



# What is WAZA?

WAZA is the acronym of the **World Association of Zoos and Aquariums**, which unites, at a global level, zoological gardens, aquaria, national and regional associations, like-minded organisations and individuals willing to abide by its Bylaws and all other rules and regulations set by the Association, including its Code of Ethics.

The World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) was founded in 1946 as the International Union of Directors of Zoological Gardens (IUDZG).



The **objectives** of the Association are:

- to promote cooperation between zoological gardens and aquaria with regard to the conservation, management and breeding of animals in human care;
- to promote and coordinate cooperation between national and regional associations and their constituents;
- to assist in representing zoological gardens and aquaria in other international organisations or assemblies;
- to promote environmental education, wildlife conservation and environmental research.

WAZA's **membership** currently consists of 225 zoological parks and aquaria, 12 affiliate organisations, which support the vision, mission and interests of the association, and 23 regional or national associations with another 1000 plus member institutions.

The about 1250 zoos and aquaria organised in the WAZA network receive annually **at least 600 million visitors**, more than any other group of public, conservation-oriented institutions.

It was only in 2001 that a full-time **Executive Director** was appointed and **permanent headquarters** were established at Berne, Switzerland. The Executive Office's staff consists of four persons sharing 2.9 full-time equivalents. The Executive Office provides administrative services also to the International Zoo Educators Association and the European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarians, which both are Affiliate Members of WAZA, and to the Swiss Association of Scientific Zoos.

While WAZA **represents** the zoo and aquarium world in global fora such as CMS, CITES, RAMSAR, or CBD, the association does not see itself as a lobbying organisation but as an expert body, philosophically close to IUCN, of which it is a member since 1950. WAZA is active in the IUCN context, the Executive Director is member of four SSC-Specialist Groups, the Executive Office regularly hosts the Swiss National Committee, and the Organisation provides significant financial support to the Chair of the Species Survival Commission, the CBSG and other Specialist Groups.

