

Sustainable Animal Programs

Dear Colleagues,

Our commitment to creating sustainable animal programs that not only ensure the wellbeing of the animals in our care but also contribute to the conservation of species in the wild is foundational to our Association of Zoos and Aquariums' mission. The dedicated leaders that work on these programs and their innovative thinking are the driving forces behind our efforts.

With nearly 500 animal programs under the AZA umbrella, including Taxon Advisory Groups, Species Survival Plan® programs, and studbook programs, I give credit to everyone who serves in some capacity to support these programs. The work, initiatives, resources, and tools only exist as a result of the people who give their time and talent to foster exceptional collaboration across our AZA network.

This issue of *Connect* shines a spotlight on some of the passionate leaders driving forward important work across animal management, conservation, and scientific initiatives. We will delve into their inspiring journeys and contributions.

In May, many of the leaders from our institutions gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland, for TAG meetings. This issue of *Connect* also explored the inspiring conversations and planning that emerged from those meetings.

Further highlighting the collaborative spirit in this issue, we feature a group of SSP program leaders who seized an opportunity to address common challenges faced by their individual small cat SSPs. You will read about how finding ways to pool resources has led to more robust programs focused on small cats within AZA-accredited facilities.

You will also read about the impacts of ethical and responsible decision-making when it comes to aquatic animal moves, emphasizing their role in shaping the future of aquariums.

For AZA, animal care is deeply embedded within each of our facilities and extends far beyond our gates and into the wild—a shared responsibility that I know we all take pride in.

If you're looking for ways to increase your involvement, need additional resources, or want to connect with our animal care programs, the Animal Care and Management page on AZA's website is a great place to start!



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Connect

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