

**Crocodile Specialist Group Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Universidad Nacional del Litoral, Santa Fe, Argentina**  
(6 May 2018)

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**Zoos**

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**1. World Tomistoma Day**

August 5<sup>th</sup> celebrated by zoos all over the World, especially those in the USA and in Europe and those that display Tomistoma in their collections. WTD is used to raise awareness of this unique crocodylian and to help raise funds for the CSG Tomistoma Task Force.

**2. Activities in North American zoos**

- a. Albuquerque BioPark Zoo (Matt Eschenbrenner and Katie Anderson reporting)
  - i. *Mecistops cataphractus*, *Crocodylus suchus*, and other vertebrate species - \$25,000 - BioPark has a long-term commitment offering expertise, training, veterinary assistance, and material support to the National Zoo in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. In 2017, croc-related work included collecting and analyzing blood from 25 *M. cataphractus* (12 adults, 13 juveniles). Also inserted PIT Tags into 13 juvenile West African crocodiles hatched in 2014. It is hoped these crocodiles will be the first to be released into the wild into protected parks. They also repaired issues with filtration in the slender-snout pool. The ABQ BioPark Society has funded this work to a total of \$80,000 over the past 4 years. ABQ BioPark has provided funding for 2018 to continue this work (\$25,000).
  - ii. *Crocodylus siamensis*, \$1900 grant awarded to Katie Anderson and Lonnie McCaskill (WCS) for Next-Gen sequencing of DNA for crocodiles in the captive breeding and reintroduction project in Cambodia.
  - iii. Conservation Priorities for World Crocodylians, (\$777 monthly for duration) - an MOU has been finalized between ABQ BioPark (Matt Eschenbrenner and Katie Anderson) and the CSG to develop conservation priorities. ABQ has committed 5 hours per month for both to work on this project.
- b. Dallas World Aquarium (Luis Sigler reporting)
  - i. *Crocodylus intermedius*, \$8700 - capacitation to Biologists and Park Rangers in Venezuela, and support with airfare expenses for a PhD student from Colombia doing a research on Orinoco crocodiles in Venezuela.
  - ii. *Crocodylus acutus* and *Caiman crocodilus chiapasius* \$1000 - donation of camera traps for documenting hatching in wild crocodiles and caiman in La Encrucijada Biosphere Reserve.
  - iii. *Crocodylus acutus* \$5000 - surveys along the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica (expenses and equipment).
  - iv. *Crocodylus rhombifer* \$2500 - Winter Croc Fest.
- c. Detroit Zoological Society (Dr. Paul Buzzard reporting)
  - i. *Crocodylus siamensis*, \$12,500 financial support provided to the CAG's Siamese crocodile SSP and to WCS, plus an additional \$16,487 for *ex-situ* care of crocodiles (2015-2017) in preparation for transfer and eventual release in Lao PDR in collaboration with WCS (Lonnie McCaskill).
- d. Ellen Trout Zoo (Gordon Henley reporting)
  - i. CAG "croc school" grant, \$3500 annually - sponsors a Latin American crocodylian biologist to attend the AZA Crocodylian Biology and Professional Management training course through a donation to the Zoo Conservation Outreach Group (COG) each year.
- e. Los Angeles Zoo (Ian Recchio reporting)
  - i. *Gavialis gangeticus*, \$18,000 - for the past three fiscal years (2015-2018) contributions to Dr. Jeff Lang's work with Gharial in the Chambal.
  - ii. Los Angeles Zoo opened a new Gharial exhibit in May 2017 with four young Gharial imported the previous Fall to the Bronx Zoo.
- f. Oklahoma Zoo (Barry Downer reporting)
  - i. *Alligator sinensis* and *Crocodylus intermedius* \$1250 - 2016 CrocFest.
  - ii. *Crocodylus rhombifer* \$500 - 2017 CrocFest.
  - iii. *Crocodylus siamensis* \$5000 - 2016 CARE Grant to Dr. Jackson Frechette (FFI) and Lonnie McCaskill (WCS) for captive breeding and reintroduction in Cambodia. Sponsored by Danielle Leopold.
  - iv. *Crocodylus mindorensis* \$5000 - 2017 CARE Grant to Joseph Brown for study of the conservation and ecology of Philippine crocodiles. Sponsored by Barry Downer.

- v. *Mecistops cataphractus* and *Osteolaemus sp. nov. cf. tetraspis*, \$4000 - 2017 CARE Grant to Dr. Matt Shirley for Project *Mecistops*: Conservation and Management of Critically Endangered Crocodiles and Other Flagship Species in West Africa. Sponsored by Danielle Leopold.

g. Maryland Zoo

- i. Bruce Shwedick's Crocodilian Conservation Center of Florida \$500 - for purchase of construction tools.

h. Pittsburgh Zoo (Henry Kacprzyk and Dr. Joseph Gaspard reporting)

- i. *Crocodylus mindorensis* - support through CrocFest and directly contributions to Mabuwaya Foundation.
- ii. *Gavialis gangeticus* - multiyear support to Subir Chowfin and the Gadoli and Manda Khal Wildlife Conservation Trust for conservation of Gharial.

i. San Antonio Zoo (Craig Pelke reporting)

- i. *Gavialis gangeticus* \$5000 - 2014-2016 to Gharial Conservation Alliance to support Dr. Jeff Lang's study of Gharial ecology. Expects to repeat \$1000 contribution in 2018.
- ii. *Tomistoma schlegelii* \$3000 - 2015-2017 donations to the CAG for Tomistoma field conservation. Expects to repeat \$1000 contribution in 2018.

j. Virginia Aquarium (Chip Harshaw and Mark Swingle reporting)

- i. *Tomistoma schlegelii* \$6000 - IUCN CSG Tomistoma Task Force.
- ii. *Tomistoma schlegelii* \$2000 - direct support of Agata Staniewicz research in Borneo - key financial supported of the CSG's Tomistoma Task Force, supported fieldwork in the Mesangat and in Sarawak regions of Borneo.
- iii. *Tomistoma schlegelii* (Oct. 2015) - imported two Tomistoma from Borneo to add to the CAG's SSP breeding program in North American collections.
- iv. CrocFest (*Crocodylus rhombifer*, *C. mindorensis*, *C. intermedius*, *Mecistops cataphractus* and *Alligator sinensis*) \$1250 - regular substantial contributor to fundraising efforts for crocodilian conservation. In December 2015, the Virginia Aquarium (specifically, Mark Swingle and Chip Harshaw) was the recipient of the inaugural Ralf Sommerlad Crocodile Conservation Award at Winter CrocFest.
- v. Commitment to future support of crocodile conservation projects - Director Mark Swingle included in the report a commitment that the Aquarium will continue to support crocodile conservation efforts through direct funding (as available) and active participation in conservation groups such as the IUCN CSG and the Association of Zoos & Aquariums Crocodile Advisory Group. These funds and support for organizations like the TTF are part of the Aquarium's ongoing commitment to support field research and conservation efforts both regional and world wide.

k. AZA Crocodilian Advisory Group (CAG)

- i. *Crocodilian Biology and Professional Management (CBPM) Training course* - The CAG offered CBPM this spring for the 18th straight year to 24 students, bringing the total number of alumni to about 360. As always, the student body included several international students.
- ii. The CAG awarded Dr. Natalia Rossi (Wildlife Conservation Society) \$1950 to bring local Cuban crocodile biologists and farmers to the "National workshop for research and management of crocodiles of Cuba" held in Playa Giron, Cuba last Summer (May 2017).
- iii. The CAG awarded Flora and Fauna Cambodia (and Lonnie McCaskill) \$8850 for captive breeding and reintroduction program in Cambodia.
- iv. The CAG awarded CSG \$3500 to send one member of CSG Future Leaders Working Group to the 17<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to CITES (Sep.-Oct. 2016).

3. **CrocFest** - Since 2010, CrocFest has raised \$315,000 for nearly a dozen projects, ALL managed by AZA members or CSG members (or both)! Support has come from industry, zoos, academia and the private sector.

- a. *Crocodylus rhombifer* - \$35,000+ - Christmas CrocFest 2017
- b. *Crocodylus rhombifer* - \$46,000 - Summer CrocFest 2017
- c. *Crocodylus intermedius* - \$33,000 - Christmas CrocFest 2016
- d. *Alligator sinensis* - \$22,000 - Summer CrocFest 2016
- e. *Mecistops cataphractus* - \$32,000 - Christmas CrocFest 2015
- f. *Gavialis gangeticus* - \$23,000 - Summer CrocFest 2015

#### 4. Activities in Australasian Zoos

a. Zoos Victoria (Chris Banks reporting)

- i. *Crocodylus mindorensis*, \$AUD50,000 annually - continued partnership with the Mabuwaya Foundation in north-east Philippines:
  - 1. \$AUD50,000 annual partnership contribution, primarily allocated to crocodile and biodiversity surveys, Mabuwaya staff support and Isabela State University (ISU) student projects.

2. Additional funding provided to enable construction of the Philippine Conservation Centre at the San Mariano campus of ISU. All approvals are in place and construction anticipated to commence in February/March 2018.
  3. Site visit to Mabuwaya Foundation by Chair of Zoos Victoria's Board and Manager of Conservation Partnerships; included release of three head-started crocodiles.
- ii. Facilitating agreements to enable international zoo support. Communication with the Philippines Department of Environment & Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau to facilitate renewal of the Memorandum of Agreement for coordinated management of Philippine Crocodiles in European zoos.
- b. Ocean Park Conservation Foundation (Paolo Martelli reporting)
    - i. *Alligator sinensis* (\$45,500) - restoring a Wild Population of Chinese Alligators at Wuchang Lake, Anhui Province, China.
    - ii. *Gavialis gangeticus* (\$12,700) - Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Nesting and Reproduction of Gharials in Chitwan National Park, Nepal.
    - iii. *Gavialis gangeticus* - release of 24 Gharial into the Rapti River in Kasara.
  - c. Romulus Whitaker, founder of the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust/Centre for Herpetology, was conferred the prestigious and highly deserved Padma Shri for his work in wildlife conservation (January 2018). This is one of India's highest civilian honors.

## 5. Activities in European Zoos

- a. New crocodylian studbook programs (EEPs) approved by EAZA (Fabian Schmidt reporting)
  - i. The Gharial studbook will be kept by Ivan Rehak (Prague Zoo).
  - ii. The African slender-snouted crocodile studbook will be kept by Francois Huyghe (Biotropica in Val du Reuil, France).
- b. Crocodyles of the World (Colin Stevenson reporting)
  - i. Successfully hatched *Tomistoma schlegelii* in July 2017.
- c. The 2<sup>nd</sup> European Croc Networking Meeting, Krokodile Zoo (Eskilstrup, Denmark), on 6-8 October 2017. The meeting included 60 participants.
- d. Fabian Schmidt's European report includes details on additional support for *in-situ* croc conservation projects by European zoos.

## 6. Activities in Latin American zoos

- a. The Crocodile Specialist Group of Venezuela (GECV) hosted its 6th course in Ecology and Conservation of the Crocodylia of Venezuela, 2-4 March 2016. Funding was provided, in part, by the Krokodile Zoo (Denmark), and the Dallas World Aquarium (USA).

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