Reproductive Management Center** (RMC), hosted by the **Saint Louis Zoo**, is responsible for assessing factors such as contraception type efficacy, reversibility, and safety; an animal's age, reproductive status, behavioral and social needs, and delivery system practicality when recommending appropriate contraception methods for the animals cared for in AZA-accredited institutions.

Program Partners – Field-based partners for SAFE programs.

Program Partner Representatives – The Program Partner Representative is the primary contact between the representative's institution and the Program Leader of the designated SAFE species program. The Program Partner Representative is responsible for maintaining open communication between the program and the institution, communicating to the Program Leader on behalf of the institution, and participating in program communications and activities. The role of each Program Partner Representative will vary across the SAFE programs and over the course of the program plan's implementation reflecting each representative's expertise and the activities (an timing of those activities) that they are helping to implement.

Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) – Saving Animals From Extinction is an AZA effort to bring groups of AZA-accredited facilities together with field-based partners to enhance the probability of conservation success for threatened species or a group of related taxa in the wild. SAFE species programs help AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums do more and better conservation. Stories from these programs help the public recognize and support the meaningful conservation done by AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

SAFE Program Plan – A cornerstone of the SAFE species program is the development of a three-year program plan within nine months of approval as a SAFE species program. The program plan will include measurable field conservation, public engagement, and funding objectives that will advance an established conservation or recovery plan. Data related to these objectives should be included in a program summary table within the program plan, which should be updated annually and included in the program's annual report.

Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) – Established in 1991, Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs) help facilitate, support, network and coordinate the relevant research activities of its member institutions. SAGs are made up of experts in a particular field of wildlife science. Members include veterinarians, researchers and zoo- and aquarium-based curators with appropriate scientific training, as well as university, government and other outside scientists with a commitment to sharing their particular expertise.

Signature SSP – Populations that meet the Animal Programs Sustainability Criteria and will be sustainable for the long term will be designated Signature SSPs.

Small Population Management Scientific Advisory Group (SPMAG) – A Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) that provides technical advice pertaining to population management for AZA Animal Programs. SPMAG helps advance the science of applied small population biology and develops tools for use by small population managers.

Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program – An AZA Survival Plan® Program (SSP) strives to manage a population with the interest and cooperation of AZA-accredited facilities, and is identified through documented demand and potential sustainability within the AZA community defined by the species being held in at least 15 AZA facilities, the majority (>50%) of individual animals of the managed population is housed in AZA member facilities, Breeding exceeds acquisitions from non-AZA sources, and no external entities, government or otherwise, significantly impact how the animals are managed. An SSP is identified by Taxon Advisory Group (TAG)s during the Regional Collection Plan (RCP) process upon review of the SSP Assessment process; and develops a Breeding and Transfer Plan that identifies population goals and recommendations to manage a genetically diverse, demographically varied, and biologically sound population. Success is achieved when SSP animals are available to meet program goals and come from biologically sound populations as a result of a shared commitment to cooperative populations and program management. All levels of SSPs are subject to AZA's Animal Program Full Engagement and Sustainability Partner Policies.

Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Coordinator – A Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Coordinator performs various duties to lead and support the AZA SSP program. The SSP Coordinator works with Institutional Representative (IRs), the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper (if different from the Coordinator), the Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), the Animal Population Management Committee

(APM Committee), and the AZA CMWS Department, as well as any associated governmental agencies, to develop, oversee, promote, and support the cooperative animal management, conservation, and research initiatives of the SSP Program. The primary responsibility of the SSP Coordinator is to regularly complete and distribute an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan for the managed population.

SSP Sustainability Report – An automatically generated 5-page report that summarizes husbandry practices, exhibit management, species appeal, educational opportunities, multi-species exhibit considerations, species biology, SSP population dynamics, management priorities, challenges to sustainability, and research needs. The report is a compilation of the SSP Coordinator's expertise and the current and projected population summaries from the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan or PVA.

SSP Sustainability Report Search Portal – An online tool for collection planners, Program Leaders, ILs, IRs, research scientists, and other zoo and aquarium staff. The searchable format allows collection planning users to perform searches that identify appropriate species for their collection planning criteria, while also directing resources and attention to managed species.

Statement of Individual Commitment – A signed statement by the potential new Animal Program (AP) officer to show that the individual is willing and able to meet the commitments and responsibilities of the AP and leading the group in its mission.

Statement of Institutional Support – A signed statement by the potential new Animal Program (AP) officer's facility to show that the facility is willing and able to support this individual in meeting the commitments and responsibilities of the AP and leading the group in its mission.

Steering Committee – The Steering Committee serves as the voting body for Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) business, and all members are integrally involved in TAG decision making, appointments, publications and meetings. The Steering Committee is composed of 5-15 members, including Officers. Each TAG may determine the optimal size and management of its Steering Committee.

Studbooks – An AZA Regional Studbook dynamically documents the pedigree and entire demographic history of each individual in a population of species. These collective histories are known as the population's genetic and demographic identity and are invaluable tools that track and manage each individual cared for in AZA-Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, Accredited Related Facilities and by Approved Sustainability Partners as part of a single *ex situ* population.

Studbook Keeper – The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper is responsible for maintaining an accurate record of the histories of all individual animals in an *ex situ* population. The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper works directly with the associated Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) and Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program, all participating AZA member institutions, the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee), Population Management Center (PMC) or PMC Adjunct, and the AZA CMWS Department to complete and distribute a timely and accurate AZA Regional Studbook to be used for demographic and genetic analyses relevant to the SSP Program's population management.

Sustainability Designations – An initial Studbook, or a Population Viability Analysis (PVA), Breeding and Transfer Plan, or MateRx determines an Animal Program's (AP's) designation. Sustainability Designations include Secure Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs, Signature SSP Programs, and Provisional SSP Programs. This list is updated quarterly on the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) website.

Sustainability Partners – AZA Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) approved wildlife facilities that regularly exchange animals with AZA-accredited facilities and Accredited Related Facilities, typically as part of the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Breeding and Transfer Plan or other SSP Program management process.

Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Annual Report – Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Annual Reports update the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) CMWS Department on the conservation work of the TAG, and the Animal Programs (APs) within the TAG's purview. TAG Annual Reports provide the Chair an opportunity to document and communicate any potential issues within the TAG's programs, and allow an opportunity for the TAG to submit AP meeting minutes and other materials to AZA on an annual basis. Reports are due to the AZA CMWS Department July 15 of each year.

Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) – Established in 1990, Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) examine the conservation and management needs of entire taxa, or groups of related species. TAGs establish priorities for management, research, and conservation. TAGs select appropriate species for AZA conservation and management programs and provide a forum for discussing husbandry, veterinary, ethical, and other issues that apply to entire taxa.

Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Chair – The primary responsibility of the Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Chair is to assure the completion and distribution of a Regional Collection Plan (RCP). Additional responsibilities include leadership of the TAG, organization of its members, oversight and consistent communication with all Animal Programs within the TAG's purview (Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program, AZA Regional Studbooks, and Candidate Programs), the Institutional Liaisons (ILs), Institutional Representatives (IRs), and reporting to the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee). The TAG Chair serves as the primary contact and AZA expert for the taxon and abides by the duties and responsibilities defined for the position.

Wildlife Conservation Committee (WCC) – Provides assistance to all AZA institutions in order for them to engage in effective and sustained wildlife and habitat conservation. The WCC oversees the overall SAFE species initiative.

Wildlife Conservation Committee (WCC) Liaison – Each WCC member, except for the Chair, is assigned 1-2 SAFE programs to serve as a liaison to the WCC. Liaisons provide mentoring to the Program Leaders, monitor the program's progress, provide assistance, and review the annual report.

Appendix II: AZA Animal Program Institutional Representative Form Example

AZA Animal Program Institutional Representative (IR) Guidelines

Overview

The Institutional Representative (IR) is the primary contact between their institution and the Program Leader of the Animal Program(s) to which they have been designated. The IR is responsible for maintaining open communication between the Animal Program and the institution, communicating to the Program Leader on behalf of the institution, and participating in Animal Program communications and activities.

Each institution is represented by one IR for each Animal Program the institution participates in. If the TAG Chair moves to an institution that already has an IR represented in that TAG, or if a new Chair is appointed from an institution that already has an IR represented in that TAG, the TAG Chair will automatically be appointed as that institution's IR. The previous IR must relinquish his/her position because there can only be one IR, and one vote, per institution for each Animal Program. If the former IR served on the Steering Committee, the TAG will hold an immediate election to replace the Steering Committee member. SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers are not automatically approved as IRs; they must be designated as their institution's IR by the Institutional Liaison (IL). Program Leaders who are not Steering Committee members may still participate in the TAG as non-voting advisory members.

One individual may serve as the IR for more than one Animal Program at an institution; however, the duties for each Animal Program are independent of each other. IRs should be aware that being a representative to multiple Animal Programs involves a greater commitment. The IR is appointed by the Institutional Liaison (IL) unless the institution's Director assumes this responsibility.

Eligibility Requirements

The Institutional Representative must:

- be an employee of the institution they represent.
- be designated by the IL of the institution.
- uphold TAG business confidentiality.
- serve as the institution's IR for the TAG if they serve as TAG Chair.
- be familiar with the species/taxa they represent. It is understood that there will not always be a staff member that specializes in a particular taxon or species. In these situations, the position should fall to the person on staff who is the most logical point of contact for the Animal Program.
- have the ability to make decisions about the institution's animal collections or be able to communicate with those who have the ability to make decisions about the collections.
- have proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet programs, utilizing AZA web resources, and have email access. Most documents will be sent electronically or be available for download from the AZA website, and the IR must be able to view and download in documents in Microsoft Word and PDF formats.
- have the capability to disperse documents to the appropriate institution personnel.

Essential Position Functions

- Communicate with and disseminate information among Animal Programs, Program Leaders, the IL, the Institutional Director and the animal care staff, and work with and encourage Program Leaders to build sustainable populations.
- Respond to and fulfill inquiries by TAG and SSP Programs in a timely manner.
- Vote in all Steering Committee/Management Group elections.
- Review and complete "Institutional Wants and Needs" surveys within the requested time frame.
- Communicate Animal Program participation with the IL.
- Review and communicate comments for Draft Breeding and Transfer Plans and RCPs to the IL and Program Leaders during the 30-day comment period.
- Request Animal Program documents from the IL if the IR is not an individual AZA member and does not have access to documents through the AZA website.
- Ensure that any Regional Collection Plans (RCPs) and Breeding & Transfer Plan recommendation disagreements are addressed with the IL and Program Leaders during the comment period.
- Complete and return space surveys for TAG RCPs within the requested time frame.
- Consider volunteering for Animal Program activities and standing for election to Animal Program committees.
- Communicate any contact information amendments or change of status to the IL.

When requests are made for Taxon or Specimen reports from AZA Animal Program Leaders, please contact the Curator-Zoological Records to assist in providing the correct information as necessary.

AZA Animal Programs use the PMC Track software (**www.pmctrack.org**) prior to assembling Breeding & Transfer Plans. This software is a valuable tool in tracking recommendations in such plan and IRs are required to use this system. Participation in Wants/Needs as well as Outcomes Surveys are tracked through the software.

Surveys and Breeding & Transfer Plans (drafts and final) must be discussed with the appropriate Zoological Curators before being submitted or confirmed. FACILITY Management, Inc. IRs must be familiar with their roles and responsibilities, and are expected to communicate questions or concerns in a timely manner.

By signing, I understand the above information and accept the responsibilities and duties as explained.

_____ _____

Print Name Signature

_____

Date

A copy of this signed form will be kept on file in the office of the FACILITY's Institutional Liaison.

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ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

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