AZA Species Survival Plan® Program Handbook

Created by the AZA Management Committee in association with the AZA Conservation Program.
Species Survival Plan® Program Handbook
Published by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums

Formal Citation: Association of Zoos and Aquariums (2020). Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program Handbook. Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Silver Spring, MD.

Original Completion Date:
March 2011

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Species Survival Plan® Program Handbook
Chapter 1. Introduction

Mission Statement
The mission of an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) cooperatively managed Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program is to oversee the population management of select species within AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, Sustainability Partners, and Certified Related Facilities (CRFs) and to enhance conservation of this species in the wild. Each SSP Program coordinates the individual activities of participating member facilities through a variety of species research, husbandry, management, and educational initiatives. Each SSP works under the supervision of a Taxon Advisory Group (TAG), which may manage multiple AZA Animal Programs within its purview. SSP Programs may work with their TAG to coordinate with other regional and international species conservation programs to lead, develop, oversee, promote, evaluate, and support the cooperative animal management, and scientific initiatives of the SSP Program.

Description
SSP Programs are led by expert advisors who cooperatively work together to maximize genetic diversity, appropriately manage the demographic distribution and long-term sustainability of TAG recommended Animal Programs within AZA member facilities. Each SSP Program manages the breeding of a select species or sub-species through a Breeding and Transfer Plan (previously referred to as a Master Plan). Breeding and Transfer Plans summarize the current demographic and genetic status of the population, describe the Animal Program’s management designation, and recommend breeding pairs and transfers. Breeding and Transfer Plans are designed to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse and demographically stable population for the long-term future.

The AZA and its member facilities recognize that cooperative management is critical to the long-term survival of professionally managed Animal Programs and are fully committed to the goals and cooperative spirit of the SSP Program partnerships. Therefore, all AZA member facilities are required to fully participate in Green SSP Programs and their associated processes (see the AZA Policy for Full Participation in the SSP Program, Appendix A, and the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy, Appendix B). Full participation in Yellow and Red SSP Programs is voluntary; however, cooperation among AZA facilities is strongly encouraged.

The AZA Animal Programs, along with the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee), must assure 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 Acquisition and Disposition (A&D) Policy), the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, and the Sustainability Partner policies. All Board approved policies are found on the AZA website (https://www.aza.org/board-approved-policies-and-position-statements).

AZA Animal Programs
All AZA Animal Programs that have a published AZA Studbook, at least three defined goals, a minimum population size of 20 individuals, and are managed among three or more AZA member facilities are designated, in their TAG’s Regional Collection Plan (RCP), and on the AZA website, as an SSP Program.

Animal Programs that have a published AZA Studbook, at least 3 defined goals and are designated as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered (IUCN or other government agency) are not required to meet the minimum population size or number of participating facilities criteria in order to be designated by the TAG as an SSP Program. Whether the SSP Program is designated as Green, Yellow, or Red is dependent on the Animal Program’s Sustainability Criteria (e.g., current population size, number of participating facilities, and projected gene diversity). The TAG may designate Animal Programs that do not qualify to be SSP Programs as Candidate Programs as long as the TAG has the goal of growing the Candidate Program to SSP status.
SSP Programs

Animal Programs designated as Green SSP Programs manage populations that are the most sustainable over time. Green SSP Program designations are made if Animal Programs:

- have a published AZA Regional Studbook,
- have at least 3 defined goals,
- are managed among at least three AZA member facilities,
- have a population that is able to retain >90.0% GD for 100+ years or 10+ generations, and
- have a population that is presently sustainable demographically with a sufficiently large population size and a positive growth rate to reach 100 years or 10 generations.

Animal Programs designated as Yellow SSP Programs manage populations that are potentially sustainable but require additional attention and effort to increase their sustainability. Factors such as reduced husbandry and breeding expertise/predictability, limited number of individuals, space, or founders, and/or poor demographics may prevent the Animal Program from achieving the Green SSP Program designation. Yellow SSP Program designations are made if Animal Programs:

- have a published AZA Regional Studbook,
- have at least 3 defined goals,
- have a population size equal to or greater than 50 individuals,
- are managed among at least three AZA member facilities, and
- have a population that is not able to retain at least 90.0% GD over for 100+ years or 10+ generations, or have a population that has never been formally planned, or was planned more than 5 years ago, so that the population’s projected gene diversity cannot be properly assessed.

Animal Programs designated as Red SSP Programs manage populations that are currently unsustainable and in critical need of start-up efforts (e.g., importations) to help them increase their sustainability. This designation may change to a Yellow or Green SSP Program as sustainability increases. Red SSP designations are made if Animal Programs:

- have a published AZA Regional Studbook,
- have at least 3 defined goals,
- have a population size between 20 and 49 individuals, and
- are managed among at least three AZA member facilities.

Animal Programs that manage species designated as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered (IUCN) do not need to meet minimum population size and number of participating facility criteria to be designated as an SSP Program. These SSP Programs only need to have a published AZA Regional Studbook and three defined goals.

More information on the designation and management of SSP Programs is in Chapter 3: SSP Program Management.
Chapter 2. Organization

Animal Program Overview

AZA Board of Directors

AZA

AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences

Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee)

Taxon Advisory Group (TAG)

TAG Officers
- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer (if appropriate)

TAG Steering Committee

Liaisons / Representatives
- APM Committee Liaison
- Institutional Representatives

Advisors
- Conservation Advisors
- Education Advisors
- Population Advisors
- Research Advisors
- Scientific Advisors
- Technical Advisors

Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs
- SSP Coordinator
- SSP Vice–Coordinator (Recommended)
- SSP Management Group (If desired)

Studbooks
- Studbook Keepers

Candidate Programs
- Candidate Program Leader
SSP Program Structure

All SSP Programs are composed of an **SSP Coordinator**, Vice Coordinator (recommended), a **Management Group** (if preferred), and Advisors (if preferred) to assure that a significant amount of experience and diversity are represented. Required **Officer** positions include the SSP Coordinator and an AZA Regional **Studbook Keeper**. Ideally the SSP Coordinator or SSP Vice Coordinator is also the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper; however this is not a requirement. In some cases the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper may also act as the International Studbook Keeper. The SSP Program may also include a Secretary and, if any financial components are incorporated into the SSP Program, a Treasurer. The SSP Coordinator or Vice Coordinator may fulfill the role of Secretary or Treasurer, if necessary. It is not permissible for an SSP Program to have more than one Coordinator (Co-Coordinators) or Vice Coordinator (Co-Vice Coordinators). An SSP Coordinator is not required to be the **Institutional Representative (IR)** for their facility.

An SSP Program should include a Management Group if the SSP Program would benefit from the additional structure and administrative support. The Management Group must be composed of, and elected from, the SSP Program’s Institutional Representatives (IRs). In addition, each SSP Program may be complimented by Advisors, who are not required to be affiliated with an AZA facility but are able to serve as experts in various fields such as nutrition, behavior, education, and field conservation, and may be members of an associated AZA **Scientific Advisory Group (SAG)**. SSP Programs are encouraged to be creative in composing their Management Groups depending on the specific needs of their species.

**Officer Positions**

**SSP Coordinator**

**Position Overview**

The SSP Coordinator is elected by their TAG’s **Steering Committee** (if the TAG has a current, approved RCP), or by the APM Committee (if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP). An SSP Coordinator performs various duties to lead and support the AZA SSP Program. The SSP Coordinator works with IRs, the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, the TAG, the APM Committee, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, as well any associated governmental agencies, to develop, oversee, promote, and support the cooperative animal management, research, husbandry, and educational 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.

Additional responsibilities include leadership and organization of the SSP Program in building and appropriately managing a sustainable population, and communication of recommendations and guidelines to the appropriate stakeholders. 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.

**Eligibility Requirements**

The SSP Coordinator must:

- As of January 1, 2011, be a paid employee at an AZA member facility (AZA-accredited facility, Certified Related Facility, Society Partner, and Conservation Partner.) SSP Coordinators appointed prior to this date who were not employed at an AZA member facility are granted a personal variance as long as their existing circumstance remains in effect. When such individuals change circumstances they must resign as SSP Coordinator or gain employment at an AZA member facility within 6 months.
  - The term “paid” refers to hourly or salaried. The intent of this requirement is to assure that each Program Leader is fully integrated with his/her facility, serves a vital and consistent role within the facility that is outside of their role as a Program Leader, and has the facility’s full support to serve as a Program Leader. Payment of a minimal amount to a Program Leader who is no longer integrated with their facility outside of their role as Program Leader does not fulfill this eligibility requirement.
- Have an individual AZA membership.
- Be well versed in the biology and behavior of the species covered by the SSP Program.
- Indicate any prior population management experience (i.e., completing AZA’s Population Management 1 and/or 2 professional development courses, participation in a formal population planning meeting, prior Program Leader experience), as this is preferred.
- Uphold SSP business confidentiality.
- Be proficient in utilizing AZA web resources and the internet, and have email access.
- Have strong skills in organization, communication, facilitation, conflict resolution, and in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals.
- Provide a Statement of Commitment included in the application (Appendix C).

**Essential Position Functions**

**Population Planning**

- **If the SSP Coordinator is the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper (or International Studbook Keeper in cases where a separate AZA Regional Studbook does not exist), s/he must:**
  - Publish the AZA Regional component of the Studbook within 1 year of approval as SSP Coordinator/Studbook Keeper.
  - Coordinate development and publication of an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan with the Population Management Center (PMC), a PMC Adjunct, or an approved Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG) Advisor.
  - If an SSP Coordinator is elected during the 3 year period of a current Breeding and Transfer Plan, the next Breeding and Transfer Plan will be required until its scheduled due date, or as soon as possible after completing a planning session with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or SPMAG Advisor.
  - If an SSP Coordinator is elected past the 3 year period of the previous Breeding and Transfer Plan, a planning meeting date must be scheduled within 1 year of becoming SSP Coordinator. Publication of the Breeding and Transfer Plan will be due within 18 months of becoming SSP Coordinator.
  - Publish a complete Breeding and Transfer Plan with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an Approved SPMAG member at least every 3 years after initial Breeding and Transfer Plan publication.

- **If the SSP Coordinator is not the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, s/he must:**
  - If the AZA Regional Studbook is current, work with the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper and the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor to publish an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan as soon as possible after completing a planning session with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or SPMAG Advisor.
  - If the AZA Regional Studbook is not current, work with the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper to submit an up-to-date AZA Regional Studbook to the PMC within 1 year of approval as SSP Coordinator.
    - If it is a new AZA Regional Studbook and the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper does not meet the deadline within the 1 year period, then the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper can request an extension from the TAG, or if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, from the APM Committee Vice Chair of SSPs & Studbooks.
  - Coordinate development and publication of an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor as soon as possible after completing a planning session with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or SPMAG Advisor after the publication of an initial AZA Regional Studbook.
  - If an SSP Coordinator is elected during the 3 year period of a current Breeding and Transfer Plan, the next Breeding and Transfer Plan will not be required until its scheduled due date, or as soon as possible after completing a planning session with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or SPMAG Advisor.
  - If an SSP Coordinator is elected past the 3 year period of the previous Breeding and Transfer Plan, a planning meeting date must be scheduled within 1 year of becoming SSP Coordinator.
SSP Coordinator. Publication of the Breeding and Transfer Plan will be due within 18 months of becoming SSP Coordinator.

- 
  - Publish a complete Breeding and Transfer Plan with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an Approved SPMAG member at least every 3 years after initial Breeding and Transfer Plan publication.

- Communicate and collaborate with species managers from other zoological regions on this SSP Program as needed for population sustainability.

- Assure that the roles and goals of SSP Programs that are a part of a GSMP, or other formal international program, are well defined, and that participating facilities are aware of these roles.

- If the SSP Program is part of a GSMP or other formal inter-regional program, the SSP Program must coordinate with the TAG to determine whether the GSMP breeding and transfer information is sufficient for population management use among AZA facilities and therefore the publication of a separate SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan is not necessary.
  - If the GSMP breeding and transfer information is published in place of an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan it must be published at least every 3 years, unless it is approved for a different time frame due to the species’ natural history and/or WAZA accountability.
  - If the GSMP breeding and transfer information is published independently from the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan, then the BTP must be published at least every 3 years and the GSMP will be required upon publishing at WAZA’s accountability.

- Communicate any SSP Program data updates to the TAG Chair for inclusion in the TAG’s Animal Program Summary Table (See TAG Handbook).

- Contribute to the SSP Sustainability Report and assure that all information in the report is current and complete.

- Work with the TAG Chair to assure that all goals in the SSP Sustainability Report are aligned with the TAG’s RCP and TAG Annual Report.

- Copy the TAG Chair on all proposed changes to the SSP Sustainability Report.

- Communicate any SSP Program changes to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Program Oversight

- Consult with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor for genetic or demographic management questions, and to produce a Breeding and Transfer Plan (see Appendix F).

- Review the SSP’s IR list on a regular basis. Contact ILs for those facilities that do not have a designated IR or when there is a discrepancy between the SSP’s IR designation list and the IR designation list on the AZA website. IR lists can be downloaded on the SSP’s Program page.
  - Communicate to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department any IRs that should be assigned to SSP Programs for non-AZA facilities.

- Assure that all SSP Program participants have an opportunity to communicate their wants and needs in the planning process.

- Assess and address the wants and needs of AZA member facilities.

- Assure that all Sustainability Partners in all SSP Programs have been reviewed and approved by the TAG Chair and the APM Committee (Appendix G).

- Work with animal owners to assure that all SSP Program animals are relocated to an AZA member facility, or designated as nonessential to the population’s demographic and/or genetic goals, within 2 years if a participating facility loses AZA accreditation and is not eligible to apply to be a Sustainability Partner, or chooses not to apply to be a Sustainability Partner.

- For the following qualifying event, the SSP Coordinator extends an invitation to a potential Sustainability Partner if the SSP wishes to include the facility in the Program and the facility is likely to pass the specific criteria in the Sustainability Partner application:
A facility participating in an SSP was formerly AZA-accredited, but is no longer accredited.

The SSP Coordinator should consult Appendix G: Sustainability Partner Policy & Application. The deadline to address Sustainability Partners will be 2 years from the change in facility accreditation OR approximately six months prior to the next SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan publication, whichever comes first. If the non-AZA facility is not approved as a Sustainability Partner during that time, the facility will be excluded from the SSP.

- Respond to surveys and requests for information from the AZA Reproductive Management Center (RMC), as well as facilitate communication between the RMC and IRs when needed.
- Document issues related to IR or institutional accountability with respect to commenting on Draft and Final Breeding and Transfer Plans, and completing wants and needs surveys. A chart noting the institutional accountability should be included in the Breeding and Transfer Plan. In addition, the SSP Coordinator should make the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and the APM Committee Chair aware of repeated events of poor IR or institutional accountability.
- Maintain detailed records, including institutional name, contact information, and Species360 mnemonics for each non-AZA member participating in SSP Programs.
- Immediately communicate any violations in AZA's SSP Sustainability Partner Policy to the TAG Chair, the APM Committee Vice Chair of Partnerships, the APM Committee Vice Chair of SSPs & Studbooks, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
- Attempt to reconcile any disagreements surrounding SSP recommendations through effective communication. Program Leaders should utilize their TAG Chairs, other Program Leaders, and the APM Committee to assist if needed. For Green SSP Programs, if disagreements cannot be reconciled, the SSP Coordinator must document the issue, communicate with the TAG Chair, and follow the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy (Appendix B).
- Apply for an AZA SSP Sustainability Award if there has been a significant increase in the SSP population's sustainability.

**Administration**

- Develop an appropriate Management Group if necessary, and oversee the fulfillment of Management Group responsibilities.
  - If the SSP Program no longer requires an existing Management Group, the SSP Coordinator must explain the reasoning with the TAG Chair, and the TAG Steering Committee must approve the removal of the Management Group in its entirety.
- Assure that all Officers and Management Group members update their personal information to the TAG Chair and on the AZA website.
- Send copies of all significant SSP Program documents to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and TAG Chair.
- Respond to inquiries from the AZA office in a timely manner.
- Maintain regular contact with and respond in a timely fashion to inquiries/questions/concerns from SSP Program members.
- Assure that the SSP Program adheres to the AZA Communications Policy (Appendix H).
- Support the AZA Animal Welfare Committee with the development and updating of Animal Care Manuals (ACMs).
- Work closely with the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department if the SSP Program species is selected as an AZA SAFE species.
- Understand that Program Leaders are not responsible for providing engineering advice or letters of endorsement to facilities designing new exhibits for your Animal Program species. Rather, it is the responsibility of those who are developing new exhibit designs to approach a range of AZA member facilities to learn about various specifications or sources regarding the species to be exhibited.
The SSP Coordinator is encouraged to:

- Elect a Vice Coordinator. If no one within the Management Group or the SSP Program’s IRs applies for this position then the SSP Coordinator may appoint an interested party from their facility. As there may only be one vote per facility, the Vice Coordinator would not have an official vote in SSP Program elections and issues.
- Actively advocate and develop sustained interest on the part of member facilities to participate in the SSP Program and build a sustainable population.
- Arrange at least one working SSP Program meeting each year, either in person or electronically through tele- or web-conferencing. If this meeting is in person, the SSP Program is encouraged to hold the meeting in conjunction with the AZA Annual Conference and/or Mid-Year Meeting. Provide minutes from these meetings to the TAG.
- Provide routine SSP Program updates to IRs.
- Serve on or as an Advisor to the appropriate TAG and attend relevant meetings.
- Maintain contact with counterparts in other regional associations to facilitate inter-regional cooperation, if applicable.
- Engage with the appropriate International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Specialist Group and other relevant organizations, if applicable.
- Delegate responsibilities to the SSP Vice Coordinator and Management Group, as appropriate.
- Complete the AZA Professional Development Courses “Population Management 1 (PM1): Data Acquisition and Processing” and “Population Management 2 (PM2): Data Analysis and Breeding Recommendations.”
- Review relevant AZA Online Training Modules (https://www.aza.org/online-training-modules/).

Vice Coordinator Position Overview

The Vice Coordinator is a recommended role for SSP Programs and is elected from the Management Group or IRs through a publicly disclosed, democratic process. If no one within the Management Group or the SSP Program’s IRs applies for this position then the SSP Coordinator may appoint an interested party from their facility. The Vice Coordinator’s specific duties will be outlined by each SSP Program, but the primary role of the SSP Vice Coordinator is to assume leadership of the SSP Program should the SSP Coordinator be unavailable. It is presumed that if, for any reason, the SSP Coordinator must vacate the position, the SSP Vice Coordinator will assume all SSP Coordinator duties until a new SSP Coordinator is elected. Vice Coordinators are not automatically appointed as the SSP Coordinator upon an SSP Coordinator vacancy. Only one official Vice Coordinator may be appointed to the SSP; however, the SSP Program may design its operating structure as best it sees fit.

Eligibility Requirements

The SSP Vice Coordinator must:

- As of January 1, 2011, be a paid employee at an AZA member facility (AZA-accredited facility, Certified Related Facility, Society Partner, and Conservation Partner.) SSP Vice Coordinators appointed prior to this date who were not employed at an AZA member facility are granted a personal variance as long as their existing circumstance remains in effect. When such individuals change circumstances they must resign as Vice Coordinator or gain employment at an AZA member facility within 6 months.
- Have an individual AZA membership.
- Be well versed in the biology and behavior of the species covered by the SSP Program.
- Uphold SSP business confidentiality.
- Have proficiency in utilizing AZA web resources and the internet, and have email access.
- Have strong skills in organization, communication, facilitation, conflict resolution, and in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals.
• Provide a **Statement of Individual Commitment** (Appendix E).
• Provide a **Statement of Institutional Support** from their employer (Appendix E).

**Essential Position Functions**
• Assume all Coordinator duties if Coordinator is unavailable, or the Coordinator position is vacant.
• Attend all TAG and SSP Program meetings, whenever possible.
• Respond to inquiries from the IRs, TAG, and AZA office in a timely manner.
• Assist the SSP Coordinator in supporting the SSP Program and building a sustainable population.
• Assist the Coordinator with filling the Secretary and Treasurer (if applicable) positions if vacant.

**Secretary**

**Position Overview**
If the SSP Program determines that a Secretary is needed to record and manage the SSP Program’s details, the Secretary is elected from the IRs through a publicly disclosed, democratic process. The SSP Coordinator or Vice Coordinator may fulfill the role of Secretary, if necessary. In the event that a Secretary cannot be identified from within the Management Group membership, an IR may be appointed Secretary, but will not be allowed to vote as a Management Group member. The Secretary keeps a written record of the SSP Program’s elections, votes and formal meetings, and communicates these records, and any programmatic changes to the TAG, the APM Committee, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

**Eligibility Requirements**
The Secretary must:
• As of January 1, 2011, be a paid employee at an AZA member facility (AZA-accredited facility, Certified Related Facility, Society Partner, and Conservation Partner.) Secretaries appointed prior to this date who were not employed at an AZA member facility are granted a personal variance as long as their existing circumstance remains in effect. When such individuals change circumstances they must resign as Secretary or gain employment at an AZA member facility within 6 months.
• Have an individual AZA membership.
• Uphold SSP business confidentiality.
• Have proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet programs, utilizing AZA web resources, and have email access.
• Have strong skills in organization, communication, and in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals.
• Provide a statement of individual commitment (Appendix E).
• Provide a statement of institutional support from their employer (Appendix E).

**Essential Position Functions**
• Attend all TAG and SSP Program meetings, when possible.
• Respond to inquiries from the IRs, TAG, and AZA office in a timely manner.
• Post all issues held to a vote within the SSP Program on the SSP’s listserv, SSP Network Group, AZA website, etc.
• Distribute all Officer nominee applications to the Management Group, or if there is no Management Group, to the IRs.
• Oversee and mediate all components of issues and elections held to a vote within the SSP Program, including the issue and/or election, the voting record, and the outcome.
• Record and archive the results of all issues held to a vote within the SSP Program and submit them to the SSP Coordinator.
• Record, report, and archive IR responses to SSP related requests.
• Record, document, and **AZA brand** all SSP Program business (e.g., Action Plans, etc.) and submit these to the SSP Coordinator.
• Record, archive, AZA brand, and submit minutes from significant SSP Program meetings to the SSP Coordinator.
• Keep all application materials, statements of individual support, etc. on file.
• Communicate all programmatic changes (e.g., Program Leader, Officer, Management Committee member, Advisor, SSP Program designation, etc.) for the SSP Program to the TAG Chair and AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Treasurer
Position Overview
If any financial components are incorporated into the SSP Program, a Treasurer should be elected from the Management Group through a publicly disclosed, democratic process. The SSP Coordinator or Vice Coordinator may fulfill the role of Treasurer, if necessary. In the event that a Treasurer cannot be identified from within the Management Group membership, an IR may be elected Treasurer but will not be allowed to vote as a Management Group member. Treasurers collect, disperse, and archive written records of all financial transactions. Treasurers also coordinate and manage AZA designated fund accounts.

Eligibility Requirements
The Treasurer must:
• As of January 1, 2011, be a paid employee at an AZA member facility (AZA-accredited facility, Certified Related Facility, Society Partner, and Conservation Partner.) Treasurers appointed prior to this date who were not employed at an AZA member facility are granted a personal variance as long as their existing circumstance remains in effect. When such individuals change circumstances they must resign as Treasurer or gain employment at an AZA member facility within 6 months.
• Have an individual AZA membership.
• Uphold SSP business confidentiality.
• Have proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet programs, and have email access.
• Have strong skills in organization, communication, and in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals.
• Provide a Statement of Individual Commitment (Appendix E).
• Provide a Statement of Institutional Support from their employer (Appendix E).

Essential Position Functions
• Apply for and manage the SSP Program’s Dedicated Fund in compliance with “AZA’s Management Guidelines for AZA Conservation Program Dedicated Funds” (www.aza.org/dedicated-funds), if appropriate.
• Respond to inquiries from the TAG and AZA office in a timely manner.
• Attend all TAG and SSP Program meetings, when possible.

Management Group
Overview
At a minimum, an SSP Management Group is composed of the Coordinator, Vice Coordinator (recommended), and AZA Regional Studbook Keeper. The SSP Program may find it useful to create a larger Management Group to assist in sharing the SSP Program’s workload and to allow the AZA member facilities greater input into the SSP Program’s management. The Management Group serves as the voting body for SSP Program business and all members are integrally involved in the SSP Program appointments, publications, and meetings. Each SSP Program should determine the Management Group’s size (suggested ideal is 7 individuals with a maximum of 15 individuals), structure, and administrative responsibilities (e.g., election terms, term limits, duties, etc.). Management Group members must be elected from the SSP Program’s IRs.

Eligibility Requirements
Members of the Management Group must:
• be a paid employee of their facility
• be their facility’s IR
• Uphold TAG business confidentiality.
• Have proficiency in utilizing AZA web resources and the internet, and have email access.
• Have strong skills in organization, communication, facilitation, conflict resolution, and in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals.

**Essential Position Functions**

- Contribute to the development of the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan
- Review and approve the species’ GSMP, if applicable.
- Vote in all elections and issues brought to a vote.
- Attend TAG and SSP Program meetings, whenever possible.
- Inform the SSP Coordinator of any problems or issues within the Management Group.
- Contribute to and review the final draft of the ACM for the species represented by the SSP Program. This includes garnering information regarding ecology, nutrition, reproduction, behavior, etc., and conducting a complete literature review to incorporate the most recent scientific information, and working with the TAG, if applicable, to identify the required external reviewers.
- Provide expert review of *Conservation Grants Fund (CGF)* proposals directed to the SSP Program.
- Provide and update general SSP information for the public pages of the AZA website upon request.
- Respond to inquiries from the IRs, TAG, and AZA office in a timely manner.

**Members of the Management Group are encouraged to:**

- Solicit additional Management Group members to reach the Group’s ideal capacity (5-15 individuals).
- Solicit new Management Group members to replace retired Management Group members.
- Implement a Program Leader Training and Mentoring Plan to help new incoming SSP Officers, Studbook Keepers, and Management Group members become familiar and comfortable with their responsibilities, especially with respect to building sustainable populations.
- Identify, assist, and provide, if appropriate, financial support for *in situ* and *ex situ* research related to the SSP Program.

**Studbook Keeper**

**Position Overview**

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 the purpose of population management. This is an important responsibility because the global zoo and aquarium community depends on the maintenance of accurate Studbook records in order 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 Breeding and Transfer Plan. The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper works directly with the associated TAG and SSP Program, all participating AZA member facilities, the APM Committee, the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences 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.

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, and the TAG. If the Studbook is an *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.
Eligibility Requirements
The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper must:

- As of January 1, 2011, be a paid employee at an AZA member facility (AZA-accredited facility, Certified Related Facility, Society Partner, and Conservation Partner.) AZA Regional Studbook Keepers appointed prior to this date who were not employed at an AZA member facility are granted a personal variance as long as their existing circumstance remains in effect. When such individuals change circumstances they must resign as AZA Regional Studbook Keeper or gain employment at an AZA member facility within 6 months.
- Have an individual AZA membership.
- Uphold SSP business confidentiality.
- Be well versed in the biology and behavior of the Studbook species.
- Complete the AZA Professional Development Course “Population Management 1 (PM1): “Data Acquisition and Processing” within 2 years of becoming the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper. AZA Regional Studbook Keepers are also encouraged to take “Population Management 2 (PM2): Data Analysis and Breeding Recommendations” (https://www.aza.org/professional-development).
- Have proficiency in word processing and spreadsheet programs, population management software, utilizing AZA web resources, and have email access.
- Have strong skills in organization, communication, and in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with diverse groups of individuals.
- Provide a Statement of Individual Commitment (see AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook).
- Provide a Statement of Institutional Support from their employer (see AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook).

Essential Position Functions

- Create, update and submit a current AZA Regional Studbook report to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for publication on the AZA website within 12 months of completing PM1, in accordance with the requirements outlined in Appendix D of the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook.
- If the Studbook Keeper has already completed PM1 upon becoming an AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, create, update and submit a current AZA Regional Studbook report to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for publication on the AZA website within 12 months of becoming AZA Regional Studbook Keeper.
- Submit a complete, current AZA Regional Studbook database to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and the PMC at least once every 3 years in accordance with the current to date listed on the front cover of the previous Studbook publication; however, annual updates are preferred.
- Provide an up to date AZA Regional Studbook database (PopLink, SPARKS, or Excel) to the SSP Program’s Population Advisor (i.e., PMC, PMC Adjunct, or SPMAG Advisor) prior to each formal population planning meeting, or as needed for population management purposes.
- Send copies of all significant AZA Regional Studbook documents and correspondence to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, the relevant TAG Chair, and the SSP Coordinator (if the AZA Regional Studbook is for an SSP Program and if the SSP Coordinator is not the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper).
- If the Studbook is maintained in ZIMS for Studbooks, the Studbook cannot be exported. Instead of submitting a database, the PMC, PMC Adjunct, or SPMAG Advisor must have access to the database in ZIMS for Studbooks.
- Work closely with the appropriate TAG and SSP Coordinators.
- Attend relevant meetings, when possible.
- Update new contact information, including facility, phone, fax, and email via the AZA website by logging into their account on “My AZA.”
- Serve as a contact and AZA expert for the Studbook species. Understand that Studbook Keepers are not responsible for providing engineering advice or letters of endorsement to facilities designing new exhibits for the Animal Program species. Rather, it is the responsibility of those who are developing new exhibit designs to approach a range of AZA member facilities to learn about various specifications or sources regarding the species to be exhibited.
- Abide by the duties and responsibilities set forth by the AZA, the APM Committee, and the TAG.
- Maintain contact with counterparts in other regional associations to facilitate inter-regional cooperation, if applicable.
- If there is a separate International Studbook Keeper for the species or if data are combined in a single International Studbook, the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper is still responsible for current and accurate AZA regional data needed for AZA population analyses.
- Review relevant AZA Online Training Modules (https://www.aza.org/online-training-modules/).

Liaisons & Representatives

APM Committee TAG Liaison

Position Overview
The **APM Committee Liaison** is a member of the APM Committee who serves as the primary contact between the APM Committee and the Chair of the TAG(s) to which s/he has been assigned. The TAG should maintain consistent and open communication with their APM Committee Liaison. This will facilitate the Liaison in assisting the TAG during all RCP and accountability processes, and acting as a resource for TAG Program Leaders regarding APM Committee guidelines. The APM Committee Liaison will assist the TAG, and all SSP Programs within its purview, as needed.

Essential Position Functions
- Act as a Liaison between the TAG and APM Committee.
- Attend (or participate via conference call) as many of the TAG’s Animal Program meetings as possible.
- Maintain consistent communication with the TAG Chair.
- Uphold TAG business confidentiality.
- Provide general assistance to the TAG’s Animal Program oversight and operation, and assure the TAG maintains consistent communication with their Program Leaders, especially with respect to building sustainable populations.
- Serve as a conduit between the Animal Programs within the TAG’s purview and the APM Committee.
- Provide a verbal summary of the TAG and the Animal Programs within the TAG’s purview, including any accomplishments and/or concerns at both the Annual and Mid-Year APM Committee meetings.
- Assure that the TAG prioritizes, manages, and publishes the ACMs within their purview.
- Review the TAG’s Annual Report and communicate any issues identified to the APM Committee during the AZA Annual Conference.
- Respond to any inquiries from TAG Chairs during the development of the RCP, review the Draft RCP as outlined in the RCP Handbook, and provide feedback to the TAG Chairs.
- Review the TAG’s RCP, with the APM Committee Vice Chair of TAGs, and an additional appointed APM Committee member, and present this review to the APM Committee for final RCP approval consideration.
- Review SSP Sustainability Partner applications for completion.
Institutional Liaison

Position Overview

The default facility’s single Institutional Liaison (IL) is the institutional CEO/Director, however s/he may appoint an alternate IL for the facility if desired. The IL assures 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 Institutional Director. The IL designates IRs and keeps the facility’s IR list current. The IL serves as the default IR for any TAG or SSP Program which does not have an IR designated and is required to respond accordingly. The IL works with Program Leaders and IRs to assure that their facility fully participates in all associated TAG and SSP Programs, and if necessary, will meet in conflict resolution processes.

Eligibility Requirements

The Institutional Liaison must:

- Be a paid employee of the facility s/he represents.
- Be designated by the CEO/Director of his/her facility.
- Have access to their facility’s IR list through the AZA website.
- Be an individual member of AZA.
- Uphold TAG business confidentiality.
- Have the capability to monitor and communicate with all IRs at his/her facility. Depending on the number of Animal Programs in which the facility participates, this can be a potentially large group of individuals.
- 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 in Microsoft Word and PDF formats.
- Have the capability to disperse documents to the appropriate institutional personnel.

Essential Position Functions

- Designate 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.
- Review and update their IR list via the AZA website on a regular schedule to assure currentness.
- Review the AZA Online Training Modules for instructions on how to manage your IR list.
- Fulfill the IR responsibilities for any TAG or SSP Program that does not have a designated IR.
- Review the list of upcoming SSP planning meetings at the PMC that is posted in the IL Network Group’s announcement section each month. ILs should review this announcement as it serves as a reminder to update their IR list through the AZA website so that the Program Leaders obtain the most current IR list for their Animal Program.
- Assure that deadlines, including those for the completion of space surveys, are met by each IR.
- Assure that all Draft RCPs and Breeding and Transfer Plans are read and that all recommendations included within them are approved by each IR during the comment period.
- 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 studbook databases maintained by AZA Regional Studbook Keepers at their facility are archived, either at the facility or the AZA PMC.
- Assure that any RCP and Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendation disagreements are addressed by the IR with the SSP Coordinator during the comment period.
• Respond to initial inquiries of Program Leaders and IRs in a timely manner.
• Communicate with TAG and SSP Programs regarding problems that may arise with IR participation and work within the Reconciliation Process to resolve them if necessary.
• Follow up with Program Leaders who are approaching their accountability deadline for their Animal Program documents (i.e., 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.
• Follow up with AZA Regional Studbook Keepers who are approaching their Population Management 1 accountability deadlines; ILs are copied on reminder emails sent from the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
• If the institutional 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.

Institutional Representative

Position Overview

The IR is the primary contact between his/her facility and the Program Leader of the TAG and SSP Programs to which s/he has 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.

Each facility is represented by one IR for each TAG and SSP Program in which the facility participates. If the TAG Chair moves to a facility that already has an IR represented in that TAG, or if a new Chair is appointed from a facility that already has an IR represented in that TAG, the TAG Chair will automatically be appointed as that facility’s IR. The previous IR must relinquish his/her position because there can only be one IR, and one vote, per facility 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 facility’s IR by the 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 a facility; 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 IL unless the facility’s Director assumes this responsibility.

Eligibility Requirements

The Institutional Representative must:
• Be a paid employee of the facility s/he represents.
• Be designated by the IL of the facility.
• Uphold TAG business confidentiality.
• Serve as the facility’s IR for the TAG if s/he serves as TAG Chair.
• Be familiar with the species/taxa s/he represents. 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 facility’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 facility personnel.
Essential Position Functions

- Communicate with and disseminate information among Animal Programs, Program Leaders, the IL, the institutional Director, Ambassador Animal staff, 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.
- Assure that any RCP and Breeding and 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.

Advisors

Position Overview

Advisors, often members of corresponding SAGs, play a critical role in advising, designing, and executing management decisions within AZA Animal Programs. If a member of the Management Group has the appropriate expertise in an advisory area, then s/he may serve as that Advisor. SSP Programs are encouraged to fill as many Advisor positions as appropriate for their SSP Program in order to implement superlative management initiatives. Advisors do not need to be employed by an AZA member facility.

Advisors do not vote in elections or on TAG issues unless they also serve as an IR or a member of the TAG Steering Committee.

Suggested Advisors

- Animal Welfare
- Biomaterials Banking
- Behavior
- Contraception
- Education
- Endocrinology
- Epidemiology
- Field Conservation
- Genetics
- Government Affairs
- Green Practices
- Horticulture
- Life Support Systems
- Nutrition
- Pathology
- Public Relations
- Registrar
- Reintroduction
- Research
- Reproduction
- Water Quality
- Veterinary

Position Functions

- Advise the SSP in their efforts to identify, develop and implement Animal Program goals, as applicable.
- Work with the SSP Programs and provide input on the SSP Sustainability Reports.
- Provide content for AZA taxa-related stories of interest related to the Advisor’s area of expertise.
- Provide expert advice regarding any topics, research proposals and inquiries related to the Advisor’s area of expertise.
- Provide input on relevant Animal Care Manuals as requested.
- Uphold SSP Program business confidentiality.
• Assist in the development of education materials related to the Advisor's area of expertise.
• Assist with the development of research projects related to the Advisor's area of expertise.
• Assist the SSP Program and TAG in reviewing taxa-related CGF grant proposals as requested.

The AZA Population Management Center
The AZA PMC, hosted by the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, and San Diego Zoo Global in San Diego, California, was established in June, 2000 to provide assistance to zoo professionals across the country by conducting demographic and genetic analyses and preparing Breeding and Transfer Plan for SSP Programs. For more information on the PMC and its role in AZA Animal Programs see the SSP and AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbooks.

PMC Functions
PMC Population Biologists provide many services for AZA Animal Programs including:
• Producing Breeding and Transfer Plans (BTPs) with SSP Programs
• Assisting AZA Regional Studbook Keepers with AZA Regional Studbook publication
• Researching unknown or partially-known pedigrees
• Creating analytical AZA Regional Studbooks
• Conducting research and helping develop software to improve methods of population management
• Advising on data conventions and entering abnormal data, and
• Troubleshooting problems with population management software (e.g., SPARKS, PopLink, PMx, ZIMS for Studbooks, PMCTrack).

See Chapter 4 for more details on the PMC.

The AZA Reproductive Management Center
The mission of the AZA Reproductive Management Center (RMC) is to provide information and recommendations to the AZA community about contraceptive products that are safe, effective, and reversible. These recommendations are used by zoo professionals 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.

The RMC includes scientists, veterinarians, and animal managers with research and management expertise in wildlife contraception. The RMC houses a Contraception Database which contains over 30,000 records for animals treated with contraception. Using these data, the RMC is able to make taxon- and species-specific recommendations about products that are safe, effective, and reversible.

The RMC assures that contraceptives are safe and effective by:
• Maintaining databases that monitor all contraceptives used in all mammalian species.
• Analyzing data on the efficacy and safety of contraceptives.
• Conducting comprehensive pathologic examinations on reproductive tracts to detect if deleterious effects are associated with contraceptives through the Reproductive Health Surveillance Program.

RMC Functions
The RMC assists SSP Coordinators, mammal curators, wildlife managers, and veterinarians in choosing and administering appropriate contraceptives by:
• Annually producing and distributing up-to-date contraceptive recommendations for all mammals,
• Providing AZA SSP Coordinators and TAG Chairs with species-specific contraception guidelines for Animal Care Manuals,
• Providing a “Help Line” to assist animal managers with specific contraceptive questions or concerns,
• Maintaining a website with the latest wildlife contraceptive information,
• Attending SSP or TAG planning meetings if relevant to the population, and
• Providing written recommendations to be included in SSP Breeding and Transfer Plans as an Appendix, if needed.

The RMC relies on feedback from the zoo community to update and improve contraception recommendations. 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. This is 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 details be reported not only during treatment to obtain efficacy parameters, but also after treatment is stopped for breeding. The RMC requests reversal data in the annual Contraception Survey, but asks that program managers keep the RMC in mind when births occur in their respective populations throughout the year.
Chapter 3. SSP Program Management

Sustainability Criteria
SSP Programs operate within three distinct management levels: Green SSP Programs, Yellow SSP Programs, and Red SSP Programs. The TAG may also designate populations that do not currently meet the minimum criteria to be an SSP as Candidate Programs. An Animal Program's Sustainability Criteria (i.e., population size, number of participating AZA member facilities, and projected gene diversity) directly affect its management designation. These criteria and how to define them are explained below and summarized in Table 1.

If there is no published AZA Regional Studbook, an Animal Program will be designated as a Candidate Program until a current, up-to-date AZA Regional Studbook has been submitted to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for publication.

Population Size
- To determine the current population size, refer to the initial, published AZA Studbook, or the most recently published Population Viability Analysis (PVA), Breeding and Transfer Plan, and/or MateRx (whichever is most current).
- In order to be designated as an SSP Program, the population size (total N in the initial published Studbook, or the most recent Population Viability Analysis (PVA), Breeding and Transfer Plan, or MateRx) must be equal to or greater than 20 individuals. These SSP Programs are further designated as Green, Yellow, or Red SSP Programs through their population size and/or projected gene diversity.
- If the Animal Program manages a species which is classified as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered (e.g., IUCN or other government agency), the minimum population size criterion does apply and the Animal Program will qualify as an SSP Program upon publishing an AZA Regional Studbook.

Participating AZA Member Facilities
- To determine the official number of participating AZA member facilities in the managed population, refer to the initial AZA Studbook, or the most recently published Population Viability Analysis (PVA), Breeding and Transfer Plan, or MateRx (whichever is most current).
- In order to be designated as an SSP Program, the managed population must include at least three participating AZA member facilities. These SSP Programs are further designated as Green, Yellow, or Red SSP Programs through their population size and/or projected gene diversity.
- If the Animal Program is for a species which is classified as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered then the minimum number of participating AZA member facility criterion does not apply and the Animal Program will qualify as an SSP Program upon publishing an AZA Regional Studbook.

Projected Gene Diversity
- For most populations, a projected gene diversity will be used to differentiate between Green and Yellow SSP Program designations, and this projected gene diversity is defined as the projected % gene diversity (%GD) at 100 years or 10 generations, although colonial populations such as herds, flocks and schools may require alternate modeling programs (to be developed) to determine their projected gene diversity.
- An Animal Program's projected gene diversity is measured during population analysis with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor.
- The projected gene diversity (%GD) at 100 years or 10 generations may be determined by a PVA or Breeding and Transfer Plan from the last 5 years.
- MateRx reports cannot be used to change projected gene diversity.
- If the population has never undergone formal population planning by the PMC, a PMC Adjunct or approved SPMAG Advisor, or was planned more than 5 years ago, the population's projected gene diversity cannot be properly assessed.
If the Animal Program has at least 50 individuals in the population and three AZA facilities (determined as discussed above), it will be designated as a Yellow SSP Program until formal population planning occurs.

If the Animal Program has between 20 and 49 individuals in the population and three participating AZA facilities, it will be designated as a Red SSP Program until formal population planning occurs.

- The designation of each SSP Program may change in accordance with the population becoming more or less sustainable over the course of time. The TAG should assist in making these updated designations available to AZA members on the AZA website.

### Table 1. Applying Sustainability Criteria to Designate Animal Program Management Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Green SSP Program</th>
<th>Yellow SSP Program</th>
<th>Red SSP Program</th>
<th>Candidate Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population size</td>
<td>50 and above</td>
<td>50 and above</td>
<td>20-49</td>
<td>19 and fewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># AZA member facilities</td>
<td>3 and above</td>
<td>3 and above</td>
<td>3 and above</td>
<td>2 or fewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected gene diversity</td>
<td>90.0% or above</td>
<td>Less than 90.0%</td>
<td>Less than 90.0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SSP Management Designations**

SSP Programs fall into one of three designations: Green SSP Programs, Yellow SSP Programs, and Red SSP Programs. The differences in SSP Program management are described below, summarized in Table 2, and are outlined in a flow chart in Appendix M. The SSP Handbook provides complete SSP Program management details.

All AZA Animal Programs are held to the same established minimum criteria to be designated an SSP Program, unless the species is classified as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered (IUCN or other government agency).

**Green SSP Programs**

- Green SSP Programs are overseen by the TAG, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, and the APM Committee.
- Green SSP Programs are cooperatively managed Animal Programs for selected populations that achieve the highest level of formal management due to their future sustainability.
- Green SSP Programs are managed by an SSP Coordinator, a Vice Coordinator (recommended), and a Management Group (if desired).
- Green SSP Programs are those populations that retain a minimum of 90% gene diversity at 100 years or 10 generations, and include at least 50 individual animals held among at least three AZA member facilities.
- Green SSP Programs must work with their TAG to identify their role in zoos and aquariums, at least three goals, and essential actions to work towards each goal.
- Green SSP Programs must record their population in a current, published AZA Regional Studbook.
- Each Green SSP Program Breeding and Transfer Plan manages breeding in order to maintain a healthy and self-sustaining population that is both genetically diverse and demographically stable.
- The PMC, PMC Adjuncts, and approved SPMAG Advisors are available to officially advise Green SSP Programs in the preparation of breeding and transfer recommendations.
- Green SSP Program participants must abide by the AZA Full Participation Policy in SSPs (Appendix A) and, if needed, the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy (Appendix B).
- SSP Programs may partner only with Sustainability Partners that are approved by the APM Committee (See Appendix G for Sustainability Partner Policy and application).
Yellow SSP Programs

- Yellow SSP Programs are overseen by the TAG, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and the APM Committee.
- Yellow SSP Programs are cooperative population management Animal Programs for selected populations that receive formal management.
- Yellow SSP Programs are managed by an SSP Coordinator, a Vice Coordinator (recommended), and a Management Group (if desired).
- Yellow SSP Programs are those populations that retain less than 90% gene diversity at 100 years or ten generations, but include at least 50 individual animals (within AZA facilities and Sustainability Partner facilities) held among at least three AZA member facilities.
- Yellow SSP Programs must work with their TAG to identify their role in zoos and aquariums, at least three goals and essential actions to work towards each goal.
- Yellow SSPs must record their population in a current, published AZA Regional Studbook.
- Each Yellow SSP Program Breeding and Transfer Plan manages breeding in order to maintain as healthy and self-sustaining of a population as possible that is both genetically diverse and demographically stable.
- The PMC, PMC Adjuncts, and approved SPMAG Advisors are available to officially advise Yellow SSP Programs in the preparation of breeding and transfer recommendations.
- Although cooperation among AZA member facilities is strongly encouraged for the long-term benefit of the ex situ population, participation in Yellow SSP Programs is voluntary.
- SSP Programs may partner only with Sustainability Partners that are approved by the APM Committee (See Appendix G for Sustainability Partner Policy and application).
  - For all SSP Programs that have non-AZA partners, the facility will be approved as a Sustainability Partner or they will be excluded from the SSP within 2 years or prior to the next Breeding and Transfer Plan (whichever comes first).
  - Adherence to the AZA Code of Professional Ethics and the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management is still required.
- When a Yellow SSP Program can retain 90% gene diversity it will be designated as a Green SSP Program.
  - Should a Yellow SSP Program change to a Green SSP Program, the draft SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan will be evaluated by the PMC Director, the APM Committee Chair, the APM Committee Vice Chair for SSPs and Studbooks, the APM Committee TAG Liaison, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Senior VP. The evaluation will be based on criteria of Green SSP Programs, and the group will vote on the designation status. The SPMAG Chair will be consulted if additional assessment is needed.

Red SSP Programs

- Red SSP Programs are overseen by the TAG, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, and the APM Committee.
- Red SSP Programs are cooperative population management Animal Programs for selected populations that receive formal management.
- Red SSP Programs are managed by an SSP Coordinator, a Vice Coordinator (recommended), and a Management Group (if desired).
- Red SSP Programs are those populations that retain less than 90% gene diversity at 100 years or 10 generations, and include between 20 and 49 individual animals held among at least three AZA member facilities. Animal Programs managing species that are classified as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered do not need to meet these criteria (e.g., a
population of 19 individuals, managed at only two facilities, but classified as Critically Endangered, would qualify as a Red SSP despite failing to meet SSP criteria).

- Red SSP Programs must work with their TAG to identify their role in zoos and aquariums, at least three goals, and essential actions to work towards each goal.
- Red SSP Programs must record their population in a current, published AZA Studbook.
- Each Red SSP Program Breeding and Transfer Plan manages breeding in order to maintain as healthy and self-sustaining of a population as possible that is both genetically diverse and demographically stable.
- The PMC, PMC Adjuncts, and approved SPMAG Advisors are available to assist Red SSP Programs.
- Although cooperation among AZA member facilities is strongly encouraged, participation in Red SSP Programs is voluntary.
- SSP Programs may partner only with Sustainability Partners that are approved by the APM Committee (See Appendix G for Sustainability Partner Policy and application).
  - For all SSP Programs that have non-AZA partners, the facility will be approved as a Sustainability Partner or they will be excluded from the SSP within 2 years or prior to the next Breeding and Transfer Plan (whichever comes first).
  - Adherence to the AZA Code of Professional Ethics and the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management is still required.
- If a Red SSP Program population grows to 50 or more individual animals, then it will be designated as a Yellow SSP Program.
- If a Red SSP Program can retain 90% gene diversity it will be designated as a Green SSP Program.

### Candidate Programs

- Candidate Programs are overseen by the TAG, with no additional accountability requirements by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department or the APM Committee.
- Candidate Programs are managed by a Candidate Program Leader.
- Candidate Programs are Animal Programs that the TAG hopes to grow to an SSP Program, and they are not considered AZA cooperatively managed Animal Programs at this time.
- Candidate Programs are those populations that have 19 or fewer individual animals and/or are held only at one or two AZA member facilities.
- Candidate Programs may also be populations which do not currently have a published AZA Regional Studbook.
- Candidate Programs must work with their TAG to identify their role in zoos and aquariums, at least three goals, and essential actions to work towards each goal.
- Once a Candidate Program Leader publishes an AZA Regional Studbook demonstrating that the population meets minimum SSP criteria it will be designated as an SSP. Candidate Program Leaders must take PM1 in order to publish an AZA Regional Studbook.
  - If the Candidate Program Leader has not taken PM1 prior to submitting an initial AZA Regional Studbook, the Candidate Program Leader must identify to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department that they have a skilled mentor (one that has taken PM1) that guided them through the process, and present their Studbook for review by a PM1 instructor, a PMC staff member, a PMC Adjunct Population Biologist, or an AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences staff member.
- Candidate Programs may work with private participants (organizations that are not AZA member facilities) without completing the APM Committee Sustainability Partner approval process. Adherence to the AZA Code of Professional Ethics and the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management is still required.
- Candidate Programs should consider partners with the understanding that when they grow to an SSP Program, they must follow the Sustainability Partner Policy and application (see Appendix G).
Table 2. Animal Program Overview: Green SSP, Yellow SSP, Red SSP, and Candidate Program Management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Green SSP Program</th>
<th>Yellow SSP Program</th>
<th>Red SSP Program</th>
<th>Candidate Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AZA Policies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Code of Professional Ethics</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Full Participation in SSP Program Policy</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy</td>
<td>Required</td>
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<td>Not Required</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APM Committee Approval of Sustainability Partners</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sustainability Criteria</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum population size (N)*</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum number of participating AZA member facilities*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected gene diversity (%GD) at 100 years or 10 generations</td>
<td>90.0% or above</td>
<td>Less than 90.0%</td>
<td>Less than 90.0%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAG recommended Animal Program in RCP</td>
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<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Regional Studbook</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not Required^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal population planning by PMC, PMC Adjunct or SPMAG Advisor</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Group</td>
<td>If Needed</td>
<td>If Needed</td>
<td>If Needed</td>
<td>If Needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop three Program goals</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA and APM Committee oversight</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breeding and Transfer Plan published at least every 3 years</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Regional Studbook published at least every 3 years</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Not Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZA Regional Studbook Keeper</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Recommended^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>must take Population Management 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Leader must take</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Management 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If a managed species is listed by IUCN or ESA as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered, there will be no minimum number of participating facilities, nor minimum population size requirements, in order to qualify for management at the SSP level. In these cases, SSP status (Green, Yellow, Red) will be determined based upon population size and projected gene diversity at 100 years or 10 generations.

^For a Candidate Program to upgrade to management at the SSP level, an AZA Regional Studbook must be published. The Candidate Program Leader, therefore, must complete AZA’s Population Management I in order to publish an official AZA Regional Studbook.

**Animals Declared Out of the Managed Population**

Some animals in the managed SSP population, due to their age, reproductive status, or other demographic or genetic characteristics, may be deemed out of the managed population.

- The SSP Program must document all decisions to designate an individual animal as out of the managed SSP population. SSP Coordinators should communicate with facilities housing any animals that are designated to assure mutual understanding.
• In some cases animals may be sent out of the SSP population to another region in order to facilitate global population goals. These animals may not necessarily be out of the SSP, but individuals should be selected so that any negative impact on the SSP is minimized.
• Please refer to the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management before transferring any individuals that are designated as out of the SSP population to any non-AZA facilities.

Government Owned Species
The AZA Institutional Data Management Scientific Advisory Group (IDMAG) Government Ownership Working Group (IDMAG/GOWG) maintains a list of government owned species and develops record keeping protocols for many of these species. When managing government owned species, AZA Studbook Keepers and SSP Coordinators should be aware of record keeping protocols and loan agreements that may affect studbook record keeping or breeding and transfer recommendations in order to maintain data quality and assure legal compliance. It is suggested that documentation such as loan agreements or Memorandums of Understanding be obtained for all appropriate specimens. The GOWG is available to work with Animal Programs lacking record keeping protocols to develop them.

Any questions with regard to existing government-owned species, record keeping protocols, or general data management issues may be directed to the IDMAG/GOWG or IDMAG Chairs. Contact information and relevant documents are found on the AZA website (https://www.aza.org/institutional-data-management-scientific-advisory-group).

Assessment
SSP Programs should regularly assess the status and performance of its Officers, Management Group members, IRs, ILs, and other SSP Program participants within its purview.

Management Group Assessment
• SSP Coordinators should regularly communicate with their Officers, Management Group, Advisors, IRs, ILs, and the TAG regarding accountability deadlines, SSP Program management changes, policy guidelines, publications, population planning, etc. The Management Group may remove Management Group members if they do not adequately and/or appropriately perform their duties. The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, the APM Committee Vice Chair of TAGs, and the TAG Chair are available to provide assistance with SSP Program participant performance issues.

• TAG Chairs with current, approved RCPs have the authority to remove SSP Coordinators and AZA Regional Studbook Keepers who do not fulfill their Animal Program responsibilities. Any such action should be reported to the APM Committee Vice Chair of TAGs and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Institutional Assessment
• The SSP Program should assess the status and performance of the facilities participating in its SSP Program.

• The SSP Program should track IR and IL responses or lack of responses to all information requests, and include this information in an appendix in their Breeding and Transfer Plan

• The AZA Policy for Full Participation in the SSP Program is required of all AZA member facilities caring for species designated as Green SSP Programs (Appendix A). Full participation is strongly encouraged for all AZA member facilities caring for species designated as Yellow and Red SSP Programs.

• TAG Chairs are responsible for arbitrating any full participation issues brought to their attention by their Green SSP Programs in effort to reach a mutually agreeable resolution.

• The SSP Coordinator should discuss any potential issues with the TAG Chair, who will then discuss with the APM Committee Vice Chair of TAGs, their APM Committee Liaison, and/or a representative from the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

• If a resolution cannot be obtained through this method, either party or the APM Committee may initiate AZA’s Animal Management Reconciliation Process Policy (Appendix B).
Cooperating with Other Zoo and Aquarium Regional Associations

- It is important to cooperate with WAZA and other regional zoo and aquarium associations (i.e., the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), the Zoo and Aquarium Association (ZAA in Australasia), etc.) as Animal Programs strive toward sustainability.
- SSP Programs must work closely with their TAG as they pursue international relationships with these other regional zoo and aquarium associations.
- For some Animal Program populations, management at the regional level (solely within one regional association, e.g., AZA) may be sufficient to achieve the Animal Program’s goals.
- The desired population size for maintaining optimal %GD for other Animal Programs may be greater than the current carrying capacity (maximum available space) within one regional association and cooperation with multiple regional associations may be necessary.
- Program Leaders are encouraged to consistently communicate with their regional counterparts as needed, and assure that the TAG’s members, APM Committee Liaison, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department are kept informed about such discussions.
- The PMC is available to assist with questions relating to multi-regional population management (e.g., assessing genetic and demographic status regional populations, discussing potential value of global management, combining databases, selecting animals for transfer between regions, etc.).
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and the TAG’s APM Committee Liaison are available to assist Program Leaders in developing these relationships, if necessary.

Global Species Management Plans

The AZA and other WAZA member regional zoological associations have collectively identified addressing the sustainability of animal populations as a top priority. Thus, we seek to maximize the collective impact of our efforts in building the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations by working together in a manner that builds upon, respects, and optimizes existing regional processes and furthers science-based, inter-regional collaboration. For some Animal Programs forming an official WAZA Global Species Management Plan (GSMP) may be appropriate. The WAZA Committee for Population Management (CPM) is established to advance these relationships and collaborations in professionally managing species in zoos and aquariums globally. One way in which the CPM does this is through coordinating, administering, and overseeing GSMPs.

- When population goals cannot be met within a single regional association, global management may be an ideal method for increasing sustainability.
- Establishing 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. For certain populations, these additional resources may markedly increase their long-term management success and sustainability.
- Once approved by the CPM, a GSMP formalizes a series of clear goals and agreements to which the GSMP partners agree or aspire to achieve, with an underlying goal of increasing the long-term sustainability of zoo and aquarium populations.
- Cooperation in a GSMP may range from a series of aspirations to a formal Memorandum of Understanding on specific goals and commitments. The partners (e.g., the regional associations) determine the appropriate level (e.g., individual, regional) at which to manage the population, as well as define the scope and flexibility of the GSMP.

The WAZA regional associations continue to advance best practices aimed at increasing effective communications for building population sustainability. Over the past few years a small number of pilot GSMPs have served as guides for developing a common framework for defining the mechanisms and management of GSMPs. AZA has made a commitment to take a strong leadership role for pilot and future GSMPs, and will be deeply involved in the development of the GSMP Program and working integrally with all partners.
Establishing a GSMP

- Please review the WAZA GSMP Handbook, which may be obtained from the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
- An international studbook database is generally required for a GSMP. If an ISB for the species does not already exist, regional databases may be used to assist in completing the GSMP application but the PMC should be consulted to determine how to combine regional databases if global population management is the desired goal.
- Working with all partnering zoological regions, the zoological region that will be leading the GSMP will develop the GSMP application.
- Once the application is complete, it should be submitted to the regional association office (e.g., the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences department) for review.
- The regional association office will send the completed application to the proposed partner regional associations for review and approval.
- Once all proposed partner regional associations have endorsed the application, the leading regional association will submit the application to WAZA’s CPM for review and approval.

Sustainable Populations through Responsible Partnerships

AZA Animal Programs focus on select species through cooperative management of small populations at AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and Certified Related Facilities (CRFs). These facilities undergo a thorough accreditation review process that includes the submission of an extensive application as well as an intensive, on-site inspection by a team of experts to assure the highest standards of animal care and management are met. Additionally, the facilities have access to members-only resources through the AZA Population Management Center, AZA Reproductive Management Center and the AZA office.

AZA Animal Programs can benefit from responsible partnerships with individuals, facilities, or organizations outside of AZA in the form of expertise, space, and other various resources. With a goal of creating genetically and demographically sustainable populations of animals that experience excellent welfare, AZA Animal Programs may explore such partnerships when they:

- Benefit individual animal(s) and/or the population as a whole through the goals of an AZA Animal Program
- Support AZA’s mission of high quality animal care and welfare
- Recognize the contributions of like-minded entities in assuring a future for animals in expert care

See Appendix G for the Sustainability Partner Policy and application.

Sustainability Partners

The definition of a Sustainability Partner in an AZA Animal Program is an organization that regularly exchanges animals with AZA-accredited facilities and Certified Related Facilities, typically as part of the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan or other SSP Program management process.

- A Sustainability Partner’s species/animal(s) is regularly included in the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan.
- Recommendations are made for individuals of that species in the Sustainability Partner’s collection through the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan process. This would include documented interim SSP Program recommendations.

If an AZA Animal Program (e.g., TAG, SSP) determines that an animal population may benefit from collaboration with a Sustainability Partner that can provide high quality genetic, demographic, conservation, husbandry, population management, and/or animal welfare benefits to an SSP Program, they must consider the information provided below. Sustainability Partners in any AZA Animal Program must adhere to AZA’s Policy on Responsible Population Management, SSP Full Participation Policy, the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare regardless of Animal Program designation. SSP Programs may partner only with Sustainability Partners that are approved by the APMC Committee (See Appendix G for the
Sustainability Partner Policy and application). For SSP Programs that have non-AZA partners, the individual/organization must be approved as a Sustainability Partner or they will be excluded from the SSP population. All SSP Programs that include non-AZA partners in their SSP Program population must assess these partners and should aim to submit any Sustainability Partner applications to the APM Committee six months prior to their next SSP Breeding and Transfer Planning meeting.

As stated in the *Guidelines for Data Entry and Maintenance of North American Regional Studbooks*: “Any and all facilities that can be verified as holding or having held specimens should be included in the studbook. Inclusion of data from a facility should not be contingent on whether it is a member or affiliate of AZA; if a facility provides data to the studbook keeper, it should be included in the studbook, provided it can be verified.”

However, the inclusion of animals in a studbook does not indicate or imply that the facility is a Sustainability Partner in the Animal Program. Only AZA facilities and approved Sustainability Partners may be included in a Breeding and Transfer Plan. The AZA Population Management Center (PMC) may assist with evaluation of animals in the population regardless of their location, however discussion within the SSP and its associated TAG must occur to determine whether a facility/person needs to apply to be a Sustainability Partner, and thus continue participating in the SSP Program.

Sustainability Partners are not considered accredited or certified. Like AZA accreditations and certifications, approvals for a Sustainability Partner's continued participation in an SSP Program must be renewed every five years based on a review of the benefits to the Animal Program. Animal Program Leaders must evaluate existing partnerships (with the help of their associated TAG) when beginning a new SSP Program or taking over an established SSP Program, especially before the Breeding and Transfer Plan process. See Appendix N for the *Guidelines for Assessing Sustainability Partners in Species Survival Plan® Programs*.

**Application Review and Approval**

- The SSP Coordinator is responsible for compiling all Sustainability Partner application materials and sending the application as a complete package to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, with a copy to their TAG Chair.
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will work with the APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships to review all application materials for completeness.
- Should any items be missing from the application or should the letter of justification from the SSP need adjustments, the APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships will return the incomplete application to the SSP Coordinator and specify the missing required information.
- The SSP Coordinator must submit requested materials or communicate with the APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships within 2 weeks of receiving the returned application. If the APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships does not hear from the SSP Coordinator within 2 weeks, the Sustainability Partner application will be considered inactive until the SSP Coordinator resubmits it.
- The APM Committee will hold monthly conference calls to review any complete Sustainability Partner applications that were submitted in the previous month.
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will notify the SSP Coordinator, TAG Chair, and the applicant of the outcome as soon as possible.

**Approved Partnerships**

Once identified/approved, the Sustainability Partner must:

- Agree to adhere to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare.
- Appoint an Institutional Liaison (IL) and Institutional Representative (IR) to serve as the primary point of contact(s) for SSP communications. Contact the AZA Conservation, Management, and...
Welfare Sciences Department with the IL and IR names and contact info for the Sustainability Partner.

- Not display the AZA logo or SSP logo.
- Upon request, agree to allow the sponsoring AZA-accredited facility, staff, Board, APM Committee, TAG, and/or SSP representatives to visit the applicant and view their facility to assure adherence to AZA policies and animal care and welfare practices. Such visitors will provide feedback to the SSP, TAG, and the APM Committee.
- Submit a new, complete application for Sustainability Partner before the end of the five-year approval period in order to continue participation in the SSP Program.

Loss of Approval Status
A Sustainability Partner may have its approved status revoked by APM Committee if it fails to meet any of the Sustainability Partner responsibilities identified above and in the application.

If APM Committee deems it appropriate, the SSP Program may work with a Sustainability Partner that loses its approved status for up to two years to help manage the population, facilitate transfer of animals owned by AZA zoos and aquariums and, when possible, mentor re-approval of Sustainability Partner status. In such instances, the Sustainability Partner will not be an active participant in the SSP Program, however still may be considered during the planning processes. During this time, the SSP Program will not move SSP Program animals to the former Sustainability Partner facility.

For reinstatement as a Sustainability Partner, the potential Sustainability Partner’s benefit to the SSP population’s sustainability and adherence to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Animal Care and Welfare Standards must be reassessed.

Animal Program Roles, Goals, and Essential Actions

Animal Program Role
Although many species will qualify for more than one of the defined purposes below, the SSP Coordinator should work with the TAG to identify the primary role in zoos and aquariums for their managed population. The primary role for each SSP Program must be included in the Animal Program Roles, Goals, and Actions Table in the TAG’s RCP and Annual Report (See TAG Handbook for more information). SSP Program roles may be selected from the following list, or develop alternate descriptors.

- **Conservation Action** – the taxon is under immediate threat and action, or reintroduction is underway.
- **Assurance Population** – the taxon is threatened or declining in some fashion and the managed population is serving as a genetic and demographic reservoir for the future, if required.
- **Education/Exhibit Needs** – the taxon is used for educational purposes and inspires guests to care for wildlife.
- **Research** – the taxon is in need of greater understanding and the managed population serves as a research population or a population that is just being founded within zoos and aquariums.

Setting Goals for your SSP Program
The SSP Coordinator should work with the TAG to set at least three goals, with corresponding essential actions, for their SSP Program. Working closely with the TAG, the SSP should prioritize the top three goals and outline the essential actions to meet these goals. The top three goals and essential actions must be included in the Animal Program Roles, Goals, and Actions Table in the TAG’s RCP and Annual Report (See TAG Handbook for more information).

The first goal for each SSP Program should relate to the primary purpose of cooperatively managing the species within the AZA community. The second and third goals may be focused on items unique to the taxon and/or the managed population. Examples of additional goals might include, but are not
limited to, increasing an SSP Program’s current projected gene diversity to X% GD, increasing the population size to 50 individuals, or increasing the number of spaces for the population.

The essential actions for each goal must be specific actions or tasks that need to be achieved to accomplish the goals. Examples may include increasing the number of breeding and offspring spaces available by a certain number, increasing the number of breeding pairs, advancing artificial insemination techniques, obtaining new importation permits, compiling or researching effective husbandry protocols, or working with non-AZA partners to increase the number of founders in the population. Essential Actions should be articulated according to SMAART criteria as being: specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

A SMAART goal explains a behavior using the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>A SMAART goal identifies a specific action or event that will take place.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>The description of a SMAART goal will allow you to determine your progress towards completion, and let you know when you are finished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievable</td>
<td>A SMAART goal should be achievable given available resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed-upon</td>
<td>A SMAART goal should encourage collaboration and cooperative ownership of plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>A SMAART goal should require you to stretch some beyond your normal routine and regular abilities, but allow for likely success based on your skills and the time available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>A SMAART goal should state the specific time period in which it will be accomplished.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4. Breeding and Transfer Plans

Overview
The goal of a Breeding and Transfer Plan is to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse, and demographically stable \textit{ex situ} population of a particular species through cooperative management strategies among AZA member facilities. In order to assure the production of an effective Breeding and Transfer Plan, the SSP Coordinator must work with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor to summarize the current demographic and genetic status of the population, describe the SSP management designation, and recommend breeding pairs and transfers.

SSP Program Population Advisors
SSP Program advisors fall into three APM Committee approved categories:

- **PMC Advisors** are employed by and working at the AZA Population Management Center at Lincoln Park Zoo.
- **PMC Adjuncts** are trained by the PMC, and are employed by and working at an AZA member facility. An SSP Program is only approved or assigned to have their population planned by a PMC Adjunct if the SSP Coordinator or the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper is employed by the same AZA member facility that houses the PMC Adjunct.
- **PMC Regional Adjuncts** are trained by the PMC, and are employed by and working for a consortium of AZA members. An SSP Program is only approved or assigned to have their population planned by a PMC Adjunct if the SSP Coordinator or the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper is employed within the consortium of zoos and aquariums (e.g., the California Association of Zoos and Aquariums).
- **Approved SPMAG Advisors** are current member of the SPMAG who have historically planned particular populations. An SSP Program must receive APM Committee approval in order to have their population planned by a SPMAG Advisor.

Preparing for the PMC Planning Meeting

Scheduling the PMC Meeting
- All Green, Yellow, and Red SSPs will be assigned a planning date. Candidate species are not prioritized at this time but should contact the PMC if their status changes (e.g., if an initial AZA Regional Studbook is published, or if an updated published AZA Regional Studbook indicates that the population size or number of participating facilities have increased above minimum SSP criteria).
- The PMC may be able to provide informal assistance for Animal Programs in need of advice outside of scheduled formal planning dates. See “interim planning” below for more information.
- Animal Programs that have not scheduled planning meetings but need population management assistance should contact the PMC Planning Coordinator (PMC@lpzoo.org) to schedule a future planning date. Populations that have never been planned should contact the PMC as soon as possible.
- The SSP Coordinator must notify all people involved (i.e., SSP Vice Coordinator, AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, Management Group members, and IRs) of the planning date and their responsibilities prior to meeting with the PMC.
- As many IRs as possible should participate in the planning process to increase institutional support and the effectiveness of the Breeding and Transfer Plan. SSP Coordinators are encouraged to reach out to their IRs and invite them to the planning meetings.
- PMC planning meetings may be conducted electronically (conference calls, internet conferencing) or in person (typically at Lincoln Park Zoo, the AZA Annual Conference or the AZA Mid-Year Meeting). It is preferred that first-time planning meetings be held in person.

Consulting with the AZA Reproductive Management Center (RMC)
The AZA RMC, hosted by the Saint Louis Zoo, provides information on safety, efficacy and reversibility of contraceptive products to the AZA community to help zoo professionals make
informed decisions on how to 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.

- The RMC is an integral part of AZA Animal Program management practices and is fundamental to managed breeding and population sustainability for individuals that are, or have ever been, contracepted.
- To assist AZA’s Animal Programs the RMC maintains a database which monitors contraceptive records in one centralized location in order to facilitate meta-analyses and disseminate up-to-date recommendations.
- The SSP Coordinator should communicate with the RMC regarding the animals in their population prior to each formal planning meeting to review and update their status, as necessary.
- The RMC may provide written recommendations to be included in the Breeding and Transfer Plan as an appendix, if needed.
- An Advisor from the RMC may attend or conference into the SSP Program’s planning meeting if relevant for the population.
- Communication between the SSP Coordinator and the RMC need not be limited to planning meetings, but can occur throughout the year as questions arise or new data become available.

The PMC Planning Meeting

Materials Required Prior to the PMC Planning Meeting

There are five types of materials that the SSP Program must compile and submit to the PMC in preparation for a scheduled planning meeting (See Appendix F). The PMC will work with the SSP Program to set deadlines by which each of these materials must be received by the PMC so that they can prepare for the planning meeting (for more guidance, visit: [http://www.lpzoo.org/population-management-center](http://www.lpzoo.org/population-management-center)).

These materials include:

1. An **AZA Regional Studbook database** for the SSP Program species containing all the currently living animals. The PMC Planning Coordinator will run data validation software or will validate the submitted data to assist AZA Regional Studbook Keepers in preparing for the meeting. Studbook Keepers should assess the validation provided by the Planning Coordinator and make updates to the Studbook accordingly.

2. A **list of institutional wants and needs** from all current or future holders of that SSP Program’s species, including information on exhibits, holding facilities, breeding capabilities, or social groups, if applicable. Information regarding specific requests for breeding, holding, placing, or receiving animals should be included. IDs of animals should be included when relevant. The AZA and the APM Committee recommend utilizing PMCTrack to send and collect standardized, customizable wants/needs surveys to IRs; see section regarding PMCTrack below for more information.

3. A **list of animals to be excluded** from the breeding population and the reason (e.g., medical, behavioral, age/post-reproductive, etc.).

4. An **up-to date contact list for IRs** for distribution of the Draft and Final Breeding and Transfer Plans.

5. A **list of potential pedigree assumptions** for those animals with unknown or MULT parentage (if applicable).

If the SSP Coordinator fails to meet the deadlines mutually agreed upon with the PMC, the PMC may cancel the meeting and reschedule for a time when the SSP Program is better prepared. If deadlines are not met, and the meeting cancelled, the PMC cannot guarantee a new planning date. The PMC will contact the TAG Chair and inform them of the situation. Repeated lack of preparedness may result in an SSP Coordinator’s removal from their position by the TAG Steering Committee.
PMCTrack
PMCTrack is a web-based resource for SSP Coordinators who are preparing to plan with the PMC. SSP Coordinators should use PMCTrack to:

- See where the SSP Program is in the PMC planning process, as well as viewing information about their program’s management history
- View recommendation outcomes, which are data on whether previous recommendations to hold, transfer, breed, or not breed occurred as requested in past breeding and transfer plans; these data can be used to better understand SSP management challenges and evaluate current breeding situations before planning
- Use standardized surveys to collect important institutional information before a planning meeting. Wants/needs surveys are sent to all IRs to gather information each holding facility’s needs for the species; outcomes surveys are sent to IRs if a recommendation from the last breeding and transfer plan is not fulfilled according to the studbook, and solicit reasons that that recommendation was not completed as requested in the plan. PMCTrack includes automated reminder emails to encourage survey participation by IRs.

PMCTrack will help SSP Coordinators prepare for planning with the PMC, communicate with IRs, respond to problems completing plan recommendations, and will help to improve the planning and management processes over time for AZA Animal Programs. SSP Coordinators can log-in to PMCTrack at any time, but will most frequently utilize it when preparing for planning with the PMC.

For more information, contact PMCTrack@lpzoo.org.

Key Elements Produced in the Breeding and Transfer Plan
The PMC will work with the SSP Coordinator, other Animal Program participants, and their RMC Advisor (if necessary), throughout the course of the planning meeting to produce a Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan. This Draft will be AZA branded, structured to meet a standardized format and will include:

- A cover page with essential information such as the species common and scientific names, SSP Coordinator name and contact information, Studbook Keeper name and contact information, picture of the SSP species, date through which the data are current, and name of the PMC Advisor.
- A Table of Contents.
- A list of participating facilities with their corresponding IRs and Species360 mnemonics. This section must identify if the participant is an AZA-accredited facility, CRF, or approved Sustainability Partner.
- A genetic and demographic status summary of the population. Specific items to be included will be determined by the PMC Advisor but should include any assumptions made for the analyses.
- Animal-By-Animal Recommendations. The Breeding and Transfer Plan must include a list of the recommended actions for each individual animal or groups of animals in the population. These recommendations will consider genetic and demographic factors, social, nutritional, behavioral, and medical concerns, practical day-to-day animal management considerations, and the wants and needs of the facilities.
- A general description of the SSP Program, identification of the SSP Program Officers, Management Group members, and Advisors, and a summary of the SSP Program’s priorities and activities.

Reviewing the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan
Upon completion of the planning meeting, the PMC will post the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan on the AZA Animal Program webpage for 30 days and email the draft to IRs. This process is specifically designed to assure that all facility IRs view, fully comprehend, and provide feedback on the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations before they are finalized. The IR is expected to communicate any recommendations effecting their facility’s population to their IL and Director, and is required to provide feedback and address questions or concerns about these recommendations to the SSP Coordinator during the comment period. Lack of feedback from an IR will be interpreted as...
the facility’s full acceptance and agreement to the recommendations presented in the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan.

The following steps are vital to the review process:

- An automated email will be sent to all SSP Program designated IRs to inform them that the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan is available for review.
- The IRs will have 30 days to provide feedback and address questions or concerns about the recommendations made in the Breeding and Transfer Plan with the SSP Coordinator.
- The SSP Coordinator must respond to institutional comments and address them promptly.
- The SSP Coordinator may wish to notify the IL if an IR does not respond to the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan within three weeks. If the IR or IL does not respond within the next seven days, the SSP Coordinator may wish to notify the institutional Director.

**IR and IL Responsibilities**

- SSP Coordinators are responsible for tracking and reporting the response (or lack of response) and feedback provided by the IRs for their Breeding and Transfer Plans.
- If a non-responsive pattern becomes apparent with an IR, the SSP Coordinator should inform the IL of the potential problem. If it is deemed that the IR is not fulfilling his/her obligations, it is the IL’s responsibility to contact the IR and inquire about the status of the delinquent duty. The IL will work with the IR and the SSP Coordinator until responsibilities are met.
- If the IL fails to properly oversee the completion of the SSP Program responsibilities of the IRs at his/her facility, the SSP Coordinator will likely contact the TAG, APM Committee, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department to formally register a complaint.
- Failure to meet these obligations will likely result in the recommendation of removal of the IR by the APM Committee.

**Publication of the Final Breeding and Transfer Plan**

Upon completion of the Draft Breeding and Transfer Plan 30 day comment period, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will publish the Final Breeding and Transfer Plan electronically on the AZA Animal Program webpage. A formal announcement of this publication will be distributed via an automated email that will be sent to all SSP Program designated IRs and in the publication month’s Animal Programs Update. SSP Coordinators must assure that the following individuals/entities are notified of Final Breeding and Transfer Plan publication:

- All facilities holding the SSP Program species and participating in the SSP Program
- The SSP Vice Chair
- The AZA Regional Studbook Keeper
- The AZA TAG Chair
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department
- The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, if applicable.
- The IUCN Specialist Group Chair, if applicable.
- Invested individuals who do not have access to the member’s only section of the AZA website (i.e., IUCN specialist group chairs, Program Leaders from other regional zoological associations) of the publication.

**Interim Population Recommendations**

Although Breeding and Transfer Plans are the official method of recommending and documenting population management actions, many populations will need assistance between plans due to changes in the population or institutional needs. The PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor can usually provide informal unscheduled assistance to Program Leaders for such interim planning needs.
A MateRx is one tool provided by the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor that Program Leaders can use to assist them when making recommendations for their population between planning meetings.

- A MateRx is a matrix of all potential breeding pairs in a population which integrates four genetic factors to produce a single numeric Mate Suitability Index (MSI) for each male/female pair.
  - The MSI is calculated from considering the potential breeding pairs’ mean kinship values, the difference in male and female mean kinship, the inbreeding coefficient of the potential offspring produced, and the amount of unknown pedigree in the potential pair. A MateRx allows users to simplify the decisions about which pairs should be bred by condensing all that we know about the genetics of a pair into a single number.

- Requests for a MateRx can be made to the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor.

- Materials required for a MateRx include an updated studbook, a list of animals to be excluded from the breeding pool, and new information on pedigree assumptions.

- In some cases, a MateRx cannot be produced due to species biology or data quality (e.g., pedigree unknownness, population size, etc.). However, even in these cases the PMC highly encourages Programs to contact them for alternative assistance (PMC@lpzoo.org).

- Program Leaders are encouraged to record all recommendations made between their formal Breeding and Transfer Plans.
Chapter 5. SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal

A grant awarded to AZA by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) allowed AZA to customize their database and merge existing data with new data from Animal Program documents and Program Leaders. The AZA community is now able to identify patterns in population challenges and to strategically address population needs. The SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal were launched to the AZA membership in May 2016 and are becoming incorporated into the daily management of AZA SSP Programs. This collection planning tool has profound impacts on TAG recommendations and management decisions, and facilitating action towards increasing SSP population sustainability. The primary sustainability challenges identified by SSP Coordinators and population biologists will help facilitate AZA members in aligning their resources (e.g., space, experience with partnership and imports, multi-species exhibit opportunities, husbandry/research expertise) with the essential actions of SSP Programs. The information gleaned from these reports allows zoo and aquarium staff to take direct action in addressing population sustainability. See Chapter 8 for more details.

SSP Sustainability Reports

The SSP Sustainability Reports are automatically generated, 5-page reports that summarize 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. They also include the major challenges impeding each SSP’s population sustainability and the goals and essential actions needed to address them. 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. The main areas of the reports are:

Page 1:
- Photos of the species
- Marketing phrase
- Species conservation status, SSP designation, geographic information, and biome
- Exhibit design and management
- Species appeal
- Messaging opportunities

Page 2:
- Multi-species exhibit opportunities
- Non-SSP species that could be substituted by the SSP species
- Species biology
- Offspring housing and reproduction

Page 3:
- Sustainability profile that includes population size, demographics, genetics, and images such as census graphs, age pyramids, and population projections

Page 4:
- Challenges to SSP population sustainability, with identified goals, actions, and needs
- Reproductive technologies available
- Additional research opportunities
- Additional notes on SSP management

Page 5:
- Acquisitions and transfers with information about imports, exports, and reintroductions
- Challenges to acquisitions and transfers
- Disclaimer that includes the date that the report was last updated
SSP Search Portal

The SSP Search Portal is 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. This portal contains 25 search fields, including IUCN status, species appeal, special exhibit considerations, opportunities in multi-species exhibits, messaging opportunities, and research opportunities. The user can select any number of criteria that will return links to the individual SSP Sustainability Reports. The SSP Search Portal can help collection planners at AZA facilities to incorporate SSP species into their institutional collection plan, while facilitating alignment of their specific resources and expertise with SSP needs. SSP Coordinators may use their SSP Sustainability Reports to communicate the challenges impeding population sustainability and encourage the zoos and aquariums participating in the SSP to take an active role in overcoming these challenges. Research scientists can use the “Research Opportunities” field in the Online Portal to align their interests and expertise with critical SSP research needs.

Updating the SSP Sustainability Reports

Quantitative Data
Each month, the quantitative data (e.g., population numbers, gene diversity, participating facilities) from recently finalized SSP Breeding and Transfer Plans is downloaded from PMCTrack and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences staff add that information to the SSP Sustainability Reports.

Qualitative Information
To assure that the SSP Sustainability Reports are as accurate as possible, SSP Coordinators are encouraged, at any time, to submit updates to their qualitative information (e.g., major challenges to their SSP population sustainability, progress in importations) to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

At the very least, SSP Coordinators will be asked to review their reports during each of their SSP planning sessions and send any updates to their information at that time.

TAG Chairs are requested to review all of the SSP Sustainability Reports within their purview at least once per year to make sure that the information is current, accurate, and in line with the TAG’s goals. The TAG Chair will be asked if they have conducted their reviews in their TAG Annual Report.

A disclaimer is located on the last page of the SSP Sustainability Reports. A date is included in the disclaimer to show when the report was last updated.
Chapter 6. SSP Program Administration

SSP Program Accountability

SSP Coordinators are accountable for submitting a Breeding and Transfer Plan at least every 3 years in accordance with the submission date listed on the front cover of the previous publication, in order to meet their SSP Program accountability requirements. If a GSMP breeding and transfer information is also produced, it must be submitted at the time of publication in accordance with WAZA accountability. In addition, SSP Programs should also track IR responses for required SSP Program objectives, including wants and needs data.

There are a few SSP Programs that, due to the species’ natural history, may not require or benefit from a traditional Breeding and Transfer Plan every 3 years. These SSP Programs will be considered on a case by case basis by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, the TAG, and the SSP Program’s Population Advisor.

Automated Accountability Emails

Automated deadline reminders are emailed as a courtesy to remind the SSP Coordinator, and other associated parties, of an upcoming deadline. Each email includes the appropriate instructions, relevant contact information, and links to the Deadline Information pages on the AZA website (http://www.aza.org/animal-program-deadlines/). These automated emails are administered as follows:

- One year prior and 6 months prior to the deadline – Sent to the SSP Coordinator, and copied to the associated TAG Chair and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
- One month prior – Sent to the SSP Coordinator, and copied to the associated TAG Chair, Institutional Liaison, APM Committee Chair, APM Committee Liaison, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
- Deadline reached - Sent to the SSP Coordinator, and copied to the associated TAG Chair, Institutional Liaison, APM Committee Chair, APM Committee Liaison, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
- Two weeks past - Sent to the SSP Coordinator, and copied to the associated TAG Chair, Institutional Liaison, APM Committee Chair, APM Committee Liaison, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Extension Requests

Prior to the accountability deadline date:

- The SSP Coordinator may request an extension to complete their Breeding and Transfer Plan 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 Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department with the approved new deadline.
- If the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, the SSP Coordinator must also contact the APM Committee Vice Chair for SSPs & Studbooks to request an extension.
  - If deemed appropriate, the TAG Chair must contact the APM Committee Vice Chair and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department with the proposed new deadline.
- The APM Committee Vice Chair will work with the APM Committee to approve/not approve the extension request and communicate the decision to the TAG Chair and SSP Coordinator.

After the accountability deadline has passed:

- If the Breeding and Transfer Plan extension request was not made prior to the Breeding and Transfer Plan deadline but the SSP Coordinator wishes to maintain their position, the IL or Director of the SSP Coordinator’s facility must contact the APM Committee Vice Chair for SSPs & Studbooks within 2 weeks of the missed deadline to discuss the reason for the missed deadline, and request a new deadline.
- The APM Committee will vote to determine if the reason for the missed deadline for the completion of the Breeding and Transfer Plan is valid, and if so, a new deadline will be set.

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• If the APM Committee determines that the reason for the missed deadline is non-valid, the SSP Coordinator will likely be removed from their position.
• If the SSP Coordinator is removed, the position vacancy will be advertised on the AZA website and in the *monthly Animal Programs Update*.

**Voting**

• All members of the Management Group, if one exists, are required to vote on issues and in elections; votes are determined by majority
• The Secretary will record the votes and submit the voting record to the SSP Coordinator.
• The SSP Coordinator will alert the members of the SSP, the candidates (if applicable), and the TAG of the outcome of all votes.
• Failure to meet these obligations may result in the removal of the Management Group member by the SSP Coordinator or the APM Committee.

**Election Processes**

SSP Coordinators are elected by their TAG’s Steering Committee (if the TAG has a current, approved RCP) or by the APM Committee (if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP or lacks a TAG Chair). SSP Officers and Management Group members are elected from the SSP Program’s IRs. There are no SSP mandated term limits for SSP Officers or Management Group members. SSP Programs may determine whether to impose term limits on their Management Group members. All facilities are able to participate in the SSP Program through their IRs.

SSP Coordinator vacancies must be announced in the monthly Animal Programs Update: [https://www.aza.org/animal-programs-monthly-update](https://www.aza.org/animal-programs-monthly-update), and are available on the Current Program Leader Vacancy page if they are not filled after the required 30-day posting: [http://www.aza.org/Program-Leader-Vacancies/](http://www.aza.org/Program-Leader-Vacancies/).

**SSP Coordinator**

• Individuals interested in becoming an SSP Coordinator should consult the appropriate TAG Chair. If no TAG Chair exists, or the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, interested individuals may consult the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for advice on becoming an SSP Coordinator.
• Applicants for the position of SSP Coordinator must submit an SSP Coordinator Application (Appendix C), a Statement of Individual Commitment and a Statement of Institutional Support (Appendix C).
• All SSP Coordinator applications should be submitted directly to the TAG Chair, if the TAG has a current, approved RCP. If the TAG’s RCP has not been approved or is not current, or there is no TAG Chair, SSP Coordinator applications should be submitted to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
• TAG Chair contact information can be found on the TAG’s Animal Program page, or on the AZA website: [https://www.aza.org/contact-information](https://www.aza.org/contact-information).

**Officers**

• The SSP Coordinator will distribute a call for interest to the SSP Management Group, or to the IRs if there is no Management Group, to obtain a list of nominees for vacant Officer positions (except that of SSP Coordinator).
• Nominees for Officer positions must submit a Statement of Individual Commitment (Appendix E) and a Statement of Institutional Support (Appendix E) to the SSP Secretary (or the SSP Coordinator if the SSP Program does not have a Secretary) who will distribute the application to the Management Group, or if there is no Management Group, to the IRs.
• Elections, using an open democratic process, will be held if more than one Management Group member, or IR, is interested in the same Officer position.
• The SSP Coordinator will communicate the new appointment decision to the applicant, the rest of the applicant pool, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
Management Group Members

- The SSP Coordinator will send a request for Management Group nominees to all of the SSP Program's IRs if the Officers determine that a Management Group is necessary.
- Elections, using an open democratic process, will be held if the number of interested IRs exceeds the number of Management Group positions available.
- The Management Group may fill a vacated position by either holding a new election or appointing the IR who received the highest number of votes among the nominees not selected in the previous election.
- An IL may be involved with the Management Group as a non-voting member if an IR at the same facility is in the Management Group. There may only be one vote per facility.

AZA Regional Studbook Keeper

- Ideally, the SSP Coordinator or SSP Vice Coordinator is also the AZA Regional Studbook Keeper for the SSP Program.
- Individuals interested in becoming an AZA Regional Studbook Keeper should communicate with the TAG Chair, or review published RCPs to determine priority species.
- If the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, or there is no TAG Chair, interested individuals should consult the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for advice on acquiring an AZA Regional Studbook for a taxon of interest.
- All AZA Regional Studbook Keeper applications (See AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbook) should be submitted directly to the TAG Chair if the TAG has a current, approved RCP. If the TAG does not have an approved RCP, or there is no TAG Chair, applications should be submitted to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Change in Employment or Institutional Status

Change in Facility

Officers

- If the SSP Coordinator is leaving a facility and wishes to maintain the SSP Coordinator role and the facility does not wish to relinquish the SSP Program, the Director (or IL) must contact the TAG Chair (or the APM Committee Vice Chair for TAGs if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP or the TAG Chair position is vacant) within 30 days of the departure of the SSP Coordinator. The position must be advertised as a vacancy in the monthly Animal Programs Update for a minimum of 30 days and a new SSP Coordinator candidate from the facility must submit an application (Appendix C).
  - The TAG Steering Committee (or the APM Committee Vice Chair for SSPs & Studbooks if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP or the TAG Chair position is vacant) will request an updated application from the current SSP Coordinator if s/he wishes to retain their position.
  - Additional applications will also be received from any interested candidates.
  - The TAG Steering Committee will review and vote on the candidates to select the one most qualified.
  - For purposes of continuity of SSP Program management, applicants from the current supporting facility will be given serious consideration.
  - Upon selection of an SSP Coordinator, the TAG Chair (or the APM Committee Vice Chair for SSPs & Studbooks if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP or the TAG Chair position is vacant) will inform the applicants, the supporting facilities, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department of the final decision.
- Officers moving to a new facility do not automatically become that facility's IR; they must be designated by the new facility's IL.
- If the new facility's current IR is involved in the SSP Program in a voting capacity, the facility must determine which of the two will serve as the IR for, and which will no longer act as a voting member of, the SSP Program to assure each facility has only one voting member.
• The IR required to step down may be appointed as a non-voting Advisor at the SSP Program’s discretion.
• Officers who move to a new AZA member facility must, within 90 days of departure from their original facility, submit a new Statement of Individual Commitment (Appendix E) and Statement of Institutional Support (Appendix E) to the TAG Chair.
• Officers must update their new contact information, including facility, phone, fax, and email to the TAG Chair and via the AZA website by logging into their account on “My AZA.”

Management Group Members
• If a Management Group member transfers to a new facility with an existing IR for the same SSP Program, the facility must determine which of the two will serve as the IR for, and which will no longer act as a voting member of, the SSP Program.
• The Management Group member required to step down may be appointed as a non-voting advisor at the SSP Program’s discretion.

IL and IR
• ILs or IRs who transfer to a new facility will no longer serve as the previous facility’s representative to the SSP Program. The IL position will revert to the Director, and the IR position will revert to the IL.

Loss of Employment
Officers
• If an Officer loses their position from an AZA member facility, they have 6 months to re-gain employment with another AZA member facility before they have to surrender their position within the SSP Program.
• If an Officer is no longer employed at an AZA member facility and fails to communicate with the TAG or the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department within one month, it will be assumed that the Officer has abandoned the role in the Animal Program and the TAG may proceed with filling the vacancy before the 6 month grace period is over.
• Officers who do not resign under these conditions will be removed by the TAG Chair or, if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, the APM Committee.

IL and IR
• If an IL or IR loses their position from an AZA member facility, they will immediately be removed from the SSP Program. The IL position will revert to the Director, and the IR position will revert to the IL.

Member Facility Loss of Accreditation or Certification
Officers
• If an Officer’s facility loses accreditation or certification, they must communicate this to the TAG Chair.
• If an SSP Officer’s facility loses accreditation or certification, the Officer has 6 months to resign from the SSP Program or find employment with another AZA member facility.
• Officers who do not resign from the SSP Program under these conditions will be removed by the TAG Chair or, if the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, the APM Committee.

IL and IR
• The IL and all IRs of a facility that loses accreditation or certification will be removed from Green SSP Programs if accreditation is not regained within the two year grace period.

Member Resignation
Officers
• SSP Coordinator must provide a written notice of resignation to the TAG Chair.
• The SSP Vice Coordinator will act as interim SSP Coordinator until a replacement is elected.
• Officers, excluding the SSP Coordinator, must provide a written notice of resignation to the SSP Coordinator.
• Departing Officers should uphold SSP business confidentiality and, when possible, orient and provide all relevant SSP Program documents to their replacement.

Management Group
• SSP Management Group members must provide a written notice of resignation to the SSP Coordinator.
• Departing Management Group members should uphold SSP business confidentiality and, when possible, orient and provide all relevant SSP Program documents to their replacement.

IL and IR
• If an IR resigns, the IL will serve as the default IR for the SSP Program until a new IR is designated.
• If an IL resigns, the Director will serve as the default IL until a new IL is appointed.

Member Removal

Officers
• If an SSP Coordinator is removed by the TAG or the APM Committee, the position must be advertised and the TAG will select a new Coordinator from the pool of applicants if the TAG has an approved RCP. If the TAG does not have a current, approved RCP, the APM Committee will select the new SSP Coordinator.
• The SSP Management Group must vote to remove an Officer (excluding the SSP Coordinator) from the SSP Program.
• The SSP Coordinator will notify the TAG and the APM Committee in writing if an Officer (excluding the SSP Coordinator) is removed from the SSP Program and will include all reasons for, and documentation pertaining to, the removal.
• The SSP Management Group will hold a new election to fill the vacant Officer position as soon as possible.

Management Group Members
• The Management Group may choose to remove a Management Group member.
• The SSP Coordinator will notify the TAG and the APM Committee in writing if a Management Group member is removed from the SSP Program and will include all reasons for, and documentation pertaining to, the removal.
• The Management Group may fill the position by either holding a new election or appointing the IR who received the highest number of votes among the nominees who were not selected in the previous election.

IL and IR
• If an IL removes an IR, the IL will serve as the default IR for the SSP Program until a new IR is designated.
• If a Director removes an IL, the Director will serve as the default IL until a new IL is appointed.

AZA Animal Program participants (e.g., Program Leaders, Officers, Steering Committee members,) may be removed at the discretion of the AZA Executive Director. In the rare case that this should occur, the Executive Director and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will work closely with the TAG or SSP Program to document this process.
Chapter 7. SSP Program Functions

Conservation Activities
While not a requirement, SSP Programs may want to support and/or engage in conservation activities on behalf of their species. Engagement is particularly encouraged if an SSP Program manages a species designated by the IUCN or other government agency as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered.

- The AZA Wildlife Conservation Committee is available to assist SSP Programs with developing conservation programs with clear goals and objectives. The Wildlife Conservation Committee recommends that all conservation activities are part of an adaptive management plan that links activities to current threats and ultimate conservation goals. One recommended framework is the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation (http://cmp-openstandards.org/).
- Additional recognition of specific projects may develop within the context of AZA SAFE: Saving Animals from Extinction.

SSP Officer and Management Group Training
- SSP Coordinators are encouraged to mentor incoming SSP Coordinators, Officers, AZA Regional Studbook Keepers, and Management Group members to help them become familiar and comfortable with their responsibilities as established by the APM Committee in the associated Animal Program Handbooks, especially with respect to building sustainable populations.
- Mentoring and training procedures should include identifying the protocols used to assure data are current and transferred from the outgoing Program Leader to the new incoming Program Leader.
- Effort should be taken to coordinate training for SSP Programs within a TAG so that training can address similar issues across the taxa.

Animal Program Meetings
The APM Committee holds an open meeting for AZA Program Leaders, Officers, ILs, IRs, and other interested parties at each AZA Annual Conference and Mid-Year Meeting. These meetings may include reporting and updates from the APM Committee, the PMC, the RMC, and/or the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department, as well as an open question and answer session. Minutes from these meetings are disseminated over the consci listserv after the meeting.

Program Leader Workshops
- Program Leader workshops may be held at AZA Annual and/or Mid-Year Meetings. These may be organized by the AZA, the APM Committee, or individual Animal Programs.
- These workshops should be advertised in the Animal Programs Update and other appropriate Network Groups and listservs.
- Minutes and reports from these meetings should be AZA branded and disseminated, as appropriate. The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department is available to assist with document branding, if needed.

AZA Online Training Modules
Online Training Modules are web-based video tutorials found on the AZA website that were created for AZA’s Animal Program Leaders, Institutional Representatives (IRs), Institutional Liaisons (ILs), and other individuals interested in becoming involved in AZA’s Animal Programs. These modules provide helpful hints on navigating the AZA website and the Animal Programs Database, as well as downloading certain documents and contact information. PMCTrack and population management modules are available to help Animal Program participants navigate PMCTrack and understand the technical aspects of creating an AZA Regional Studbook or Breeding and Transfer Plan. Any new Online Training Modules will be announced in the monthly Animal Programs Update.
Conservation Grants Fund Reviews

Participation in the AZA Conservation Grants Fund (CGF) review process provides all Animal Programs with a direct tool for steering the research directives of the AZA. SSP Programs may be asked to provide first-tier reviews for relevant proposals.

- CGF application materials become available in January, with funds available the following October.
- SSP Programs are encouraged to provide input to parties interested in submitting CGF proposals in order to strengthen links between the project and the SSP Program priorities.
- Only one review per proposal may be submitted on behalf of the SSP Program. Requests for reviews will be forwarded to Program Leaders in April and are due at the end of May.
- Reviews should critically examine the project’s justification for goals and anticipated outcomes, the conservation and/or management significance and importance, project team ability, and budget.
- Reviews are considered confidential, should identify those aspects of the proposal most important to the SSP Program, and describe whether and how the proposal reflects SSP Program priorities. If the SSP Program is given multiple proposals to review, it is helpful to provide a hierarchy which proposals best reflect these priorities.

Outputs

Each SSP Program is responsible for publishing and maintaining specific outputs including a Breeding and Transfer Plan, an SSP Sustainability Report, and an Animal Care Manual (ACM). Breeding and Transfer Plans must be developed with, and require approval from, the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor. The SSP Sustainability Report may be updated at any time by emailing the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department. ACMs require AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department approval prior to publication. All outputs must be AZA branded and published on the AZA website upon approval.

Breeding and Transfer Plans

Each SSP Program is required to develop a Breeding and Transfer Plan which summarizes the current demographic and genetic status of the population, describes the SSP Program management designation, and recommends breeding pairs and transfers. Breeding and Transfer Plans are designed to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse, and demographically stable population. In order to assure the production of an effective Breeding and Transfer Plans, the SSP Coordinator must work with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an approved SPMAG Advisor. See Chapter 7 for more information on Breeding and Transfer Plans.

SSP Sustainability Reports

Each SSP Coordinator should work with the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department to complete their 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. This information can be updated at any time and is automatically generated from the SSP Search Portal located on the AZA website.

Animal Care Manuals

SSP Programs are required to assist their TAG in creating ACMs for their species. ACMs present a compilation of knowledge provided by recognized animal experts based on the current science, practice, and technology of animal management. The manual assembles basic requirements, best practices, and animal care recommendations to maximize capacity for excellence in animal care and welfare. The manual should be considered a work in progress, since practices continue to evolve through advances in scientific knowledge. The use of information within this manual should be in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations concerning the care of animals. The recommendations are not exclusive management approaches, diets, medical treatments, or
procedures, and may require adaptation to the specific needs of individual animals and particular circumstances in each facility. Commercial entities and media identified within the ACM are not necessarily endorsed by AZA. The statements presented throughout the body of the manual do not represent standards of care unless specifically identified as such in clearly marked sidebar boxes. See Chapter 9 for more information on ACMs.

Communication
Each SSP Program must develop a means to facilitate communication among its members, as well as distribute appropriate information about the SSP Program and its functions to the general public. The SSP Program may choose to distribute information via reporting sessions at AZA conferences and meetings, through AZA Annual Reports, monthly Animal Programs Update, Listservs, and AZA Stories and/or through TAG websites, e-mail, and newsletters. All public communications must be AZA branded and it is recommended that the TAG utilize electronic resources as much as possible in order to engage in green practices.

Meetings
- SSP Coordinators should hold (electronically or in person) at least one working Animal Program meeting each year, and are encouraged to hold in person meetings in conjunction with the AZA Annual Conference and/or Mid-Year Meeting.
- If the SSP Program holds additional meetings in a venue outside of these conferences, the SSP Program must communicate the dates and locations of these to its TAG Chair, the APM Committee Liaison, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
- The SSP Coordinator or SSP Vice Coordinator is encouraged to schedule and moderate reporting sessions at AZA Mid-Year and/or Annual Conferences.
- All Officers are encouraged to attend all official SSP Program meetings.
- Minutes must be recorded, AZA branded, archived, disseminated among the SSP Program’s IRs, and submitted to the TAG Chair and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

Position Statements, White Papers and Guidelines

Position Statements
An AZA Position Statement must be approved by the AZA Board of Directors and defines an AZA Committee, SAG, or Animal Program (and therefore the Association's) position on a specific issue. AZA Position Statements most frequently supplement an AZA Board approved policy and are supported by an informational and science-based AZA White Paper. AZA Board approved Policies, Position Statements and White Papers are found here: https://www.aza.org/board-approved-policies-and-position-statements.

If an Animal Program, Committee, or Scientific Advisory Group is interested in developing Position Statement and White Papers relevant to taxa within their purview they should adhere to the following process:
- Draft the Position Statement using the AZA branded template (Appendix J).
- Draft a White Paper using the AZA branded template (Appendix K).
- Submit both Drafts to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org).
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will review the drafts and, if deemed necessary, send them to the appropriate AZA Committees for review.
- All review comments will be returned to and discussed with you by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department to develop final drafts.
- If deemed necessary, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will submit the Final Drafts to the AZA Board for review.

White Paper
An AZA White Paper may either support an AZA Position Statement and therefore require approval by the AZA Board of Directors, or it may be a stand-alone document that does not support an
official AZA Position Statement. AZA White Papers may be informational articles that discuss a philosophy or initiative, or a description of recommended guidelines that are of relevance to the Association. If an Animal Program, Committee, or Scientific Advisory Group has a White Paper that they wish to submit for review, they should adhere to the following process:

- Draft a White Paper using the AZA branded template (Appendix K).
- Submit the Draft to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org).
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will review the draft and, if deemed necessary, send it to the appropriate AZA Committees for review.
- All review comments will be returned to and discussed with you by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department to develop final draft.
- If deemed necessary, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will submit the Final Draft to the AZA Board for review.

Guidelines
While the majority of Animal Program guidelines (i.e., hand-rearing protocols, mixed species exhibit suggestions, etc.) may not require AZA Board approval it is still important that they are required and approved by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department before they are published and distributed to assure that they are appropriate and reflect the philosophy. If an Animal Program, Committee, or Scientific Advisory Group has developed guidelines that they wish to submit for review, they should adhere to the following process:

- Draft Animal Program guidelines using the AZA branded template (Appendix L).
- Submit the Draft guidelines to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org).
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will review the draft and, if deemed necessary, send it to the appropriate AZA Committees for review.
- All review comments will be returned to and discussed with you by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department to develop final draft.
- If deemed necessary, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will submit the Final Draft to the AZA Board for review.

Animal Programs Update
The Animal Programs Update is published monthly on the AZA website at [https://www.aza.org/animal-programs-monthly-update](https://www.aza.org/animal-programs-monthly-update), and includes Animal Program announcements, vacancy advertisements and new publications. The TAG is responsible for submitting programmatic changes for Animal Programs within its purview, including SSP Program appointments and contact information, Animal Program upgrades and downgrades, and taxonomic changes for managed species to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department. The SSP Program may also provide TAG-approved announcements and notices to be published in the monthly Animal Programs Update.

The TAG Chair must approve all Program Leader vacancy advertisements and assure that the TAG submits them to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department. All Program Leader vacancies must be advertised for 30 days in the Animal Programs Update and on the Current Program Leader Vacancies page [www.aza.org/Program-Leader-Vacancies](www.aza.org/Program-Leader-Vacancies) before a new Program Leader may be appointed.

AZA Network
The **AZA Network** brings together great ideas, best practices and lessons learned from within the zoo and aquarium community. The diverse community allows for open professional interest groups or closed working groups. Your profile in the Network is where you will manage notifications of activity, allowing you options to receive emails as activity occurs, or in a daily, or weekly digest email. There are many open professional interest groups available, as well as closed Animal Program groups that can be maintained by the Animal Program Leaders themselves. These groups allow members to start discussions, add resources, and share documents.
SSP Programs are encouraged to establish an AZA Network Group for their SSP Program. Membership within Animal Program Network workspaces may be compartmentalized such that some portions may be restricted to the Management Group, while another section may be open to all IRs. All IR updates made in the AZA Animal Program Database will automatically be applied to the workspace membership. The workspace must have a Moderator who will manage subscriptions to closed Management Group workspaces and establish rules for postings. To create a group within the AZA Network, the Program Leader should contact the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

SSP Highlights
SSP Highlights is a “member view” feature in AZA’s CONNECT magazine that provides an opportunity to highlight and share efforts SSP Programs have made to increase population sustainability in zoos and aquariums and share their successes with the general AZA membership. This feature provides a way for SSP Programs to share their creative approaches to address population sustainability challenges. Examples include engaging in innovative research, advancing management practices, and developing partnerships to enhance SSP sustainability. SSP Highlights made its debut in the August 2016 issue of CONNECT. SSPs are encouraged to submit their draft SSP Highlights to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department using the template found in Appendix I.

SSP Sustainability Award
The SSP Sustainability Award recognizes initiatives of AZA SSP Programs that have a quantifiable impact on the long-term sustainability of an SSP’s managed population. Animal Program Leaders (i.e., TAG Chairs, SSP Coordinators, Studbook Keepers, and Scientific Advisory Group Chairs) may submit an application for this award that demonstrates how their significant and innovative efforts have resulted in a significant increase in an SSP population’s sustainability. Award decisions will be based on the level of effort described that has resulted in significantly improving the SSP population’s sustainability, the quantifiable impact that has occurred which demonstrates an increase in the SSP population’s sustainability, how any resulting forward actions were made accessible to all appropriate facilities in an effective and timely manner, and how this initiative advances AZA TAG recommendations for that SSP population’s sustainability. For more information on deadlines and application materials, visit the AZA website: https://www.aza.org/ssp-sustainability-award.

Social Media and CONNECT articles
AZA manages an AZA Facebook page and a Twitter account that have thousands of followers. To maximize exposure of the TAG’s work, snippets of publicly appropriate information (including photos) should be provided for inclusion on the social media resources. To publish information on AZA’s Facebook page and Twitter account, the TAG Chair should contact the AZA Digital Media Director. In addition, TAGs may wish to distribute information about their work in an article in CONNECT each year. To publish an article in CONNECT the TAG Chair should contact the AZA Publications and Brand Director.

Newsletter
SSP Programs may find it helpful and engaging to distribute annual or more frequent updates on their activities by publishing a newsletter. Newsletters may include updates and progress reports on all aspects of the SSP Program's work, such as membership, elections, vacancies, fundraising, research, statements, photos (rights must be obtained for all photos), and conservation projects. Newsletters must be AZA branded and may be distributed online via the AZA Animal Programs Database, or specifically to IRs and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
Chapter 8. Population Sustainability

AZA Animal Programs
In the late 1970’s, the recognition that wildlife populations were declining in the wild and access to collection animals was becoming increasingly more difficult, inspired a group of visionary zoologists to create the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) concept as a cooperative animal management program administered by the AZA. AZA’s first SSPs were created in 1981.

These SSPs functioned by managing each animal of a species held by all AZA member zoos and aquariums as a member of a single population for breeding purposes. The breeding plan for each species made breeding (or “do-not-breed”) recommendations to maintain demographically stable populations with the greatest possible genetic diversity for the long-term future of a healthy and sustainable population. Sustainability of the population is related to many factors including its gene diversity, demographic stability, husbandry expertise, etc.

In 1994, AZA published *Species Survival Plans – Strategies for Wildlife Conservation*, which stated: “The SSP program was originally conceived to provide a blueprint for cooperative captive breeding programs in North America, but more recently the concept has also evolved to include field conservation efforts.”

The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Staff and the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee), which oversee 43 Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) and more than 500 Animal Programs, initiated a variety of processes to sustain zoo and aquarium collections and wild species. The TAGs became responsible for creating and maintaining RCPs which recommend species to be managed within AZA-accredited facilities given available space and resources. The AZA Population Management Center (PMC), created in 2000, became responsible for incorporating the data derived from Studbooks and RCPs to identify science-based breeding and transfer recommendations along with each SSP Program. The AZA Reproductive Management Center (RMC) at the St. Louis Zoo was also created in 2000 to assess contraception efficacy, reversibility, and safety for animals not recommended for breeding.

The 2009 publication titled *Sustaining the Ark: the challenges faced by zoos in maintaining viable populations* (International Zoo Yearbook. 43:6-18) highlighted a fact that many have increasingly recognized over the past several years: “Over the last decade . . . Ark-related activity” (i.e., maintaining sustainable populations) “has declined as zoos have diversified their conservation activities, re-directing efforts into other areas, such as conservation education, fund-raising and other support for in situ projects….Zoo populations are not achieving the conditions for sustainability.”

The declining sustainability of zoo and aquarium populations likely results from a variety of factors including insufficient animal holding and breeding space, low breeding success, need for more advanced husbandry techniques, or, occasionally, lack of success in completing breeding recommendations. In 2008, Lincoln Park Zoo developed PMCTrack to evaluate the outcomes of breeding and transfer recommendations issued by AZA Program Leaders with the assistance of the PMC. AZA Program Leaders will be able to view their program’s historical outcomes, monitor outcomes going forward, and use simple survey tools to solicit reasons why recommendations didn’t occur from Institutional Representatives, so we can begin to understand how to improve recommendation outcomes. Institutional Liaisons will also have access to the system, so directors and their ILs can evaluate the participation of their staff in the cooperative management system and how their facility is doing at completing recommendations in comparison to the AZA average. Ultimately, the AZA community will be able to use the tools and data in PMCTrack to understand, monitor, and improve AZA’s cooperative management system and the long-term viability of animal populations. The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department conducted an intensive qualitative and quantitative assessment of the Animal Programs to understand where simplification of processes may assist Program Leaders, how the involvement of non-AZA entities could make crucial founders available, and other aspects that could facilitate Animal Program success, in building sustainable populations.
In 2009, the AZA Board approved a simplified procedure to approve non-member participants in the SSP Programs, a new Full Participation Policy, and a new Animal Management Reconciliation Policy to articulate the roles and responsibilities needed to enhance program success. The Board also formed a Task Force on the Sustainability of Zoo-based Populations and a Task Force on the Sustainability of Aquatic Populations.

The Task Forces on the Sustainability of Zoo-Based Populations and Aquatic Populations, comprised of AZA Board members, the APM Committee Chair, and AZA staff, obtained input from a diversity of individuals from the conservation community including: AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences and Government Affairs staff, the PMC and RMC, the APM Committee and Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Program Leaders, researchers, and other selected conservation professionals as needed to accomplish the following tasks:

- Review the mission, goals, and limits of the cooperative management of AZA’s Animal Programs.
- Set minimum achievable goals for long-term sustainability of AZA’s Animal Programs.
- Determine which factors have the greatest impact on the sustainability of zoo populations.
- Assess resources needed to sustain the cooperative management of AZA’s Animal Programs.
- Plan for Program Leader succession.
- Assess the ability of the current program administration system to allow programs to meet sustainability requirements.
- Assess current relationships with U.S. government agencies and assess permitting regulations and practices that impede zoos and aquariums in maintaining sustainable populations. Provide recommendations to increase respect for the cooperative management of AZA’s Animal Programs and facilitate legislative and regulatory changes that will maximize collection sustainability.
- Recommend modifications to the cooperative management system structure and the administration of AZA’s Animal Programs to assure programs are positioned to achieve sustainability goals.

Variables Affecting Sustainability

The 2010 AZA Sustainability Task Force’s assessment identified a combination of variables that have contributed to the reduced long-term sustainability of many of AZA's managed Animal Program populations. As there are a variety of causes, there is no single answer, direction, or solution. These variables include insufficient:

- Knowledge of current Animal Program population sustainability duration and genetic diversity.
- Number of holding and breeding spaces needed to increase the sustainability of the Animal Programs.
- Animal Program planning capacity.
- Institutional awareness surrounding the topic of sustainability.
- Institutional commitment to provide additional holding or breeding spaces.
- Permitting and/or regulatory availability to move animals.
- Advanced breeding expertise.

Enhancing Population Sustainability

In 2010, the Task Force identified, and the AZA Board approved, a variety of new Animal Program management strategies to address these variables and improve the sustainability of AZA’s Animal Programs. These included:

- Assessing and providing each Animal Program population’s projected gene diversity (% GD) at 100 years or 10 generations.
- Designating each Animal Program as a Green SSP Program, a Yellow SSP Program, or a Red Program.
- Increasing educational opportunities for Institutional Directors and staff to gain a detailed understanding of the new Animal Program management strategies including:
  - The critical need for an increased number of holding and breeding spaces.
- The need for strong institutional support for all Program Leaders and their training.
- The importance of following Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations.
- Increasing training opportunities for zoo and aquarium staff to become more skilled at understanding permit application processes and permit writing techniques.
- Enhancing legislative and regulatory efforts to increase recognition of the vital roles of zoos and aquariums serve and better facilitate importation processes to help them build self-sustaining Animal Program populations.

In 2014, the APM Committee assessed and evaluated the effects that the new Animal Program designations had on AZA’s cooperatively managed Animal Programs. After a thorough review, the APM Committee made a recommendation to the AZA Board that all AZA cooperatively managed Animal Programs (i.e., Green, Yellow, and Red Programs) be designated as SSP Programs, that minimum SSP criteria be established for those Animal Programs that were not managing species classified as Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, or Endangered, and that all Animal Programs would identify at least three goals. The Board approved establishing criteria that all other SSP Program populations include at least three AZA member facilities and be comprised of at least 20 individuals. At this time, the APM Committee established a new category of TAG managed Candidate Animal Programs that may include those populations that did not meet the minimum SSP Criteria, but where the TAG wishes to grow the Program to become an SSP in time.

Over the years, the AZA community has engaged in several initiatives including working with the Alexander Center for Applied Population Biology and the AZA PMC at Lincoln Park Zoo to develop new tools for sustainability. Funded by grants from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Lincoln Park Zoo has worked with Program Leaders at AZA facilities to conduct Population Viability Analyses (PVAs) for AZA Animal Programs. A PVA is a computer model that projects a population’s likely future status and helps identify key factors that may be impacting the sustainability of the population. From 2011-2016, PVA reports were completed for 135 programs on a TAG-by-TAG basis. TAG summary reports, comparing and contrasting PVA results among different populations, have been completed for 16 AZA TAGs. As of the conclusion of IMLS funding in late 2016, PVAs are continuing to be conducted for additional SSPs to answer specific questions about long-term population viability. PVA reports are made available on the individual SSP or TAG pages within the Animal Programs Database.

An IMLS grant has also used IMLS funding to create a database that compiles extensive quantitative and qualitative information. Informed by this wealth of data, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department can work with TAGs, SAGs, the PMC, and other working groups to identify patterns in population challenges and to strategically address population needs.

The online tools emerging from the SSP Sustainability Database include the SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal. The Database automatically generates SSP Sustainability Reports which summarize SSP species’ basic care, exhibit design, and population management considerations and priorities. This information, which was originally provided by SSP Coordinators, TAG Chairs, and other Animal Program participants, is compiled in a searchable format, allowing collection planning users to perform searches that identify appropriate species for their collection planning criteria, while also directing resources and attention to managed species.

The SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal were designed as a member service for collection planners, Program Leaders, research scientists, and other zoo and aquarium staff. Access is available for staff at AZA-accredited facilities and Certified Related Facilities.

AZA SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction

The mission of AZA’s 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. The vision of SAFE is that together, we are saving the most vulnerable wildlife species from extinction and protecting them for future generations.
SAFE Species programs protect threatened animals; build on established recovery plans and track records of commitment; prioritize collaboration among AZA member facilities; implement both strategic conservation and public engagement activities; and measure and report conservation progress.

In 2015, ten inaugural SAFE Species were identified including the African penguin, Asian elephant, black rhinoceros, cheetah, gorillas, sea turtles, sharks and rays, vaquita, western pond turtle, and whooping crane, and SAFE continues to grow. SAFE is a framework that encourages teams to use a collaborative process, incorporate a wide-range of species-specific expertise from AZA members and non-government and government partners, and identify the conservation actions needed to protect those species based on published recovery plans. Three-year SAFE Program Plans, include objectives and actions for conservation, stakeholder and public engagement, public awareness and communications, and fundraising that will make a positive impact on species’ populations in the wild. Employees at AZA-accredited aquariums and zoos lead and implement these projects.

The Wildlife Conservation Committee administers SAFE, with support from AZA staff. Explore current SAFE Species programs or consider whether a species of interest to you may be eligible to become a SAFE Species at: [https://www.aza.org/aza-safe](https://www.aza.org/aza-safe).
Chapter 9. Animal Care Manuals

Overview

Animal Care Manuals (ACMs) provide a compilation of animal care and management knowledge that has been gained from recognized species experts based on the current science, practice, and technology of animal management. These manuals compile and organize our understanding of basic requirements, best practices, and animal care recommendations to advance the capacity for excellence in animal care and welfare. These dynamic manuals are considered works in progress, since practices continue to evolve through scientific learning. Once completed, the use of information within each manual should always be in accordance with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations concerning the care of the species specified.

Recommendations included in the manuals are not exclusive management approaches, diets, medical treatments, or procedures, and may require adaptation to the specific needs of individual animals and particular circumstances in each facility. The statements presented throughout the body of the manuals do not represent specific AZA accreditation standards of care unless specifically identified as such in clearly marked as such in sidebar boxes.

ACMs are composed by TAG and Animal Program representatives, managed by the AZA Animal Welfare Committee, and approved by the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department. The developmental procedures used to compose each manual follow a specific sequence that includes several review procedures (internal and external) before AZA reviews, and ultimately approves their publication. Because one of the most important outputs of a TAG is to develop and maintain a current ACM, a summary of the primary developmental procedures are described below, however, in addition, a specific ACM template (http://www.aza.org/animal-care-manuals/) has been composed to ease the process. The ACM template should be adjusted (e.g., edit headers and sub-headers, etc.) to match the needs of your species/taxa.

The key processes needed to compose an ACM are listed below; however the complete set of developmental processes (http://www.aza.org/animal-care-manuals/) should be used as a guide to produce the final publication.

Developmental Processes

Draft ACM Development

- TAGs and/or SSP Programs identify a contact person (Champion) who serves as the main communications conduit between the TAG/SSP and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Staff. The Champion is responsible for
  - seeking input from the TAG/SSP,
  - collecting TAG/SSP-based information,
  - compiling all scientific data and professional information about the natural history and management strategies of the taxa(on),
  - incorporating this information into the pre-existing sections of the ACM template, or editing the headers and sub-headers to match the needs of your species/taxa,
  - proof-reading and updating the TAG Chair on the ACM progress, and
  - communicating ACM issues with the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Staff.

- The Champion will submit the first Draft of the ACM to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will complete a review of the draft and assure that all relevant bullets were addressed.

- The Champion will review the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department edits, develop a 2\textsuperscript{nd} draft ACM, and submit this 2\textsuperscript{nd} draft ACM to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.
The Champion will review the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department edits, develop a 3rd draft ACM (if necessary), and submit this 3rd draft ACM to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Staff will return the edited final Draft ACM to the Champion to assure that mutually agreeable solutions are achieved for any editorial changes that may be necessary.

Final Draft ACM Review

- Prior to completion of the final Draft ACM, the Champion works with the TAG/SSP to identify two or more external review experts and submits the Final Draft ACM to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for editing.
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will provide a digital copy of the final Draft ACM to the TAG Steering Committee, SSP Management Group, relevant AZA Committees and Scientific Advisory Groups, and external review experts. Additionally, the final Draft will be posted on the AZA website for the 30-day AZA member comment period.
- The AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will collect all comments from the members and external review experts, organize them according to their corresponding ACM sections, and distribute them via email to the Champion at the close of the 30 day review period.
- The Champion will work with the TAG/SSP to review all comments, incorporate suggestions as deemed necessary and then submit the Pending-Approval ACM to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

ACM Approval

- If the ACM is approved, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department will post the ACM on the AZA website.
- An updated and revised ACM should be published within 5 years of the last ACM publication. A TAG may update an ACM sooner if significant new information regarding animal care and welfare practices becomes available.

Required Elements of an ACM

The published ACM should include a variety of components that are clear enough for colleagues not familiar with the taxonomic group to understand how and why these recommendations were made. ACMs should provide up-to-date information gained from a large body of expertise including biologists, veterinarians, nutritionists, reproduction physiologists from the contraception center, behaviorists and researchers. TAGs/SSPs must address each of the following elements in the ACM template (www.aza.org/animal-care-manuals) if deemed relevant to the taxa (and may add additional elements if warranted). If data do not exist for particular areas listed below the ACM should state that fact as a clear identification of needed research and study. Each relevant area should be as comprehensive as existing knowledge allows.

**Taxonomic Information**
- Taxonomic classification
- Genus/species/status
- General information

**Ambient Environment**
- Temperature/humidity
- Light
- Water/air quality
- Sound/vibration

**Habitat Design and Containment**
- Space and complexity
- Safety and containment

**Records**
- Definitions
- Types
- Permit considerations
- Government ownership
- Identification

**Transport**
- Preparations
- Protocols

**Social Environment**
- Group Structure and size
- Influence of others and conspecifics
- Introductions and reintroductions
Nutrition
- Nutritional requirements
- Diets
- Nutritional evaluations

Veterinary Care
- Veterinary services
- Transfer examination and diagnostic testing recommendations
- Quarantine
- Preventative medicine
- Capture, restraint, and immobilization
- Management of disease, disorders, injuries, and/or isolation

Reproduction
- Reproductive physiology and behavior
- Assisted reproductive technology
- Pregnancy, egg-laying/parturition
- Birthing/hatching facilities
- Assisted rearing
- Contraception

Behavior Management
- Animal training
- Environmental enrichment
- Staff and animal interactions
- Staff skills and training

Program Animals
- Program animal policy
- Institutional program animal plans
- Program evaluation

Research
- Known methodologies
- Future research needs

Other Considerations
- Additional information
Contacts

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AZA Web Resources

AZA Board Approved Policies
https://www.aza.org/board-approved-policies-and-position-statements

Animal Exchange
To access Animal Exchange, the user must be logged in to the AZA website and have Animal Exchange privileges assigned to your individual record in order to use this feature. Never share your log-in information with anyone as you will directly be held responsible for any changes or edits made to secured areas. Once logged in, the Animal Exchange link will be found on the Animals & Conservation > Animal Care & Management dropdown.

Animal Programs Database
The Animal Programs Database contains all Animal Program Data, and is separated out into Animal Program pages. There are separate pages for TAGs, SSP Programs, Studbooks and SAGs. Each Animal Program page can be accessed by going through the:

Animal Program Page Search Portal

Each Animal Program page contains the following (*information only available if logged in):

- Program Leaders, Officers, Advisors
- Program Leader, Officers, Advisors contact information*
- Animal Program details (start dates, websites, etc.)
- Animal Program Species
- Related Animal Programs
- Animal Program Documents*
- Animal Program IR list*

SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal

The SSP Sustainability Reports summarize SSP species' basic care, exhibit design, and population management considerations and priorities. The Search Portal automatically generates these reports which allow collection planners to perform searches that identify appropriate species for their collection planning criteria, while also directing resources and attention to managed species. The SSP Sustainability Reports and Search Portal were designed as a member service for collection planners, Program Leaders, ILs, IRs, research scientists, and other zoo and aquarium staff. Access is available for staff at AZA-accredited facilities and Certified Related Facilities.

Animal Programs Resources
https://www.aza.org/animal-programs-resources

The Animal Programs Resources page contains numerous links, documents and templates aimed to assist Program Leaders. These include:

- Program Leader Handbooks (including guides and resources related to being a new Program Leader, assessing Sustainability Partners, TAG strategic planning, PVA FAQs, and transitioning to ZIMS for Studbooks)
- Templates and Applications
- Contact information for TAGs Chairs, Institutional Liaisons, APM Committee TAG Liaisons, SPMAG TAG Liaisons
- Animal Program Sustainability Designations (updated quarterly)
- Animal Programs Monthly Update
- Current Program Leader Vacancies
- Illustrative protocols to help Program Leaders navigate the Animal Programs Database

Accountability Information and Instructions
http://www.aza.org/animal-program-deadlines/

PMCTrack
Website: www.pmctrack.org; Email: pmctrack@lpzoo.org

PMCTrack evaluates breeding and transfer recommendations to:

- Determine whether each recommendation occurred based on studbook data
- Collect reasons from Institutional Representatives for recommendations not occurring as planned
- Improve management of AZA’s Animal Programs and increase long-term viability of these populations

**Population Management Center**
Website: [http://www.lpzoo.org/population-management-center](http://www.lpzoo.org/population-management-center); Email: pmc@lpzoo.org

**Reproductive Management Center**
Website: [https://www.stlzoo.org/animals/scienceresearch/reproductivemanagementcenter/](https://www.stlzoo.org/animals/scienceresearch/reproductivemanagementcenter/); Email: contraception@stlzoo.org

**ZIMS for Studbooks**
Website (Live): [https://zims.species360.org/](https://zims.species360.org/)
Website (Sandbox): [https://studbooks.species360.org](https://studbooks.species360.org)
Email: support@species360.org

ZIMS for Studbooks is an online database where Studbook Keepers maintain and track their studbook databases.

- Transitioning to ZIMS for Studbooks for Animal Program Leaders is a guide that includes, but is not limited to, migration tips, where to find training materials, and who to contact for help.
  - [https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/2332/wcmc_transitioning_to_zims_for__studbooks_for_program_leaders.pdf](https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/2332/wcmc_transitioning_to_zims_for__studbooks_for_program_leaders.pdf)
Accountability- Accountability refers to the processes by which Animal Program participants including 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 Full Participation 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, Certified 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, Certified 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.

Animal Program Summary Table- Animal Program Summary Table identifies each AZA Animal Program (AP) (Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs and Studbooks) recommended by the TAG for cooperative management. The following information is included for each AP: the date of the last Breeding and Transfer Plan; the current population size, current gene diversity, designation, and target population size; the number of additional spaces needed to achieve the target population size; and the 5-year population trend, conservation status, and top three goals. This table must be updated as APs are analyzed by the Population Management Center (PMC), a PMC Adjunct or an approved Small Population Management Scientific Advisory Group (SPMAG) Advisor, and is a required component of the TAG Annual Report and the TAG’s Regional Collection Plan (RCP).

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 Dedicated Funds Account- AZA Committees, Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs), Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs), Species Survival Plan® Programs, and SAFE Species Programs who hold and distribute money raised specifically to support projects initiated or coordinated by their group must use an AZA Dedicated Funds to manage all transactions.

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 for Full Participation- AZA policy stating that all AZA-accredited facilities and Certified Related Facilities having a Green SSP animal in their collection are required to participate in the collaborative SSP planning process (e.g., provide relevant animal data to the AZA Studbook Keeper, assign an Institutional Representative (IR) who will communicate institutional wants and needs to the SSP Coordinator, comment on the draft plan during the 30-day review period, and abide by the recommendations agreed upon in the final plan). All AZA member facilities and Animal Programs (APs), regardless of management designation, must adhere to the AZA Acquisition, Transfer and Transition Policy, as well as the AZA Code of Professional Ethics.

AZA Strategic Plan- AZA accredited zoos and aquariums will be recognized for leading a compelling wildlife conservation movement. We will achieve this by caring for wildlife and wild places; educating and engaging public, professional and government audiences; serving and increasing membership; and developing a robust and sustainable economic model which empowers AZA to provide superlative member services.

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 and transfers. Breeding and Transfer Plans are designed to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse and demographically stable population.

Candidate Programs- TAG managed Animal Programs are not considered official AZA cooperatively managed Animal Programs; however the TAG has the goal to grow these populations to meet minimum criteria to be an SSP Program. Candidate Programs manage smaller populations (19 or fewer individual animals), and/or manage populations among only one or two participating AZA member facilities. New Animal Programs that do not have a published AZA Regional Studbook will also be classified as Candidate Programs until an AZA Regional Studbook is published.

Certified 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 Grants Fund (CGF) - Established in 1984, CGF supports the cooperative conservation-related scientific and educational initiatives of AZA and AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and their collaborators. CGF grants are awarded in six categories: Animal Health, Animal Welfare, Conservation Education, Field Conservation and/or Reintroduction, Management and/or Breeding, Research.
Conservation Partner- Organizations that support the vision, mission and goals of zoos and aquariums. Conservation Partners represent AZA-Accredited Facility member societies and associated organizations, professional societies, conservation organizations, universities, some government entities and other non-profits.

**Ex situ Conservation**- Preservation of 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.

**Green Species Survival Plan® (Green SSP) Program**- A Green SSP Program has a population size of 50 or more animals and is projected to retain 90% gene diversity for a minimum of 100 years or 10 generations. Green SSP Programs are subject to AZA’s Full Participation and Sustainability Partner Policies.

**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.

**In situ Conservation**- Preservation of natural communities and populations of species in the wild.

**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 his/her 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).

**MateRx**- The primary output is a matrix of genetic ratings for every possible breeding pair in a population which allow Program Leaders to quickly discover how the genetic status of animals in their collections compare to the rest of a managed population. Note that this does not include any demographic, logistic, or other variables that should be considered when recommending breeding.

**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 approved by AZA and advise AZA Animal Programs from their home facilities. 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 helping to develop software to improve methods of population management, and troubleshooting software problems.
PMCTrack- PMCTrack is a web-based database and monitoring system 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 facilities 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 the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, as well as San Diego Zoo Global in San Diego, California, is responsible for conducting demographic and genetic analyses needed to develop and distribute population management recommendations for all SSP Programs. PMC staff, including Population Biologists, Planning Coordinator, and Research Assistant, 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 facilities. In addition, the PMC contributes valuable information for AZA Sustainability Reports and Regional Collection Plans (RCPs).

Population Sustainability- AZA’s cooperatively managed Animal Programs reach population sustainability when the projected gene diversity (% GD) at 100 years or 10 generations is greater than or equal to 90%. The SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan for each species makes recommendations to maintain demographically stable populations with the greatest possible genetic diversity for the long-term future of a healthy and sustainable population. Sustainability of the population is related to many factors including its gene diversity, demographic stability, husbandry expertise, etc.

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.

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.

Red Species Survival Plan® (Red SSP) Program- A Red Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program has a population size of twenty or more animals managed among three or more participating AZA facilities. If a population does not meet these minimum criteria, but has an IUCN designation of Critically Endangered, Endangered, or Extinct in the Wild, and the TAG has developed three goals to sustain this population, then the population will be considered a Red SSP Program. Red SSPs cannot retain 90% gene diversity for 100 years or 10 generations and participation by AZA facilities is voluntary. Red SSP Programs are subject to AZA’s Sustainability Partner Policy.

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 facilities, 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 facilities.

Scientific Advisory Group (SAG)- Established in 1991, Scientific Advisory Groups (SAGs) help facilitate, support, network and coordinate the relevant research activities of its member facilities. 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.

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 - Established in 1981, the mission of an AZA Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program is to cooperatively manage specific, and typically threatened or endangered, species population within AZA-Accredited Zoos and Aquariums, Certified Related Facilities, and Approved Sustainability Partners. Each SSP manages the breeding of a species in order to maintain a healthy and self-sustaining population that is both genetically diverse and demographically stable.

Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Coordinator - An SSP Coordinator performs various duties to lead and support the AZA SSP program. The 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 Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences 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 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 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, Certified 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 facilities, the Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee), Population Management Center (PMC), a PMC Adjunct, or an approved Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG) advisor, and the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences 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 Green Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs, Yellow SSP Programs, and Red 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 certified related facilities, typically as part...
Target Population Size (TPS)- The desired number of SSP animals to be held across AZA and approved partner facilities over a specific, stated timeframe. This number is determined with consideration for program roles and goals (genetic, demographic, and others), logistical constraints, spatial competition with other TAG-managed species, and other population-specific concerns. Target Population Size is determined by the Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) and published in their Regional Collection Plan (RCP).

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) Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences 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 Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences 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.

Yellow Species Survival Plan® (Yellow SSP) Program- A Yellow Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program has a population size of 50 or more animals but cannot retain 90% gene diversity for 100 years or 10 generations. Yellow SSP participation by AZA facilities is voluntary. Yellow SSP Programs are subject to AZA’s Sustainability Partner Policy.
Appendix A: Policy on Full Participation in SSPs

Policy for Full Participation in the Species Survival Plan®

Cooperative animal management and conservation are among the primary goals of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). These goals are best exemplified by the Association’s shared commitment to its cornerstone animal management and conservation program: the Species Survival Plan® (SSP). The AZA Board of Directors recognizes that: 1. Cooperative animal management is vital to the long-term survival of professionally managed zoological parks and aquariums and their valuable and often irreplaceable live animal collections; and 2. All AZA-accredited institutions and Certified Related Facilities should be fully committed to the animal management, conservation, and public education goals as well as the collaborative spirit of the SSP partnership. Therefore, in 2000, the Board adopted the first policy of Full Participation in the SSP program by all AZA member institutions.

An SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan articulates long- and short-term goals for a population. It plans the “family tree” of each managed population to minimize the rate of loss of genetic diversity and maintain the long-term demographic stability of the population. Breeding and other population management recommendations are made for each animal with consideration of logistical feasibility, animal welfare, and other factors that can improve SSP outcomes. In addition to breeding recommendations, Breeding and Transfers also include a recommendation not to breed certain animals for sound husbandry reasons and the betterment of the population. The Board recognizes that, in the collaborative process of managing the SSPs, the responsibility of each SSP Management Group is to make sound Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations, and also recognizes that, at times, these may conflict with a member institution’s plans.

The Board emphasizes the responsibility of all institutions to cooperate in SSP Master Planning. If differences occur between an SSP’s recommendations and a participating institution, the SSP Coordinator and the IR have a joint responsibility to work collaboratively to resolve it. When an SSP recommendation is fundamental to the collaborative management of the ex situ population, then the SSP recommendation should take precedence. In this process, all institutions’ clearly stated and reasonable needs will be considered. If an SSP recommendation is not fundamental to the collaborative management of the ex situ population, then the SSP Management Group may elect to change it before the Breeding and Transfer Plan is finalized. Thus, when an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan is approved its animal management recommendations will accurately reflect the vital needs of both the SSP and the participating institutions.

The Policy for Full Participation in the SSP Program assures that AZA Accredited Institutions and Certified Related Facilities have input into the SSP Master Planning process and that they fully comprehend, agree to, and follow the final SSP recommendations. The Board now further defines Full Participation in the SSP program, and the processes used to achieve Full Participation, as follows:

- The Institutional Liaison (IL) at AZA Accredited Institutions or Certified Related Facilities will assure that an Institutional Representative (IR) is appointed for each SSP species the institution/facility owns or holds, or for which the institution selects to support as defined by the SSP Management Group.
- Each IR must serve as the primary point of contact for all matters relating to their assigned SSP and will assure that their institution responds to SSP needs for information during Master Planning.
- Periodically and regularly, the SSP Coordinator will ask each participating institution’s IR how their institution will participate in the SSP: breeding, non-breeding (where an institution cannot breed due to space, or other factors), or support.
- Prior to the Breeding and Transfer Plan development, at the request of the SSP Coordinator, each IR will provide all relevant data regarding individual SSP animals to the corresponding SSP Coordinator and Studbook Keeper in a timely manner. Further, IRs must assure that all proposed acquisitions or dispositions of the SSP species are included in the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan or, if the Breeding and Transfer Plan is already published, are approved in advance by the SSP Coordinator or, preferably the SSP Management Group. SSP Coordinators and IRs must work collaboratively to develop an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan that strives to meet the needs of the SSP program and the needs of participating institutions.
- A draft of the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan, which must include a written record of all animal management recommendations, will be published on the AZA web site for a 30-day comment period and the SSP Coordinator will notify all IRs as soon as the Plan is available for comment. IRs at all participating institutions must inform the SSP Coordinator during the comment period that they will adhere to the Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations, or why they cannot, which will initiate the resolution discussions described below. If all
participants agree with the recommendations, the final Breeding and Transfer Plan will be published and implemented.

- Each IR must assure that their institution’s Director and IL are aware of the Breeding and Transfer Plan and its recommendations and must initiate a collaborative discussion with the SSP Coordinator to resolve differences regarding Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations during the comment period. All involved should maintain accurate records of all related communications and discussions.

- If a resolution with no change to the SSP recommendations is found, then the final Breeding and Transfer Plan will be published and implemented.

- If a resolution that causes changes in the SSP recommendations is reached, the edited Breeding and Transfer Plan will be re-posted for a final 30-day comment period. IRs at institutions affected by the edited recommendation(s) must respond to the SSP Coordinator during the final comment period regarding their agreement to adhere to the recommendations; institutions not affected by the changes will not need to respond again. At this stage, the finalized Breeding and Transfer Plan will be published and all institutions agreeing to adhere to the Breeding and Transfer Plan’s recommendations will commence implementing the Breeding and Transfer Plan.

- If no resolution is found through direct discussion between the SSP Coordinator and the IR(s), they must work cooperatively with the IL, institutional Director, and corresponding TAG Chair to find one. If necessary, the discussion can extend for an additional 30 days, during which time the institution disputing a recommendation must not engage in any breeding or acquisitions and / or dispositions of species that run counter to the SSP recommendations. If differences are not resolved by the steps outlined above, then the SSP Coordinator and / or any other involved parties must request that AZA’s Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) mediate the situation as defined in the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy and, again, the institution disputing the recommendation must not engage in any breeding, acquisitions and / or dispositions that run counter to the SSP recommendations until the mediation and, if necessary, the reconciliation process is complete. Emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances will be considered for the health and welfare of the animals. Institutions not affected by the disagreement will continue carrying out their recommendations.

Approved by the AZA Board of Directors 26 Mar 09
Appendix B: AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy

Species Survival Plan® – Animal Management Reconciliation Policy

The success of cooperative breeding programs depends on all institutions supporting Species Survival Plan® (SSP) recommendations. Therefore, the Board emphasizes the crucial nature of the cooperative process in the development of SSP Breeding and Transfer Plans to assure that animal management recommendations accurately reflect the vital needs of both the SSPs and participating Accredited Institutions and Certified Related Facilities.

If differences regarding SSP recommendations occur between the SSP Management Group and a member Institution, AZA’s Full Participation Policy clearly articulates the process that both parties must utilize to resolve them prior to engaging in the Animal Management Reconciliation process. However, if such differences cannot be resolved, then the parties involved must request that AZA’s Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) mediate the situation.

- APM Committee will (1) determine if all efforts to resolve differences have been exhausted and, (2) determine if the recommendations in question are fundamental to the cooperative management of the ex situ population. If both situations are true, then APM Committee will notify all parties and appoint a Mediation Task Force which includes the APM Committee Chair / designee, one member of APM Committee selected by each party to represent them, the SSP Coordinator, the institution’s Director and two other institutional representatives, and AZA’s VP of Animal Conservation, or designee.

- The Mediation Task Force will conduct a confidential review of the situation in less than 30 days. Within 2 weeks of the completed review, the APM Committee Chair / designee will draft a mediation report describing a consensus decision, which will be reviewed by the participating parties. Comments on the draft report must be returned within a week of distribution. The APM Committee Chair / designee will consider all comments and produce a final mediation report. Assuming a resolution is reached, the report will be submitted to all participants involved in the process and the matter will be closed.

- If the mediation process yields no resolution, APM Committee must notify all parties and initiate the reconciliation process, during which the institution in question must not engage in any breeding, acquisitions and / or dispositions that run counter to the SSP until a resolution is found. The Reconciliation Committee, over which the APM Committee Chair / designee presides, will include the institution’s Director or designee, the APM Committee Board Liaison, and AZA’s Sr. VP of Conservation, VP of Animal Conservation, or designee, and Executive Director, or designee. The Reconciliation Committee will consider the Mediation Task Force report and determine if additional information is required.

- In its call for greater accountability, the AZA Board holds that action by the Accreditation Commission and / or the Ethics Board can be taken against a member institution that: (1) demonstrates a pattern of a failure to participate and / or (2) demonstrates an action contrary to an SSP program recommendation which threatens the short- or long-term management of the ex situ population. Therefore, the Reconciliation Committee will specifically consider if either of these instances is found to be valid.

- If it is determined that the member institution’s action is not detrimental to the cooperative management of the ex situ population, then the Breeding and Transfer Plan will be changed accordingly and the results of these findings will be incorporated into a reconciliation final report submitted to the AZA Conservation Office.

- If it is determined that the member institution’s action is detrimental to the cooperative management of the ex situ population, and / or is part of a pattern of a failure to participate, then the Breeding and Transfer Plan will stand as is and the Reconciliation Committee will notify the institution that they must comply with it. If the institution refuses this directive, the Reconciliation Committee will note this in the reconciliation final report filed with AZA’s Conservation Office and provide the report to the Accreditation Commission and the Ethics Board for consideration.

Approved by the AZA Board of Directors 26 Mar 09
Appendix C: SSP Coordinator Application

Individuals interested in becoming an SSP Coordinator must complete the following application and submit it to The TAG Chair, or if the TAG does not have a current RCP or there is no TAG Chair, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

*Please note that this application is available in a digitized Word form at https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications

1. Applicant Name: ______________________________
   AZA supporting facility: ______________________

   Have you an AZA Individual Member? _______________

   Phone:  ______________________________________

   Email:  _______________________________________

   Date Application Submitted:  ______________________

2. Common and Scientific name(s) of the species: ___________________

3. Which TAG oversees this SSP? _____________________

4. Name of the current AZA Regional Studbook Keeper, if other than you: _________________

5. Date of program's last Breeding & Transfer Plan:  ___________________________________

6. List all other AZA Program Leader positions (e.g., Studbook Keeper, SSP Coordinator, etc) you hold or have held, and the most recent publication date of relevant Animal Program documents (e.g., Studbook, Breeding and Transfer Plan, RCP).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Leader Position</th>
<th>Term dates</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Date Last published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g.: XX Studbook Keeper</td>
<td>2010 – present</td>
<td>Studbook</td>
<td>12 May 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Attach a current curriculum vitae.
SSP Coordinator Statements of Commitment and Support

AZA SSP Coordinators and their supporting facilities must be willing and able to devote the necessary resources to oversee and manage an AZA Species Survival Plan®. As outlined in the AZA Species Survival Plan® Program Handbook these duties and responsibilities include:

- Publishing a complete Breeding and Transfer Plan with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an Approved SPMAG member at least every three years after initial Breeding and Transfer Plan publication.
- Communicating any SSP Program data updates to the TAG Chair.
- Ensuring that SSP Program participants fully understand and abide by the AZA Policy on Responsible Population Management, the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, and the Sustainability Partner Policy.
- Ensuring that Green SSP Program participants fully understand and abide by the AZA Policy for Full Participation in the SSP Program and the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy.
- Ensuring that all holding facilities have a designated IR, and that this designation has updated on the AZA website. Contact the Institutional Liaison (IL) when a discrepancy between IR designations is found between the SSP Coordinator’s IR list and the IR list on the AZA website.
- Ensuring that all Officers and Management Group members update their personal information to the TAG Chair and on the AZA website.
- Sending copies of all significant SSP Program documents to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and TAG Chair.
- Maintaining regular contact with and respond in a timely fashion to inquiries/questions/concerns from SSP Program members, the TAG Chair, and the AZA office.
- Understanding that failure to meet these obligations and those outlined within the AZA Species Survival Plan® Program Handbook could result in removal from the Animal Program.

The _______________ (Name of facility) is committed to providing the necessary resources to oversee and manage the AZA ___________ SSP program as outlined above. This may include:

- Access to computers and software necessary for database management, assembling a complete Breeding and Transfer Plan for distribution and communication via email.
- Funding for travel to professional meetings, workshops or to meet with Population Advisors.
- Scheduled time within routine work schedules to accomplish Animal Program related tasks.

The above-named facility further acknowledges that information gathered for SSP Programs supported by the facility is not the exclusive property of the facility and enters public domain upon publication on the AZA website. The facility also understands that part of any SSP Program Officers’ responsibility is to promote the development of sustainable populations.

Name of Applicant: ________________  
Name of the Director/Governing Official: ____________

Date: ______________
Date: ______________

The following will serve as your digital signature:

I, ______________ (Name of Applicant) have read and agree to the terms and conditions stated above.

I, ______________ (Name of Director/Governing Official) have read and agree to the terms and conditions stated above.
Appendix D: SSP Coordinator and Regional Studbook Keeper Application

Individuals interested in becoming an SSP Coordinator and Studbook Keeper must complete the following application and submit it to the TAG Chair, or if the TAG does not have a current RCP or there is no TAG Chair, the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department.

*Please note that this application is available in a digitized Word form at https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications

1. Applicant Name: ______________________________
   AZA supporting facility: ______________________
   Are you an AZA Individual Member? _______________
   Phone:  ______________________________________
   Email:  _______________________________________
   Date Application Submitted:  ______________________

2. Common and Scientific name(s) of the species: ___________________

3. Which TAG oversees this SSP? _____________________

4. Date of program's last Breeding & Transfer Plan:

5. Date of program's last Studbook: ______________________________

6. List all other AZA Program Leader positions (e.g., Studbook Keeper, SSP Coordinator, etc) you hold or have held, and the most recent publication date of relevant Animal Program documents (e.g., Studbook, Breeding and Transfer Plan, RCP).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Leader Position</th>
<th>Term dates</th>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Date Last published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g.: XX Studbook Keeper</td>
<td>2010 – present</td>
<td>Studbook</td>
<td>12 May 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Attach a current curriculum vitae.
SSP Coordinator and Studbook Keeper Statements of Commitment and Support

AZA SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers and their supporting facilities must be willing and able to devote the necessary resources to oversee and manage an AZA Species Survival Plan®. As outlined in the AZA Species Survival Plan® Program and AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbooks these duties and responsibilities include:

- Completing the Population Management 1 (PM1) Professional Development course.
- Creating, updating and submitting a current AZA Regional Studbook report to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department for publication on the AZA website.
- Submitting a complete, current AZA Regional Studbook database to the AZA Conservation, Management, and Welfare Sciences Department and the PMC at least once every three years. In the event of loss of employment/resignation, assure that the Studbook Keeper and/or supporting facility provide relevant AZA Regional Studbook documents to the TAG Chair and to the replacement AZA Regional Studbook Keeper.
- Providing an up to date AZA Regional Studbook database to the SSP Program’s Population Advisor (PMC, PMC Adjunct, SPMAG Advisor) prior to each formal population planning meeting, or as needed for population management purposes.
- Publishing a complete Breeding and Transfer Plan with the PMC, a PMC Adjunct, or an Approved SPMAG member at least every three years after initial Breeding and Transfer Plan publication.
- Ensuring that SSP Program participants fully understand and abide by the AZA Acquisition, Transfer, and Transition Policy and the AZA Code of Professional Ethics, both of which apply to all AZA Animal Programs.
- Ensuring that Green SSP Program participants fully understand and abide by the AZA Policy for Full Participation in the SSP Program, the AZA Animal Management Reconciliation Policy and the AZA SSP Sustainability Partner Policy.
- Maintaining regular contact with and respond in a timely fashion to inquiries/questions/concerns from SSP Program members, the TAG Chair, and the AZA office.
- Understanding that failure to meet these obligations and those outlined within the AZA Species Survival Plan® Program and AZA Regional Studbook Keeper Handbooks could result in removal from the Animal Program.

The _________________ (Name of facility) is committed to providing the necessary resources to oversee and manage the AZA ______________ SSP and Studbook as outlined above. This may include:

- Funding to attend Population Management 1 and 2.
- Access to computers and software necessary for database management, assembling a complete Breeding and Transfer Plan and AZA Regional Studbook for distribution and communication via email.
- Funding for travel to professional meetings, workshops or to meet with Population Advisors.
- Scheduled time within routine work schedules to accomplish Animal Program related tasks.

The above-named facility further acknowledges that information gathered for SSP Programs supported by the facility is not the exclusive property of the facility and enters public domain upon publication on the AZA website. The facility also understands that part of any AZA Animal Program Leader’s responsibility is to promote the development of sustainable populations.

Name of Applicant: ________________

Date: ________________

The following will serve as your digital signature:
I, ______________ (Name of Applicant) have read and agree to the terms and conditions stated above.

Name of the Director/Governing Official:

Date: ________________

The following will serve as your digital signature:
I, ______________ (Name of Director/Governing Official) have read and agree to the terms and conditions stated above.
Appendix E: Statements of Commitment and Support for Officers

*Please note that these statements are available in a digitized Word form in the Program Leader Applications at [https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications](https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications)

Statement of Individual Commitment for SSP Vice Coordinator, Secretary, or Treasurer

As the ___________________ position of the _____________ SSP Program, I am willing and able to devote the necessary time to fulfill the deadlines, commitments and responsibilities as outlined in the SSP Program Handbook. I understand that failure to meet these obligations could result in my removal from the SSP Program.

Name of Applicant: _________________________________________________________
Signature of Applicant: _________________________________________________________
Date: ______________________________________________________________________

Statement of Institutional Support for Vice Coordinator, Secretary, or Treasurer

The ___________________________________ (Name of Facility) is committed to providing adequate resources and support for the _____________ position of the _____________ SSP Program as outlined in the SSP Program Handbook. I understand that failure to meet these obligations could result in his/her removal from the SSP Program.

The above-named facility further acknowledges that information gathered for SSP Programs supported by the facility is not the exclusive property of the facility and enters public domain upon publication on the AZA website. The facility also understands that part of any SSP Program Officers’ responsibility is to promote the development of sustainable populations.

Name of the Director/Governing Official:  ____________________________________________
Signature of Director/Governing Official:  ____________________________________________
Date: ______________________________________________________________________
Appendix F: Preparing for a Planning Meeting with the PMC

PMC PLANNING TIMELINE
USE THIS GUIDE TO GET READY FOR YOUR MEETING

10 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETING
☐ obtain updated taxon reports from your holding institutions, update studbook data
☐ login to AZA.org to download the official IR list for your SSP program
☐ compare your IR list to IR list downloaded from AZA, make updates as needed

8 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETING
☐ send updated studbook data + IR list (using IR list template from PMC) to:
   - PMC@pzoo.org - Kelvin Limbrick - studbook validation
   - PMCTrack@pzoo.org - Kaitlyn Peršin - pre-planning surveys
☐ indicate whether you intend to use PMCTrack for your pre-planning surveys

6 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETING
☐ login to PMCTrack to launch pre-planning surveys (How to Launch PMCTrack Surveys)
☐ update studbook based on validation comments from PMC Studbook Analyst (Kelvin)

4 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETING
☐ login to PMCTrack, check survey responses, and begin compiling institutional wants & needs and exclusions list
☐ follow up with any IR responses that are unclear to you
☐ non-PMCTrack Users’ materials are due, submit the following information to the PMC
   - updated studbook database and IR list
   - a list of institutional wants and needs using the attached spreadsheet as an example
   - a list of permanent exclusions from the breeding population
   - names of expected meeting attendees for an in-person meeting
   - list of meeting attendee email addresses for a GoToMeeting
   - list of any non-AZA institutions that you would like to see included in your managed population

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO MEETING
☐ contact any IRs that have not completed the pre-planning survey
☐ email the following information to the PMC
   - exclusions list (see previous box for reference)
   - names of expected meeting attendees for an in-person meeting
   - list of meeting attendee email addresses for a GoToMeeting
   - list of any non-AZA institutions that you would like to see included in your managed population

1 WEEK PRIOR TO MEETING
☐ PMCTrack surveys close - login to PMCTrack to download survey response reports
☐ email updated studbook + compiled wants/needs to PMC before planning meeting

DAY OF PLANNING MEETING
☐ bring any materials that have been updated since you last submitted planning data

Species Survival Plan® Program Handbook
Appendix G: Sustainability Partner Policy & Application

Information & Application to Become an Approved Sustainability Partner in an AZA Species Survival Plan® Program

Approved by the AZA Board of Directors 1 December 2009, Revised March 2014, Revised July 2018

The digitized Full Application to become an Approved Sustainability Partner can be obtained on the AZA website at https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a professional organization representing accredited zoological parks and aquariums and certified related facilities (CRFs). Among its objectives, AZA strives to raise professional standards that foster the continued development of superior zoos and aquariums and best practices in animal population management that uphold high standards of animal welfare.

AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums serve as centers of excellence in animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and public education and create animal exhibits that provide society the opportunity to develop personal connections with the animals and nature. As such, AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are concerned about ecosystem health, take responsibility for species survival, contribute to research, and promote the highest standards of animal care and welfare in the management of small populations of earth’s precious wildlife species.

Expectations for Approved Sustainability Partners in an AZA Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program

AZA SSP Programs focus on the conservation of select and typically threatened or endangered species through the cooperative management of small populations at AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and Certified Related Facilities. These facilities undergo a thorough accreditation review process that includes the submission of an extensive application as well as an intensive, on-site inspection by a team of experts to assure the highest standards of animal care and management are met.

A Sustainability Partner is defined as an organization that has regularly exchanged animals of the SSP with AZA-accredited facilities and CRFs, typically as part of the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan or other SSP Program management process.

- A Sustainability Partner’s species/animal(s) is **regularly included** in the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan.
- Recommendations are made for individuals of that species in the Sustainability Partner’s collection through the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan process. This would include documented interim SSP Program recommendations.

It is not necessary to apply for a facility to be a Sustainability Partner if exchanges occur as infrequent, “one-way,” or “one-off” transfers and the facility will not receive SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations. A facility may be sent animals excluded from the SSP population without becoming a Sustainability Partner. If the facility does not currently have the species in question then they do not qualify as a Sustainability Partner and the SSP should not apply. They may apply to include the facility as a Sustainability Partner in the future once the facility acquires the animals.
AZA believes that the highest standards of animal care, welfare, and population management are of paramount importance, and Sustainability Partners are expected to agree and abide by AZA's Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare for all animals in the facility's collection.

Sustainability Partners in SSP Programs are not considered accredited or certified and may not display the AZA logo or the AZA SSP logo. Like AZA accreditations and certifications, approvals for a Sustainability Partner's continued participation in an SSP Program must be renewed every five years.

Who is Eligible to Apply for Approval as a Sustainability Partner?

If an AZA SSP Program determines that a potential Sustainability Partner cares for animals that can provide genetic, demographic, conservation, husbandry, population management, and/or animal welfare benefits to the SSP Program, the following are eligible to apply for approval as Sustainability Partners:

**Category 1. Zoos/aquariums located outside the U.S. that are accredited members of a World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Recognized Super-Regional Zoological Association**

Note: Recognized Super-Regional Zoological Associations that have a formal accreditation program include: Asociación Latinoamericana de Parques Zoológicos y Acuarios (ALPZA), Zoo and Aquarium Association - Australasia (ZAA), Asociación de Zoológicos Criaderos y Acuarios de México (AZCARM), Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), and Pan African Association of Zoos and Aquaria (PAAZA).

Note: Members of the Asociación Mesoamerican y del Caribe de Zoológicos y Acuarios (AMACZOOA), the Eurasian Regional Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (EARAZA), the Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA), South East Asian Zoos Association (SEAZA), South Asian Zoo Association for Regional Cooperation (SAZARC), and unaccredited members of a qualifying recognized super-regional association must apply under Category 2.

**Submission Requirements**

A. A Letter of Justification from an AZA SSP Program for the applicant to participate in their SSP Program;
B. A completed and signed Sustainability Partner Application; and
C. A Letter affirming their accreditation from a WAZA recognized Super-Regional Zoological Association.

**Category 2. Wildlife facilities that are not accredited by a WAZA recognized Regional Zoological Association**

Wildlife facilities include, but are not limited to zoos and aquariums not accredited by a WAZA recognized regional zoological association (including zoos and aquariums that are members of such associations but not accredited by them), ranches, refuges, rehabilitation centers, research facilities, sanctuaries, survival centers, breeding facilities, private individuals, and educational outreach organizations. These facilities can be within or outside the U.S., and do not need to be open to the public.

**Submission Requirements**

A. A Letter of Justification from an AZA SSP Program for the applicant to participate in their SSP Program;
B. A completed and signed Sustainability Partner Application;
C. Letters of Sponsorship from the Directors of two different AZA-accredited facilities; and
D. If within the United States, submission of the most recent USDA licenses and inspection report(s), if applicable.
Application Processes

Submission Process
The SSP Coordinator must work with the applicant to assure all application materials are complete. The SSP Coordinator may fill out the application through a phone call to the applicant facility. The SSP Coordinator must submit the completed application, required letters, and attachments to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org), and assure that the applicant does not participate, or continue to participate, in the SSP Program until they are formally approved as a Sustainability Partner.

The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department will review the application materials, and forward applications deemed to be complete and appropriate for review to the APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships who will act as the coordinator of the Sustainability Partner’s application. The Vice Chair of Partnerships will review application materials to identify potential needs for clarification. The Vice Chair of Partnerships will notify the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department when the application is ready for APM Committee review, and distribute the application to the committee for review.

Review Process
Applications are reviewed by AZA’s Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) throughout the year via committee conference calls, as well as twice each year – during the AZA Annual Conference and the AZA Mid-Year Meeting. No fees are charged for the Sustainability Partner application.

APM Committee will evaluate the benefits of the applicant being approved as an SSP Program Participant in the context of the entire AZA ex-situ population which includes all SSP Program animals at AZA- Accredited zoos and aquariums, Certified Related Facilities, and Sustainability Partners.

Reviews are held either by conference call or in closed sessions, and are attended by APM Committee members and advisors and AZA staff; in addition, members of the AZA Board of Directors, the SSP Coordinator, and/or the corresponding Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) Chair may attend as well. Approval decisions are based on the information that exists at the time of the application review, not on future plans. Crucial elements in APM Committee’s consideration include:

- Completion of application
- Application support letters, documents, and photographs
- Whether there is sufficient evidence that the applicant follows the tenets of AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare for all animals in the facility’s collection.
- Whether the participation of the proposed partner in the SSP will significantly enhance the SSP program population’s sustainability, while supporting high standards of animal welfare.

APM Committee may take one of the following actions:

- **Approval:** APM Committee will grant approval when it determines that the applicant facility meets the requirements of an approved Sustainability Partner.
- **Table Approval:** APM Committee may table a facility’s application if it determines that certain conditions must be met or additional information submitted before the facility can be considered as a Sustainability Partner. If the facility is able to meet those requirements within one year, and if the SSP Program still wishes, the APM Committee will re-review the application.
- **Deny Approval:** APM Committee will deny approval when a facility does not meet the minimum requirements (see “expectations”) to be recognized as an approved Sustainability Partner at the present time and, in its opinion, would require in excess of one year to successfully do so. Applicants may work with the SSP Program and reapply to be a
Sustainability Partner after the APM Committee’s concerns have been addressed.
Once a decision is reached, the APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships will inform the SSP Coordinator and the facility’s Owner/CEO/Director of the outcome. An official letter noting the decision and points of discussion will be sent from the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department to the SSP Coordinator and the facility Director within 30 days of the application review.

**Sustainability Partner Responsibilities**

Once approval has been granted the Sustainability Partner will:

- Agree to adhere to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and relevant Accreditation Standards, especially those related to animal care and welfare for all animals in the facility’s collection.

- Appoint an Institutional Liaison (IL) to serve as the primary point of contact for SSP communications.

- Not display the SSP logo.

- Agree to allow the sponsoring AZA-accredited zoo or aquarium, staff, Board, APM Committee, TAG, and/or SSP representatives to visit and view the applicant facility, upon request, to assure adherence to AZA policies and animal care and welfare practices. Such visitors will provide feedback to the SSP, TAG, and the APM Committee.

- Submit a new, complete application for Sustainability Partner before the end of the five-year approval period in order to continue participation in the SSP Program.

**Loss of Approval Status**

A Sustainability Partner may have its approved status revoked by the APM Committee if it fails to meet any of the Sustainability Partner responsibilities identified above and in the application.

If AZA/APM Committee deems it appropriate, the SSP Program may work with a Sustainability Partner that loses its approved status for up to two years to help manage the population, facilitate transfer of animals owned by AZA zoos and aquariums and, when possible, mentor re-approval of Sustainability Partner status. In such instances, the Sustainability Partner will not be an active participant in the SSP but still may be considered during the planning processes. During this time the SSP will not move SSP animals to the former Sustainability Partner facility.

For reinstatement as a Sustainability Partner, the potential Sustainability Partner’s benefit to the SSP population’s sustainability and adherence to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Animal Care and Welfare Standards must be reassessed.
Sustainability Partner Application

Part A: To be completed by facilities in Categories 1 & 2

Facility Information
1. Facility Name:
2. Mailing Address (street, city, state, zip code, country):
3. Physical Address (if different than mailing address):
4. Telephone Number:
5. Website:
6. Is this organization open to the public on a regularly scheduled and predictable basis? Yes, Hours: No ☐
7. If located outside of the United States, is the organization accredited by a WAZA recognized Super-Regional Zoological Association: Yes ☐ No ☐
   Name of Accrediting Zoological Association:
   ☐ ALPZA
   ☐ AZCARM
   ☐ CAZA
   ☐ EAZA
   ☐ PAAZA
   ☐ ZAA - Australasia
8. If located outside of the United States, is the organization a member of a WAZA recognized Super-Regional Zoological Association: Yes ☐ No ☐
   Name of Zoological Association:
   ☐ AMACZOOA
   ☐ EARAZA
   ☐ JAZA
   ☐ SAZARC
   ☐ SEAZA
9. Who has ultimate responsibility for decisions relating to animal care, welfare, and management at the facility?
   ☐ Owner
   ☐ Director
   ☐ Board of Directors
   ☐ Animal Care Manager/Curator
   ☐ Veterinarian
   ☐ Other (name):
10. The organization is (check all that apply):
    ☐ owned/operated by municipality, city, county, state, or federal government
☐ not for profit
☐ part of a larger corporation
☐ privately funded
☐ privately owned
☐ other/more information:

11. Type of organization (check all that apply):
   ✔ Zoo
   □ Aquarium
   □ Rescue facility
   □ Research facility
   □ Sanctuary/refuge
   □ Open to the general public
   □ Guided tours only
   □ Drive-thru park
   □ Ranching operation that manages non-domestic/domesticated wildlife species
   □ Private breeder (not open to the public)
   □ Other/more information:

Facility’s Representative Information
1. Name of the Facility’s Director/CEO:
   a. Director/CEO Telephone Number:
   b. Director/CEO E-mail:

2. Name of the Facility’s Institutional Representative (IR):
   a. IR’s Telephone Number:
   b. IR’s E-mail Address:

SSP Program Information
1. Name of SSP Program:
2. Number of SSP Program animals owned by/at your facility that are to be included in the SSP Program:
3. Does the facility currently house this species?
4. Describe any breeding of this species at the organization (e.g., have you bred this species previously? How many times? When?)
5. List all other AZA SSP Programs in which the organization participates.

---

1 Sanctuaries being distinct from zoos by housing only non-breeding animals and only receiving animals (e.g., does not send animals to facilities or individuals)
Part B: To be completed by facilities in Category 2

Animal Housing, Animal Care, Safety, and Records

1. If an AZA Animal Care Manual (ACM) exists for the SSP Program species, has your facility reviewed the ACM and does your facility meet the guidelines identified in the ACM?

2. Describe the spaces available for this SSP Program species (indoor and outdoor facilities; holding areas; shifting doors; locks and pins for all doors; public barriers and containment). Attach photos of exhibit and holding areas. Approximate the size of the animals’ space.

3. Describe the staff experience in care and management of the SSP Program species.

4. Describe the facility’s veterinarian’s experience with the SSP Program species (or similar or closely related species). If the veterinarian does not have experience with the SSP Program species, is there a consulting veterinarian that does have experience with the species?

5. Describe the typical diet of the SSP Program species at the organization and how this diet was or will be created to meet the nutritional needs of the animal(s).

6. Describe the organization’s internal procedures for reviewing animal welfare of this SSP Program species.

7. Describe the standard operating procedure (SOP) for daily husbandry and/or exhibition of the SSP Program species. The SOP typically includes a list of daily staff duties required for safe care and exhibition of the species with assigned or rough estimates of sequence and time allocation.

8. What type of contact will staff have with the SSP Program species?
   - ☐ Unprotected contact – staff will intentionally make physical contact with the species and will share space with the animal(s) regularly.
   - ☐ Incidental – staff will regularly share space with the animal(s) and may occasionally make physical contact with the animals.
   - ☐ Protected – Physical contact with the animal(s) by staff will always be across or through a protective barrier; staff will share space with the animals only in emergency situations.
   - ☐ None – no physical contact with this species is ever permitted at this facility regardless of whether staff shares space with the animal(s) or interacts with them across a barrier. Exceptions regarding physical contact are only made in the event of emergencies.

9. What type of contact will visitors have with the SSP Program species?
   - ☐ Unprotected contact – visitors will share space with the animal(s) and they will be granted the ability to make physical contact with the animal(s).
   - ☐ Incidental – visitors will share space with the animals, the ability to touch the animals will be incidental and contingent on animal(s) seeking contact with visitors.
   - ☐ Protected – visitors will not share space with the animals; physical contact with the animal(s) will always be across or through a protective barrier
   - ☐ None – visitors will not be permitted to have physical contact with the animal(s) under any circumstances.

10. If the facility houses dangerous animals (including, but not limited to large felids, large
canids, bears, any great ape species, large crocodilians, large snakes, large ratites, venomous or toxic species), attach the risk management plan describing escape protocols, contingency plans for disasters/emergencies, and immobilizations/lethal weapons protocols. Please also describe any additional safety measures taken at the facility when working with these species (e.g., animal shifting protocols, lock checking protocols, communication protocols, and delivery of feed).

a. For venomous species, does your facility maintain a stock of the appropriate anti-venin, if available? Are health practitioners in your area aware that you are housing venomous species?

11. Has the facility had any permits and/or licenses related to wildlife suspended or revoked? If yes, please explain the reasons for suspension or revocation. If permits or licenses were revoked or suspended, when were they re-instated?

12. Has the facility received any fines from local, state or federal wildlife regulatory agencies? If yes, please explain by providing dates of fining and circumstances that lead to the fine.

13. Is the facility in compliance with all local, state, and federal ordinances, laws, regulations, permits, etc. related to wildlife? If no, please explain how the organization is working towards becoming compliant.

14. Submit the facility’s USDA license and the last 5 years of the USDA inspection reports, if applicable.

15. Submit any applicable (local, state, federal) wildlife permits.

16. What animal recordkeeping system does the facility use?

17. What method(s) will be used to permanently identify animals born/hatched at this facility in accordance with SSP Breeding and Transfer recommendations?

18. Submit a current inventory list and census of the animal collection at the facility.
Part C: To be completed by facilities in Categories 1 & 2

Applicant Agreement to Accept All Sustainability Partner Responsibilities

By signing below, I, (Name ), (this must be the Director or CEO) of the (Organization Name), fully agree to meet the responsibilities listed below if approved as a Sustainability Partner in the (species name) SSP Program and further acknowledge that failure to do so may result in a revocation of this approved status:

☐ I and my staff will adhere to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Animal Care and Welfare Standards for all animals in our collection.

☐ I will provide the AZA SSP Program with complete studbook histories for all animals proposed for inclusion in the SSP managed population within 30 days of approval.

☐ I will not display the SSP logo.

☐ I will complete the full application process before the end of the five-year approval period ends in order to continue my Organization’s participation in the SSP Program.

☐ I will assure that the sponsoring AZA-accredited facility, staff, Board, APM Committee, TAG, and/or SSP representatives can schedule a visit to the applicant institution/zoo upon request to view the facilities and assure adherence to AZA policies and animal care and welfare practices.

Applicant Director/CEO Signature:     Date:
Checklist of Supporting Materials and Attachments for each Sustainability Partner Category

1. Zoos/aquariums located outside the U.S. that are accredited members of a World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Recognized Super-Regional Zoological Association

☐ Does this application include a completed Letter of Justification from the SSP Program Coordinator?
☐ Does this application include a completed Letter Affirming the applicant’s accreditation from a WAZA Super-Regional Zoological Association?

2. Wildlife facilities that are not accredited by a WAZA recognized Regional Zoological Association

☐ Does this application include a completed Letter of Justification from the SSP Program Coordinator?
☐ Does this application include completed letters of sponsorship from two Directors of two different AZA-accredited facilities? If the SSP Coordinator submitting the application is also a Director from an AZA-accredited facility or CRF, they must include a letter of sponsorship from a Director of a different AZA-accredited facility. The SSP Coordinator cannot write their letter of support.

Photographs of SSP Program species:

☐ Indoor facilities
☐ Outdoor facilities
☐ Holding areas
☐ Animal shifting doors
☐ Locks and pins for all doors, including keeper to exhibit/holding, animal to exhibit, animal to animal
☐ Public barriers and containment

Documents:

☐ Standard operating procedure for daily husbandry of the species
☐ Risk management plan
☐ Copies of USDA License and applicable permits, if applicable
☐ Last 5 years of USDA inspection reports, if applicable
☐ Current inventory list and census of the animal collection
Guidelines for Letters of Justification, Accreditation, and Sponsorship

Required for facilities in Categories 1 & 2:

Letter of Justification from an AZA SSP Program for a Sustainability Partner to Participate in their Program

The letter from an SSP Coordinator must:

1. Clearly identify the SSP Program for which the potential Sustainability Partner participant’s involvement is being requested, as well as the SSP Coordinator’s identity, telephone number and e-mail address;

2. Indicate that the TAG Chair has reviewed the Sustainability Partner application and the TAG supports the approval of the potential Sustainability Partner;

3. Make a clear formal request for approval of the potential Sustainability Partner;

4. Describe the challenges that the population faces and how this partner could alleviate some of those challenges. Identify specifically why the potential Sustainability Partner's participation would benefit the SSP Program and describe how the Sustainability Partner applicant's animals and/or holding/breeding spaces are critical to the success of the SSP Program. How would the approval of the potential Sustainability Partner for participation in the SSP Program provide genetic, demographic, population management, husbandry, welfare, conservation or other benefits to the SSP Program? Identify any additional factors that substantiate how approval of the potential Sustainability Partner's participation will benefit the SSP Program and conservation of the species (e.g., reference to the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan, Global Species Management Plans, Population Viability Analysis results suggesting a need for additional holding space, unique genetics, additional demographics, TAG Regional Collection Plan goals, etc.). Present facts and accurate data. Indicate if the facility is currently working successfully with the TAG in other ways or with other SSP Programs, and include examples of when/how the facility effectively communicated with the SSP, other AZA SSP Programs, and/or other facilities. Describe any animal transfers that have occurred between the applicant and the SSP Program;

5. Provide confirmation that the SSP Coordinator has discussed in detail with the potential Sustainability Partner the responsibilities that the organization will assume upon approval as an SSP participant including assurance that the Sustainability Partner applicant has fully read and understood:
   - AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics,
   - the Full Participation in the SSP Policy,
   - the Policy on Responsible Population Management, and
   - the AZA Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare.

6. Provide a clearly stated description of how the Sustainability Partner applicant provides a level of animal care and welfare in keeping with AZA’s standards and identify how the SSP Coordinator has attained this understanding. Describe the Sustainability Partner applicant’s history of experience with the SSP Program species or similar species, and identify staff qualifications in caring for the species, related expertise, and resources at the facility. This section should also include any forms of information (such as photographs, veterinary statements, USDA inspection reports, etc.) that corroborate the applicant’s adherence to AZA standards of animal care and welfare;

7. Indicate whether the SSP Coordinator or any current participating facility in the SSP Program has conducted a site visit of the proposed Sustainability Partner in the last 3 years. Provide copies of site visit reports, if available;

8. End with the signature of the SSP Coordinator and the date.
9. Submit the completed application, required letters, and attachments to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org) for APM Committee approval.

*The APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships is a valuable resource to use when the SSP is beginning to gather the application materials. The current APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships is listed on the AZA website ([https://www.aza.org/animal-population-management-committee](https://www.aza.org/animal-population-management-committee)).

**Required for Facilities in Category 1:**

**Letter Affirming Accreditation by a WAZA Recognized Zoological Association for Organizations which are Applying for Approval in an AZA SSP Program**

The letter from the appropriate association should:

1. Clearly identify the name of the organization / entity applying for approval as a participant in an AZA SSP Program;
2. Clearly identify the name of the Association and the Association Director’s name and contact information;
3. Affirm that the applicant organization/entity is a currently accredited member in good standing of the Association providing this letter;
4. Provide clearly stated assurance that the applicant organization/entity provides a level of animal care and welfare in keeping with the standards of the Association providing this letter and identify how this information is known;
5. End with the signature of the Association Director and the date.

**Required for Facilities in Category 2:**

**Letters From the Directors of Two AZA-accredited Facilities Sponsoring the Approval of a Non- Member Wildlife Facility as an SSP Sustainability Partner**

The letters from two, separate AZA-accredited Facility Directors must:

1. Identify the SSP for which the potential Sustainability Partner participant's involvement is being sponsored;
2. Provide a description articulating why it is believed that the potential Sustainability Partner applicant will provide a benefit to the SSP Program, and identify any additional sources that substantiate how approval of the potential Sustainability Partner applicant's participation will benefit the SSP Program and conservation of the species (e.g., reference to the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan, Population Viability Analysis results suggesting a need for additional holding space, unique genetics, additional demographics, TAG Regional Collection Plan goals, etc.);
3. Provide a statement that it is understood that the signature on the letter of sponsorship serves as assurance that the applicant facility provides a level of animal care and welfare equivalent to or above that of the AZA Accreditation Standards. When referencing the site, please describe if the Director (or identify who on senior staff) visited the applicant's facility and outline the observations / experiences that substantiate why it is believed the applicant adheres, or will adhere, to AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare for all animals in the facility's collection.

For wildlife facilities in North America both sponsoring letters must be written by a Director (or designate) of two different AZA facilities. For wildlife facilities outside of North America the facility letters must be written by two Directors (or designates), one of whom must be from a WAZA Recognized Zoological Association.
America, one of the two required letters may be written by the Director of a zoo or aquarium accredited by another WAZA recognized regional zoological association.

4. End with the signature of the Director and the date.
Appendix H: Guidelines for Assessing Sustainability Partners in SSP Programs

Partnerships in animal management are unique relationships between facilities accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and entities external to AZA that are designed to benefit the population viability of the species while upholding high standards of animal care and welfare. A Sustainability Partner is an AZA Animal Population Management (APM) Committee approved wildlife facility* (see definition below) that has regularly exchanged animals of the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program with AZA-accredited facilities and certified related facilities, typically as part of the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan or other SSP Program management process.

- A Sustainability Partner’s species/animal(s) is regularly included in the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan.
- Recommendations are made for individuals of that species in the Sustainability Partner’s collection through the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan process. This would include documented interim SSP Program recommendations.

AZA Animal Programs can benefit from responsible partnerships with appropriate wildlife facilities in the form of expertise, space, and other various resources. For the purpose of this and other associated materials, wildlife facilities include, but are not limited to, zoos and aquariums, ranches, refuges, rehabilitation centers, research facilities, sanctuaries, survival centers, breeding facilities, private individuals, and educational outreach organizations. These facilities can be within or outside the U.S., and do not need to be open to the public.

The SSP Program and Taxon Advisory Group (TAG) must first decide if a partnership is warranted before a facility is invited to apply and considered for formal inclusion in an SSP Program as a Sustainability Partner. It is understood that there is no “one size fits all” model regarding how to assess partners, and each SSP Program should consider their own specific needs as they work through these guidelines. SSP Coordinators should communicate with relevant parties (SSP Program Officers, Steering Committee members, the TAG Chair, population advisors, etc.) and follow these guidelines to help them make an informed and responsible partnership decision.

This assessment process will be two-fold. APM Committee Liaisons will work with TAGs and the SSP Programs within their purview, and use these Guidelines to evaluate the current and potential SSP Program partners in order to make an initial assessment of their value to the SSP Program’s population sustainability, as well as their appropriateness as an AZA partner. During this process some existing and potential partners may be removed from the SSP Program, for a variety of reasons.
After this initial assessment, SSP Programs should work closely with their AZA Population Management Center (PMC) Population Biologist as they initiate their next Breeding and Transfer Plan (BTP) process. The analyses needed to assess the remaining partners may be time-consuming, depending on the species, population dynamics, the number of remaining potential partners, and other factors. APM Committee will allow for extensions to SSP Program accountability deadlines as needed. If the SSP Program determines that it wants to include the facility in the SSP Program then it must move forward with submitting the Sustainability Partner application to APM Committee.

Step 1: Please discuss the questions (a-e) below within the SSP Program management group to determine if the partnership meets basic requirements to be forwarded for APM Committee consideration

The first and foremost question to consider when determining whether or not to include a specific Sustainability Partner to the SSP Program should be:

Does the potential Sustainability Partner provide the AZA Animal Program (TAG or SSP) population with any of the following benefits?

a. Genetic considerations  
   i. Could the partner provide genetically unique or valuable animals to the SSP population if they joined the SSP Program? Could the partner provide a unique individual or multiple unique individuals?

b. Demographic considerations  
   i. Could the partner provide individual animals of a desired age, life stage, or gender to the SSP population?  
   ii. Could the partner provide additional animals that would make the population more demographically stable?

c. Field conservation considerations  
   i. Does this partner’s involvement affect current field conservation initiatives for the SSP Program?  
   ii. Does this partner play a significant role in a release or recovery plan for the species?  
   iii. Will the loss of the partnership negatively affect conservation strategies for the SSP or Recovery Program?

d. Husbandry, well-being, and welfare considerations  
   i. Does the partner provide some unique opportunity that would benefit the species’ husbandry that may be difficult to replicate or is only replicable on a small scale in AZA facilities (e.g., hundreds of acres for herds of animals, direct access to saltwater for marine species)?
   ii. Will the partner be able to provide appropriate husbandry for the species at all life-stages?  
   iii. Are there concerns regarding the potential commercialization of the animals or their offspring? Would the partner be willing to only accept non-breeding animals in this situation?
iv. Will the partner accept animals recommended by the SSP Program as directed?

v. Is there a specific husbandry role the partnership may provide (housing males, housing groups instead of individuals, etc.)?

vi. Will the partnership provide a husbandry benefits to individual animals as well as to the species as a whole?

vii. Will the partnership provide additional expertise to the SSP Program, such as veterinary, behavior, education, research, etc.?

e. International partners, if applicable

i. Is it logistically feasible for the partner to regularly import or export this species across its international boundary?

ii. Is the partner willing and able to meet any pre-export quarantine requirements relevant for this species as dictated by the USDA?

iii. Does the partner have a member of staff experienced with international animal transfers and/or permits?

iv. Is the facility experienced with international imports/exports among major zoological regions?

If you answer "no" to many of the above questions, then it may be most appropriate not to partner with the facility in question in future SSP BTPs. This does not imply that the SSP Program or an AZA facility can never send or receive animals from this facility. However, if exchanges occur, they must be infrequent or "one-way," and the facility will not receive BTP recommendations.

If the answer is "yes" to many of the above questions, the partner may warrant additional deliberation to include them in the SSP Program’s next BTP. Potential partners will require additional evaluation to assure that they are vital to the SSP Program and an appropriate partner for AZA. Consider the potential partner carefully. Consult with fellow members of the TAG and other SSP Programs that may have partnered with them in the past. Proceed to step 2

Step 2: Please ask your potential partner - and yourself - the following questions:

How does this new or continued partnership benefit the sustainability of the animal population?

The AZA PMC population biologists are available to help with your decision. They may be able to assess whether a potential partner’s animals are valuable to the SSP population or how valuable additional space(s) is/are and help think critically about the impact that the partner could have on the population. For example, while increasing numbers may seem automatically positive, simply adding one more space or one more animal does not necessarily mean the partner will significantly enhance the population’s sustainability. Answering this type of question may require consultation with the SSP Program’s Population Biologist, and may need to wait until the BTP process.

Will the facility actively support and participate in AZA Animal Programs?

Supporting and participating includes providing requested information regarding its animals and their husbandry and welfare upon request to AZA Program Leaders, including Studbook
Keepers, SSP Coordinators, and TAG Chairs, assigning Institutional Representatives (IRs) to the AZA Animal Program, and following agreed upon recommendations (e.g., acquisitions, breeding, transfers, etc.). An existing partner who has regularly failed to provide requested information in the past should not be moved forward through the current application process.

If you are assessing an existing partner, has the facility been actively involved in previous SSP Breeding and Transfer Plans with the SSP Program in question?

Has the facility communicated with the SSP Coordinator during the planning process such as answering wants and needs surveys, reviewing draft plans and providing feedback? Do they have a history of following SSP BTP recommendations? Are they equally likely to follow recommendations for hold as they are for breed with, or transfer? Do they regularly communicate and share their animal data with the Studbook Keeper?

If the answer to the above questions is yes, do you think they will continue to do so in the future?

Will the movement of SSP animals with the partner be considered infrequent “one-way” or “one-off” transfers?

The best way to make this decision is with an AZA Population Biologist and using PMx software; however, SSP Program Leaders can also do some investigation on their own to help make these decisions. When potentially bringing an animal into the SSP, it is best to first determine if this animal will add value to the SSP population. This value can come in many forms (e.g., genetically, demographically, husbandry, ambassador needs). When potentially sending an animal out of the SSP, there is always a cost and many variables must be carefully considered, including what will the welfare of the animal be outside of the SSP, will losing the animal hurt the demographic or genetic stability of the SSP, etc.

It is not necessary to apply for a facility to be a Sustainability Partner if exchanges occur as infrequent, “one-way,” or “one-off” transfers and the facility will not receive SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations. A facility may be sent animals excluded from the SSP population without becoming a Sustainability Partner. If the facility does not currently have the species in question then they do not qualify as a Sustainability Partner and the SSP should not apply. They may apply to include the facility as a Sustainability Partner in the future once the facility acquires the animals.

What can SSP Program Leaders do to help determine which individual animals to infrequently send out of the SSP (export) and/or receive into the SSP (import) (i.e., “one-way,” or “one-off” transfers)?

The best way to make these decisions is with an AZA Population Biologist and using PMx software; however, SSP Program Leaders can also do some investigation on their own to help make these decisions. When potentially bringing an animal into the SSP, it is best to first determine if this animal will add value to the SSP population. This value can come in many forms (e.g., genetically, demographically, husbandry, ambassador needs). When potentially sending an animal out of the SSP, there is always a cost and many variables must be carefully considered, including what will the welfare of the animal be outside of the SSP, will losing the animal hurt the demographic or genetic stability of the SSP, etc.

As each SSP is unique, there is no way to create an extensive list, but below are some examples of ways to further investigate these potential values and considerations.

- What do you know about the potential animal(s) that are proposed to join the SSP? If you are
adding them for genetic reasons, do you know their pedigree and are they linked to the SSP population? If they are intended for breeding, are they of an appropriate age, reproductively viable, experienced?

- Look at the studbook and previous Breeding and Transfer Plan for the SSP.
  - Demography
    - Are more animals demographically needed for this SSP (i.e., it has a very small population size or lacks young, breeding-aged animals)?
    - Is the SSP population demographically robust enough to send out and potentially lose animals (i.e., is the animal(s) you plan to export in pre-reproductive or reproductive age classes and will you have enough reproductive-aged animals remaining in the SSP to meet future breeding goals)?
  - Genetics
    - Would the SSP population benefit from adding more unique genes (i.e., is gene diversity low and projected to decline quickly? Do you have a small number of founders represented in the SSP?)?
    - Are the proposed non-SSP animals related to the SSP population? If so, how closely related? Has the SSP previously imported animals from this source?
    - Would the SSP population be able to withstand sending out and potentially losing some genes? Are the animals you plan to export over-represented, having high mean kinship and many living relatives in the SSP?
  - Husbandry
    - Is the husbandry known and consistent for this SSP population? If not, could this non-SSP facility share knowledge, expertise, or experienced breeding animals to help the SSP?
    - Was this non-AZA facility included in the last BTP? If so, what were their breeding and transfer recommendations?

- Are these potential animals included in the SSP studbook database? If so, look in the database to identify closely related individuals to minimize inbreeding when making new breeding recommendations. Use the Antecedent and Descendant Pedigree Reports in PopLink, the Sibling Tables and Descendant Lists in SPARKS, or the Pedigree tools in ZIMS for Studbooks. Think about the logistics, resources, abilities, and acquisition/disposition policies of the facilities potentially involved in these transfers. Are they conducive to making the proposed transfers occur?
Does the Animal Program believe the partner will adhere to relevant AZA policies and accreditation standards?

The partner must agree to adhere to the AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare. Do you know if the partner is familiar with these documents - have you provided them? Did the partner express any concerns or reservations?

The agreement to follow these policies signals the partner’s intent to provide high quality animal care and operate in ways consistent with AZA principles and ethics.

Is the facility involved with other AZA Animal Programs?

Reach out to those Animal Program Leaders and ask about the potential partner. What is the nature of their relationship? Are they communicative? Do they provide information? Do they actively participate in the program?

The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department and the AZA PMC may be able to help SSP Programs identify what other SSP Programs are working with a potential partner.

Has anyone from an AZA-accredited facility (e.g., staff, an AZA Board member, APM Committee member, TAG, and/or SSP Program representative) visited the potential partner and viewed their facility to assure adherence to AZA policies and animal care and welfare practices?

Communicate with your TAG Chair and Steering Committee, as well as other SSP Programs within your TAG (and others). Utilize the AZA Network groups for your taxa or at the Curator level. Reach out to the person who conducted a site visit to gain insight into the facility. Make sure that it is an appropriate fit for the SSP Program animals. Request documents or written opinions.

Has the partner’s participation in another SSP Program been denied?

Talk to the SSP Programs for which the partnership application was denied to identify the exact reasons why the application did not go through. It could be that a facility that is appropriate or capable of working with one species is less appropriate for another.

Step 3: Decide if this partnership will be formally submitted for APM Committee consideration

Given the answers to all of the questions above:

A. The SSP Program feels that the facility is essential to the SSP Program
   • The SSP Coordinator should review the Sustainability Partner and other related AZA policies and Accreditation Standards with the partner.
   • The SSP Coordinator should work with the Sustainability Partner and begin completing the Sustainability Partner application.
• The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department and APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships are available to assist with any questions you may have during this process.

B. The SSP Program believes the facility would be an appropriate partner, but is unsure if the facility is essential to the SSP Program from a sustainability standpoint
• The SSP Coordinator should review the Sustainability Partner and other related AZA policies and Accreditation Standards with the partner.
• The SSP Coordinator should let their AZA PMC Population Advisor know that they will be requesting additional analyses during their next SSP BTP so that schedules and materials can be planned accordingly.
• If, once these analyses are complete, the partner is deemed essential to the SSP Program then the SSP Coordinator should work with the Sustainability Partner and begin completing the Sustainability Partner application.
• The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department and APM Committee Vice Chair for Partnerships are available to assist with any questions you may have during this process.

C. The SSP Program does not believe the partner is essential to the SSP Program
• The partner must not be listed in subsequent SSP BTPs. They are not an SSP Program partner.
  o This does not prohibit occasional animal moves that are permitted by AZA’s Policy on Responsible Management.
  o This does prohibit the facility’s holdings from appearing in the BTP and from them receiving written recommendations.
Appendix I: Sustainability Partner Policy FAQ

The APM Committee recommends that Program Leaders contact Michael Ogle, APM Committee Vice Chair of Partnerships (mogle@zooknoxville.org), with any questions prior to submitting applications for review.

Expectations for Approved Sustainability Partners in an AZA Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program

AZA SSP Programs focus on the conservation of select and typically threatened or endangered species through the cooperative management of small populations at AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and Certified Related Facilities. These facilities undergo a thorough accreditation review process that includes the submission of an extensive application as well as an intensive, on-site inspection by a team of experts to assure the highest standards of animal care and management are met.

A Sustainability Partner is defined as an organization that has regularly exchanged animals of the SSP with AZA-accredited facilities and CRFs, typically as part of the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan or other SSP Program management process.

- A Sustainability Partner’s species/animal(s) is regularly included in the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan.
- Recommendations are made for individuals of that species in the Sustainability Partner’s collection through the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan process. This would include documented interim SSP Program recommendations.

It is not necessary to apply for a facility to be a Sustainability Partner if exchanges occur as infrequent, “one-way,” or “one-off” transfers and the facility will not receive SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan recommendations. A facility may be sent animals excluded from the SSP population without becoming a Sustainability Partner. If the facility does not currently have the species in question then they do not qualify as a Sustainability Partner and the SSP should not apply. They may apply to include the facility as a Sustainability Partner in the future once the facility acquires the animals.

AZA believes that the highest standards of animal care, welfare, and population management are of paramount importance, and Sustainability Partners are expected to agree and abide by AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, Policy on Responsible Population Management, and Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare for all animals in the facility’s collection.

Sustainability Partners in SSP Programs are not considered accredited or certified and may not display the AZA logo or the AZA SSP logo. Like AZA accreditations and certifications, approvals for a Sustainability Partner’s continued participation in an SSP Program must be renewed every five years.
Accountability and Planning

My SSP Program is scheduled to be planned with the AZA Population Management Center (PMC) or Adjunct Advisor in the next few months. Do all Sustainability Partner applications need to be submitted and approved before my planning date?

SSP Program populations that had a scheduled planning meeting between October 1, 2018 and March 31, 2019 were included in a six-month grace period and could include any not yet approved non-AZA facilities in the Breeding and Transfer Plan (BTP), if the Program Leaders chose to do so. Program Leaders should think about potential Sustainability Partners and start working with them to fill out the application(s) in order to be ready for the next Breeding and Transfer Plan planning process. SSP Programs will need to get their non-AZA facilities approved before the planning meeting in order to include them in the BTP. Non-AZA facilities that are not yet approved Sustainability Partners are not allowed to be included in the BTPs, even if their applications are in process.

Who enforces the implementation of the new policy, and how is it assured that only approved Sustainability Partners are included in BTPs?

The AZA Animal Population Management Committee (APM Committee) ultimately enforces all Animal Program policies. The SSP Coordinator and TAG Chair should conduct the first review of their Sustainability Partner application(s) and remove any non-AZA facilities that clearly do not meet the definition of a Sustainability Partner. During the development of the Draft BTP, the SSP Program’s Population Biologist will be engaged in conversations with the SSP Program and discuss all remaining non-AZA participants, and will be aware of which participants have been approved to be Sustainability Partners.

The AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department will review the most recent published SSP BTPs every six months or so to track Sustainability Partners that are listed in the Final Plans. The Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department will share these data with the APM Committee and the TAGs on a regular basis.

What is the turnaround time for application review and approval by APM Committee once the SSP Coordinator submits the application?

APM Committee holds monthly conference calls to review and approve Sustainability Partner applications on a rolling schedule as they are submitted. The SSP Program and the applicant will be notified via email as soon as possible whether or not the Sustainability Partner application was approved. SSP Coordinators must assure that application materials are provided and all questions answered completely. TAG Chairs may assist in assuring applications are ready for submission. If the APM Committee has questions about the application(s) during review, a representative will contact the SSP Coordinator and provide an opportunity for further clarification. While this may delay the approval process, it will be valuable in helping the APM Committee understand why the SSP Coordinator feels the partner should be considered for Sustainability Partner status.
If a Green SSP Program includes previously approved Sustainability Partners, do these Sustainability Partners have to go through the new approval process to be included in the next BTP?

Previously approved Sustainability Partners are approved for five years, and these approvals will remain in place until their original expiration date. Once the five years have passed, the Sustainability Partner must submit the new application to remain as a Sustainability Partner in the SSP Program.

Do facilities participating in SSP Programs that include government-owned/managed animals follow the same policy and processes?

The AZA Board approved a waiver to the Sustainability Partner Policy when certain conditions are met. SSP Programs that include animals owned by a US state or federal agency, or equivalent foreign government partner, may not need to complete Sustainability Partner applications for each facility housing individuals of that species in order for them to participate in the SSP. These agencies and designated facilities are considered Government Partners, which allows them to be part of the SSP and included in the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan. Official documentation may be requested by the APM Committee.

When the animals at a specific facility meet all of the following conditions with regard to the SSP program, a waiver for that facility would apply:

- The agency owns the animals the SSP program is requesting for participation,
- The agency holds responsibility and authority for adding (or removing) the facility as a holder of the agency owned individuals,
- The government agency must approve of the housing and management of the species at the facility, and
- The agency must approve animal breeding and transfer activity at this facility.

If specific facilities within your SSP Program meet the criteria above, please notify conservation@aza.org at AZA as soon as possible. If you have documentation from the agency that empowers the SSP Coordinator to manage the population for the agency please submit this to conservation@aza.org. Doing so will help the AZA staff and the APM Committee help facilitate the planning process for your program with the PMC.

The APM Committee strongly encourages Program Leaders for these programs to have up-to-date facility profiles on participating non-AZA facilities as these may be helpful in facilitating transfers of animals between AZA and non-AZA facilities. The Sustainability Partner application could be used as a template for these profiles as the application covers most, if not all, of the common questions AZA facilities may have when working with non-accredited facilities on animal transfers and may reduce the paperwork burden on non-AZA facilities participating in transfers with AZA facilities in your SSP Program.

It is important to note that requirements to acquire permits for possession, transport or import/export for your species are NOT sufficient government oversight to waive the Sustainability Partner Policy.

Application and Process

Who submits the Sustainability Partner application to APM Committee?
The SSP Coordinator and the non-AZA facility should work together to assure that the application and materials are complete. The SSP Coordinator is the point of contact and the person who should collate the application and submit all materials to the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org) and copy their TAG Chair.

**How should SSP Programs notify their current non-AZA partners of the new policy?**

We hope that SSP Coordinators have developed relationships with their current partners and feel comfortable introducing them to the application and walking them through the process, if they meet the definition of a Sustainability Partner. APM Committee has developed template letters that SSP Coordinators may wish to use to assist in their communications. Email the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department (conservation@aza.org) for these templates.

Some TAGs where multiple SSP Programs are working with the same partners may wish to coordinate their outreach efforts, while others may prefer for SSP Coordinators to reach out to their non-AZA partners directly to explain the new policy and application process. APM Committee TAG Liaisons are available for additional assistance.

**How should an SSP Program select Directors to write their Letters of Sponsorship? Can someone other than Directors (such as a Curator) write the Letters of Sponsorship?**

SSP Coordinators may ask Directors who have had recent animal transfers with the non-AZA facility to write the letter as they may have the most current knowledge of and communication with the facility. Alternatively, it may be useful to ask a Director of an accredited facility nearby to provide one of the letters since they may be aware of, have relationships with, or have visited these neighboring non-accredited facilities.

A Curator, or another designee, at an AZA-accredited facility may write the letter, but the Director of the facility must assume responsibility for the contents of the letter by signing it.

If the SSP Coordinator is also a Director from an AZA-accredited facility or CRF, they must include a letter of sponsorship from a Director of a different AZA-accredited facility.

**Who should conduct the site visit for a potential Sustainability Partner facility?**

Site visits are NOT a required component of a Sustainability Partner application. However, if a Director references a site visit in the letter of support then it must have occurred within the last five years. Visits should have an inspection report associated with them, and may be conducted by someone delegated by the signing Director, such as a member from the SSP Program or TAG Steering Committee or a representative (curator, director, or veterinarian) from a neighboring AZA-accredited facility.

It should be noted, however, that in the application, applicants agree to site visits after they are approved.
Do Candidate Programs need to follow the Sustainability Partner policy process with their non-AZA participants?

No, this policy and application process applies only to current SSP Programs. Candidate Programs will need to assess their non-AZA participants if they become SSP Programs, and facilities that meet the definition of a Sustainability Partner must be approved by APM Committee before they can be included in a BTP.

If a non-AZA facility participates in multiple SSP Programs, can they submit one Sustainability Partner application that encompasses all of these SSP Programs?

APM Committee requires a separate application for each SSP Program in which a non-AZA facility wishes to continue participating. Regulations, standards of care and welfare, facilities, and experience at the proposed partner facility may vary among species, so each must be assessed separately.

Several sections of the application form (e.g., Part A: Facility Information and Facility’s Representative Information; and most of Part B) may be easily cut and pasted from application to application, easing the workload of those facilities that may be applying to participate in multiple SSP Programs.

If a facility loses AZA accreditation during the SSP Breeding and Transfer Planning process, does the facility need to become an approved Sustainability Partner to be included in the current, final Plan?

In the event that a facility loses its AZA accreditation during the SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan planning process (i.e., after the planning meeting), if the SSP Program chooses, the newly non-accredited facility may still be included in the Final BTP. The SSP Program should work with the facility to submit a Sustainability Partner application to the APM Committee within six months from the Final BTP publication and must be an approved Sustainability Partner or rejoin AZA before the next BTP. The Final BTP must include a note next to the facility’s recommendations table indicating that in order to remain an SSP participant; this facility must work with the SSP to submit a Sustainability Partner application.

Partnerships

What are the benefits of being a Sustainability Partner to a non-AZA facility?

Sustainability Partners benefit in many ways. A Sustainability Partner is part of collective population management and information exchange. They can participate with the SSP Program, be affiliated with professionally-managed AZA programs, receive scientifically-based breeding and transfer recommendations to assist with managing animals at their facility, or acquire new animals.

Being a Sustainability Partner offers a designation of engagement in the preservation of the species in human care that goes beyond simply occasionally providing or receiving animals to/from zoos and aquariums. Sustainability Partners may also have enhanced access to
information about ways to support in situ conservation of the species through more regular and formal interaction with AZA colleagues, or they may be better placed to seek support from the AZA community for their own in situ initiatives.

We also hope that having a centralized, comprehensive, and reasonably up-to-date (five years old or less) profile maintained by AZA and the SSP Coordinator will help reduce the burden of paperwork down the road when the Sustainability Partner is sending or receiving animals from AZA-accredited facilities, as these AZA facilities will have access to the Sustainability Partner applications, which will likely answer many of the questions they typically have when they work with non-AZA facilities. We hope that current non-AZA partners recognize these benefits and value continued participation in AZA SSP Programs.

**This application may be a lot of work for applicants; what if a facility doesn’t want to fill it out?**

The types of questions found within the Sustainability Partner application are very similar to those found in recipient profile forms that many zoos and aquariums already use when they work with non-AZA facilities. Therefore, many potential Sustainability Partners may be familiar with these types of questions and have much of the information already available. SSP Coordinators and TAG Chairs may assist partners that are finding the application process difficult. If the facility does not want to apply to be a Sustainability Partner then they cannot be considered part of the SSP nor included in the BTP.

**If an SSP Program no longer wants to include a Sustainability Partner, can they remove them from the SSP Program? Do they need APM Committee approval to do this?**

An SSP Program may choose to no longer partner with a Sustainability Partner at any time without APM Committee approval. SSP Programs should let the AZA Conservation, Management, & Welfare Sciences Department know of any changes in participation, and the reasons why the partnership has ended.

**Must all Sustainability Partners adhere to relevant AZA policies and accreditation standards, regardless of SSP designation?**

The Sustainability Partner must agree to adhere to the AZA’s Code of Professional Ethics, SSP Full Participation Policy, and Policy on Responsible Population Management for all animals in their collection. The agreement to follow these policies signals the partner’s intent to provide high quality animal care and operate in ways consistent with AZA principles and ethics. As well, it acknowledges the Program Leader’s responsibility and authority to maintain best practice animal care and scientific population management standards.

The Sustainability Partner must agree to AZA’s SSP Full Participation Policy regardless of the SSP Program designation (Red, Yellow, or Green). This also signals the partner’s intent to cooperate fully with the SSP Program and abide by BTP recommendations.

**Must all Sustainability Partners adhere to relevant AZA animal care and welfare accreditation standards?**
The Sustainability Partner must agree to adhere to Accreditation Standards related to animal care and welfare. The agreement to follow these policies signals the partner’s intent to provide high quality animal care and operate in ways consistent with AZA principles and ethics.

**What if a non-AZA facility is not “regularly exchanging animals” with the SSP Program population (e.g., movements of animals between the facility and AZA are infrequently recommended by the SSP Program)? Does that mean that they do not qualify to be a Sustainability Partner?**

A facility must be “regularly exchanging animals” of the SSP to meet the definition of a Sustainability Partner. The period of time considered “regular” is dependent upon the characteristics of the SSP Program’s species, such as lifespan and frequency of breeding events. SSP Coordinators should assess the likelihood of moving animals between the partner and AZA facilities in the next five years and use that as a guideline in determining who to invite to go through the Sustainability Partner application process at this time.

Facilities that are likely to only be receiving OR sending animals to AZA facilities, but not likely to be involved in both types of transactions in the next five years, may not be priorities for applying to become Sustainability Partners at this time. However, they may apply at a later date if deemed appropriate by the SSP Coordinator. SSP Coordinators may ask their Population Biologists for assistance in making some of these decisions. All facilities and all animals are encouraged to be tracked within the Studbooks, regardless of their Sustainability Partner status, so that SSP Coordinators and Population Biologists may potentially assess whether animals at non-Sustainability Partner facilities should be brought into the SSP population.

If a non-AZA facility is expected to ONLY RECEIVE individuals deemed non-essential to the SSP and there is NO REASONABLE EXCEPTION that any individuals from that facility will be transferred into an SSP facility in the future, that facility does not need to be an SSP Sustainability Partner. If an individual is declared non-essential to an SSP and is available for export to a non-SSP facility, no demographic and/or genetic analyses will be conducted to either inform which non-SSP facility the individual should be transferred to or to provide breeding recommendations for that individual at a receiving non-SSP facility.

If a non-AZA facility has expressed a willingness to follow future SSP recommendations and holds one or more individuals that ARE EXPECTED to be transferred into an SSP facility in the future, requiring the demographic and/or genetic value of the individual(s) to be REPEATEDLY ASSESSED during Breeding and Transfer Plan or interim recommendation development to identify when transfer into an SSP facility is beneficial, then that facility should become an SSP Sustainability Partner. A non-AZA facility should also become a Sustainability Partner if it would like to receive breeding and/or transfer recommendations for its animals.

Demographic and/or genetic analyses to evaluate the transfer of individual(s) from a non-SSP facility to an SSP facility will only be completed when a specific need has been defined and transfer(s) have a REASONABLE EXPECTATION of occurring. The demographic and/or genetic value of individual(s) at non-SSPs facilities will not be repeatedly assessed during
Breeding and Transfer Plan or interim recommendation development to identify when the transfer to an SSP facility might be beneficial.

**How should the SSP Program document in the BTP when an animal is transferred out of the SSP population to a non-AZA facility that is not a Sustainability Partner for that SSP Program?**

In the BTP, the animal should be given a “SEND TO” transfer recommendation, labeled as “excluded”, and have a note indicating that the animal will be transferring “Out of the SSP.” The receiving non-AZA facility will not be listed in the BTP. The SSP Coordinator will be responsible for discussing the potential transfer options with the current holding facility, separate from the BTP. The holding facility will adhere to its own policies when transferring the animals to the non-AZA facility. The Studbook Keeper should record this transfer, and the destination, in the Studbook.

**When an AZA member-owned animal is currently held at a non-AZA facility, does that facility need to be a Sustainability Partner to remain in the SSP Program?**

When an AZA member-owned animal is held at a non-AZA facility, the best course of action will vary depending on the needs of the SSP Program. There are several possibilities: 1) The non-AZA facility may apply to become a Sustainability Partner to the SSP Program so that the animal remains part of the SSP population; 2) The non-AZA facility does not become a Sustainability Partner, and the animal is not included in the SSP nor BTP and remains at the non-AZA facility; or 3) The owning AZA facility moves the animal to an AZA facility and it remains in the SSP population. Animals should be moved as soon as possible; however, it is understood that this may sometimes take additional time.

**What are the options if a non-AZA facility does not want to complete the Sustainability Partner application but still wants to be involved in the SSP Program?**

There are several categories of AZA membership that are available including AZA-accredited members and Certified Related Facilities (https://www.aza.org/organization-membership). AZA membership provides many benefits and many opportunities. See more information at https://www.aza.org/benefits-of-accreditation, or contact membership@aza.org.

**If a non-accredited facility does not become a Sustainability Partner, does this mean I cannot work with them in any way?**

No, AZA facilities may still send animals and/or receive animals to/from non-AZA facilities at the recommendation of the SSP Coordinator according to their own animal transfer policies. When these transactions are mostly one-way (send to OR receive from) and/or rare, those non-AZA facilities are not engaging with the SSP at the level of Sustainability Partner. It does not mean that these facilities are less valuable or not necessary. AZA-accredited facilities may continue to work with non-AZA facilities in accordance with AZA Accreditation guidelines, Code of Professional Ethics, and Policy on Responsible Population Management.
In some cases, a non-AZA facility may hold individual animals for a long time before those animals become genetically and/or demographically beneficial to the SSP population. AZA recognizes that these facilities are still performing a valuable contribution and hopes the facility will provide data on the animals to the Studbook Keeper so that the animals can be tracked. The level of engagement a potential partner has with an SSP Program can change over time and thus there may be periods when it does and does not make sense for the SSP Program to try and move the facility through the Sustainability Partner process.

Are AZA Certified Related Facilities required to apply as Sustainability Partners?

No. Certified Related Facilities are full institutional AZA members, subject to the same standards, policies and processes as accredited members, with one exception, because they are not regularly open to the public, they are not required to maintain education programs.

What can SSP Program Leaders do to help determine which individual animals to infrequently send out of the SSP (export) and/or receive into the SSP (import) (i.e., “one-way,” or “one-off” transfers)?

The best way to make these decisions is with an AZA Population Biologist and using PMx software; however, SSP Program Leaders can also do some investigation on their own to help make these decisions. When potentially bringing an animal into the SSP, it is best to first determine if this animal will add value to the SSP population. This value can come in many forms (e.g., genetically, demographically, husbandry, ambassador needs). When potentially sending an animal out of the SSP, there is always a cost and many variables must be carefully considered, including what will the welfare of the animal be outside of the SSP, will losing the animal hurt the demographic or genetic stability of the SSP, etc.

As each SSP is unique, there is no way to create an extensive list, but below are some examples of ways to further investigate these potential values and considerations.

- What do you know about the potential animal(s) that are proposed to join the SSP? If you are adding them for genetic reasons, do you know their pedigree and are they linked to the SSP population? If they are intended for breeding, are they of an appropriate age, reproductively viable, experienced?
- Look at the studbook and previous Breeding and Transfer Plan for the SSP.
  - Demography
    - Are more animals demographically needed for this SSP (i.e., it has a very small population size or lacks young, breeding-aged animals)?
    - Is the SSP population demographically robust enough to send out and potentially lose animals (i.e., is the animal(s) you plan to export in pre-reproductive or reproductive age classes and will you have enough reproductive-aged animals remaining in the SSP to meet future breeding goals)?
  - Genetics
    - Would the SSP population benefit from adding more unique genes (i.e., is gene diversity low and projected to decline quickly? Do you have a small number of founders represented in the SSP)?
    - Are the proposed non-SSP animals related to the SSP population? If so, how closely related? Has the SSP previously imported animals from this source?
- Would the SSP population be able to withstand sending out and potentially losing some genes? Are the animals you plan to export over-represented, having high mean kinship and many living relatives in the SSP?
  - Husbandry
    - Is the husbandry known and consistent for this SSP population? If not, could this non-SSP facility share knowledge, expertise, or experienced breeding animals to help the SSP?
    - Was this non-AZA facility included in the last BTP? If so, what were their breeding and transfer recommendations?

  - Are these potential animals included in the SSP studbook database? If so, look in the database to identify closely related individuals to minimize inbreeding when making new breeding recommendations. Use the Antecedent and Descendant Pedigree Reports in PopLink, the Sibling Tables and Descendant Lists in SPARKS, or the Pedigree tools in ZIMS for Studbooks.

  - Think about the logistics, resources, abilities, and acquisition/disposition policies of the facilities potentially involved in these transfers. Are they conducive to making the proposed transfers occur?
Appendix J: Guidance for SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers on Sharing Studbook Data

The intention of this document is to provide guidance on when it is appropriate to share studbook data.

Sharing studbook data
There are many ways for SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers to share studbook data. Summarized data can be shared via exported population figures, tables, and reports (e.g., SPARKS, PopLink, ZIMS for Studbooks, PMx, Excel), Population Viability Analyses (PVAs), and Breeding and Transfer Plans (BTPs). Historic and current studbook data are viewable via AZA Studbook Publication documents. An entire studbook database may also be shared, potentially allowing someone to view, edit, or analyze the data.

It is important that you initially create an agreement with any collaborator(s) concerning sharing data from a studbook with third parties as well as publication of the data or any research results based on these data. Creating an agreement before sharing access to the studbook database will allow you to feel more comfortable with sharing these data. Researchers or anyone planning to publish results based on studbook data are required to fill out and submit the consent form (Appendix A) to both the Studbook Keeper and APM Committee Vice Chair of Studbooks and SSPs (conservation@aza.org) before data are shared.

Sharing access to your studbook database within ZIMS for Studbooks
Multiple people can have access at the same time to a single studbook database in ZIMS for Studbooks. This allows for all those with shared access to always be able to view the most updated version of the studbook database. However, the decision to share access to a studbook database should be carefully considered.

- Be aware that information in a studbook database has been contributed by numerous facilities, with the understanding that these data are only to be used for collaborative population management.
- Be aware that the studbook database may contain sensitive information or information that may be considered controversial (e.g., transfers, management euthanasia, individual animal’s notes).
- Never share the log in information to your personal ZIMS account. People with whom you would like to share information must have their own log in access to ZIMS. If they do not already have an account, contact AZA (conservation@aza.org) for guidance.
- The AZA Studbook Keeper will always remain ultimately responsible for their studbook database and all data within it.

Sharing studbook data with colleagues within the AZA Community
We aim to be collaborative. See the list of considerations below, but if any SSP participants would like access to the studbook data, ‘View and Export Only’ access may be the best choice and can be requested from the Studbook Keeper and SSP Coordinator, who then request it from the AZA Administrators (conservation@aza.org). Potential SSP Participants may include: SSP Advisor, TAG Chair, TAG Advisor, participating SSP facility, researcher affiliated with an AZA facility, or other colleagues involved in the SSP. Researchers or anyone planning to publish results based on studbook data are required to fill out and submit the consent form (Appendix A) to both the Studbook Keeper and APM Committee Vice Chair of Studbooks and SSPs (conservation@aza.org) before data are shared.

Sharing studbook data with collaborators outside the AZA Community
Sharing studbook data with collaborators outside AZA may be more sensitive. There are many possible reasons in which SSP Coordinators and Studbook keepers would like to share their studbook data with colleagues outside of AZA (e.g., SSP Coordinators and TAGs in other regional associations, Advisors, researchers). Before doing so, please see the list of considerations below.

When considering sharing studbook data, be aware of the following:
- Before sharing studbook data, request a research proposal from the researcher to better understand why the studbook database is being requested, what specific data will be needed
from the studbook database, and how the researcher intends to use the data. For an example of such a research proposal form, see the AZA Research and Technology Committee’s ‘AZA Standardized Research Application Form’ here: https://www.aza.org/research_and_technology_committee.

- Check in with your TAG before sharing data. Several AZA TAGs have existing processes for evaluating potential research involvement.
- For species that are government-owned, request approval from your corresponding government contacts before sharing studbook data.
- Verify who the researcher is that you are communicating with and about to potentially collaborate. You can do this by looking at their academic websites, LinkedIn, previously published articles, etc.
- Even those that have ‘View and Export Only’ access can export the entire studbook database to Excel, which allows them to analyze and share these data with others.
- It is important that you initially create an agreement with the collaborator concerning sharing the studbook data with third parties as well as publication of the data or any research results based on these data. Creating an agreement before sharing access to the studbook database will allow you to feel more comfortable with sharing these data (see Appendix A).
- We encourage SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers to at least be listed in the acknowledgements section and should be considered as co-authors on any publications using the studbook database (e.g., published journal articles, talks, posters), depending on their involvement and how prominently the studbook data are used.
- Studbook data are best interpreted by those trained in small population management and studbook data conventions and software. An AZA Population Biologist must be involved with data requests from external researchers to guide data analyses and interpretation.
- Identify the end date for the collaborator’s access to the studbook database. Depending on the research, this may be several weeks to several months or longer. If an end date is not identified, they will be assigned the default access of six months. It is good practice to annually review who has access to your studbook database and update, as needed.
- Researchers are required to include both the studbook Currentness date and date of access in any publications and presentations.
- The consent form in Appendix A must be filled out and submitted to both the Studbook Keeper and APM Committee Vice Chair of Studbooks and SSPs (conservation@aza.org).

As a reminder, all AZA Program Leaders can get access to ZIMS for Studbooks, even if your AZA facility is not a Species360 member. Contact the AZA Administrators (conservation@aza.org) for assistance if your AZA member facility is not a member of Species360. For colleagues that are neither an AZA member nor a Species360 member and want access to a studbook database, they first need to get a ZIMS login from Species360. In addition to permission from the Studbook Keeper, permission will also be required from the APM Committee Committee Vice Chair of Studbooks and SSPs (conservation@aza.org).
Required Consent Form for Access to an AZA Studbook Database for Analyses

*For researchers and anyone planning to publish results based on Studbook data

Attach a research proposal to briefly explain why the studbook data are being requested, what specific data will be needed from the studbook database, and how data will be analyzed and used. The SSP must also attach a letter of support for this specific researcher and their intended research.

I have read both the “AZA Guidelines for Roles and Access to ZIMS for Studbooks” and “Guidance for SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers on sharing studbook data” and I agree to the following terms (initial on each line):

_____ I will only use the studbook data for analyses relevant to population management and species conservation.

_____ Analyses of data from the ________________________________ (insert individual or multiple species' name(s)) studbook database will never be presented or published without consent of the SSP Coordinator and Studbook Keeper.

_____ Individual facility information contained in these records will not be shared in any way, without specific written permission from the respective submitting facilities.

_____ Any publications and presentations resulting from analyses of data from the studbook listed above will have shared authorship with the SSP Coordinator and Studbook Keeper as well as any AZA staff or Population Biologist involved, as appropriate to the regional scope of the analysis.

_____ All authors on any reports resulting from analyses of data from this studbook database will fully review the material to be submitted, will be willing to support the conclusions of the study, and can defend it.

_____ The AZA Animal Population Management Committee reserves the right to block publication and presentation of results if agreement cannot be reached on the content of the reports.

_____ When submitting manuscripts using studbook data to journals requiring deposit of data for public access and later use, the author must include the italicized statement below in the document to be deposited. All individual animal and institutional identifying information must be stripped from the deposited document and replaced with dummy codes.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the use of aggregate studbook data by permission of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the owner of this compilation of studbook data contributed by AZA members and other participants in its animal programs. That permission prohibits identification of particular facilities or identifiable details of particular animals.

Signature of Applicant: ____________________________________________          Date: ___________

Printed Name of Applicant: _______________________________________________

Approved by the AZA APM Committee Vice Chair of Studbooks and SSPs

Signature: ____________________________________________               Date:  ___________

Printed Name: _______________________________________________

Date that studbook database and/or access to studbook database was given to applicant

Date: ___________
Appendix K: AZA Guidelines for Roles and Access to ZIMS for Studbooks

ZIMS for Studbooks allows for different roles to be created to give access to specific features in each studbook database, such as the ability to view or edit data, run reports, and use available tools. Multiple people can have access at the same time to a single studbook database. The intention of this document is to outline AZA’s currently existing roles and give guidance on whom they could be assigned.

At the request of approved AZA Studbook Keepers, access roles are currently assigned by the Regional Association Administrators (i.e., AZA Conservation and Science Coordinator and PMC Planning Coordinator). To simplify the customizability of ZIMS for Studbooks and protect data quality, the features available to roles are preset as described below.

Not all SSPs are managed the same. For this reason, SSP Coordinators and Studbook Keepers may request custom roles. Depending on the nature of the request and parties involved, a request must be submitted to conservation@aza.org and may need additional approval by the APM Committee and corresponding TAG. As ZIMS for Studbooks is updated with new features, populated with more studbook databases, and we learn from the requests coming from SSPs, these roles and access options may change to accommodate the perceived needs.

AZA Studbook Data Ownership:
Access and use of studbook data is vital to the AZA mission to maintain and perpetuate healthy populations of animals. To this end, AZA owns the compilation of studbook data contributed at any time by AZA members, Sustainability Partners, SSP Programs, and other participants in its animal programs (hereafter referred to as "Contributors"). By its participation as a Contributor, a Contributor gives AZA the non-exclusive right to use its contributed data for studbook purposes including unrestricted use by AZA members and the AZA right to authorize access and use by third parties (including researchers and other regional or worldwide zoological organizations) without further notice or additional permission. (Updated approval by the AZA Board, July 2019).
AZA Roles and Their Access for ZIMS for Studbooks

1. Studbook Keeper
   - Full view and edit access (except for the overlay tool)
   - Given to: TAG-appointed Studbook Keepers recognized by AZA will receive this access as soon as the studbook database is migrated into ZIMS for Studbooks. For Candidate Programs, TAG monitor populations, and AZA member facilities’ own studbooks, the TAG or facility studbook maintainer will be treated the same as an SSP Studbook Keeper and receive access as soon as the studbook database is migrated into ZIMS for Studbooks.
   - Access: Can view and edit all data, and run any report or tool, except for overlays.
   - This role needs approval by the AZA office, to verify that they are an approved AZA Studbook Keeper, TAG-approved Candidate Program or TAG monitor population, or AZA member facility sponsored studbook database.

2. All View and Edit Access
   - Full view and edit access (customizable, as needed)
   - Given to: TAG-appointed Studbook Keepers and SSP Coordinators recognized by AZA or others, as approved by the Studbook Keeper and SSP Coordinator
   - Access: Can view and edit all data, and run any report or tool, including overlays, with the tool access being customizable, as needed.
   - If it is a Studbook Keeper or SSP Coordinator requesting this access, they need to have completed the PMII Course.
   - This role needs approval by the Studbook Keeper, SSP Coordinator, and Advising Population Biologist.

3. View and Export Only Access
   - Given to: the Studbook Keeper and SSP Coordinator approve who to give this access to and may include the former Program Leaders, International Studbook Keeper that maintains a different studbook database, another Regional Association’s equivalent Program Leader, Apprentice Studbook Keeper, TAG Chair, APM Committee member, SSP Advisors, TAG Advisors, ILs, PM1/PM2 instructors, Researchers, etc.
   - Access: Can view all studbook data, run any report or tool, and export data to Excel, but cannot edit data or use overlays.
   - Duration: Some ‘View and Export Only’ roles may include a specific timeframe that must be re-approved after each period.

4. Population Biology Advisor
   - Full view and edit access (all features)
   - Full access to data, editing, reporting, and tools
   - Given to: AZA Population Biology Advisors will receive this access as soon as the studbook database is migrated into ZIMS for Studbooks

5. Regional Administrator
   - Full administrative access
   - Given to: AZA Administrators (Rebecca Greenberg, Miranda Brauns, Haley Blackwell, Kendra Strohmayer, Kristine Schad Eebes)
   - Assign individuals to access studbook databases using one of the roles listed above

If any AZA member facilities wants access to the AZA studbook database, but are not involved in the SSP in any way, they must request access from both the Studbook Keeper and APM Committee Vice Chair of Studbooks and SSPs (conservation@aza.org).

A description of all features and how to create, delete, or edit roles can be found in the ZIMS for Studbooks Role Control document (http://training.species360.org/Documents/ZIMSHelp/ZIMSHelp-Studbooks-Update%20Roles.pdf).
Appendix L: Communications Guidelines

Guidelines on communications that represent the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and its Members

All public statements* that may be construed to represent a communication from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) or are made by or on behalf of any AZA Program** must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate AZA Department prior to public release or publication. In addition, plans to create such documents should involve input from AZA and other appropriate AZA entities** during their conceptualization and development.

* For example, but not limited to, position or advocacy statements, letters of support / endorsement or censure, policies, petition signatures, proposals, and comments on legislative / regulatory actions

** For example, but not limited to, Committees, Scientific Advisory Groups, Taxon Advisory Group, Species Survival Plan® Programs, Conservation Action Partnerships, Task Forces, the Population Management Center, and the Reproductive Management Center.
Appendix M: SSP Highlights Template

*Please note that this template is available on the AZA website (https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications)*

The brief parameters for SSP Highlights:

- 300-500 words
- “Catchy” title
- Author/SSP Coordinator (with job title)
- Photo (5*7 300dpi)
- Appropriate for the broad audience that receive CONNECT magazine

Introduction should include one or more:

- General species information
- Conservation status
- What is their role in AZA zoos and aquariums?
- Why are they cool/interesting/important animals?
- General SSP information (population size, number of organizations in the SSP)

Body should include one or more:

- Sample challenges to SSP population sustainability that will be discussed in the highlight (e.g., low gene diversity, small population size, need for husbandry/management enhancements, etc.).
- New, innovative, and/or creative ways that the SSP is engaging in to address the challenge identified (e.g., international collaborations, research projects, artificial reproductive technologies, new husbandry and management practices, etc.).
- While there may be more than one sustainability challenge and more than one initiative in place, given the limited space it is recommended to focus on only one initiative in the SSP Highlight.

Conclusion should include:

- The results and impacts of the initiative on the SSP population in lay terms
- Lessons learned. Sharing the SSP’s story is important as it may inspire other SSPs with similar challenges to try something new or think about their situation in a new light.
- Future plans to further enhance sustainability, if necessary

Please submit draft SSP Highlights to conservation@aza.org.
Appendix N: AZA Position Statement Template

*Please note that this template is available on the AZA website (https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications)

Title
Approved by the AZA Board of Directors on ????

A Position Statement defines the Association's position on a specific issue and most frequently supplements an AZA Board approved policy (http://www.aza.org/board-policies/). Please concisely describe AZA's position on the identified subject matter. If this Position Statement is associated with an AZA Board approved Policy, be sure to indicate to which policy (e.g., Acquisition and Disposition Policy (2008), Policy on the Presentation of Animals (2008), Program Animal Policy (2011)) the statement is related.

Please use Arial 10pt font for all text and separate each paragraph within a section by a 5pt. space.
Appendix O: AZA White Paper Template

*Please note that this template is available on the AZA website (https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications)

AZA White Paper

Title
Approved by the AZA Board of Directors on ????

AZA Position

Include this section in the White Paper only if there is an AZA Board approved Position Statement on this topic. If there is not an approved Position Statement then please remove this section. If this White Paper is being submitted alongside a Draft Position Statement, then you may include the Draft Position Statement here.

Please use Arial 10pt font for all text and separate each paragraph within a section by a 5pt. space.

Rationale

A White Paper may be an article that provides additional information to supplement and support a specific AZA Position Statement, or an informational article that discusses a philosophy or an initiative that is of relevance to the Association.

Please compose a concise, well-cited article that provides the evidence to supplement and support the AZA Position Statement above, or the identified philosophy or initiative. If this White Paper is informational and does supplement a Position Statement, then this “Rationale” section will be the first section of the White Paper.

Please number each citation in the References section below and include citation numbers as superscripts at the end of the appropriate sentence.

AZA Action

Detail the recommended actions that AZA institutions and/or members should engage in to adhere to the AZA Position Statement supplemented by this White Paper. If this white paper is informational, then this section is optional and may be removed.

References

References should be numbered and in APA format

1. Last name, First Initial and Last Name, First Initial. (year). Title of article. Title of Journal, Issue, page – page.
Appendix P: AZA Guidelines Template

*Please note that this template is available on the AZA website (https://www.aza.org/templates-and-applications)

Title

Approved by the AZA Conservation & Science Department (or other relevant party) on ???

While the majority of Guidelines (e.g., hand-rearing protocols, mixed species exhibit suggestions, etc.) may not require AZA Board approval it is still important that they are reviewed and approved by the AZA Conservation & Science Department before they are published and distributed to ensure that they are appropriate and reflect the philosophy of the Association.

Guidelines may provide potential strategies, suggest procedures, and/or provide additional information regarding a specific topic. If these Guidelines are associated with an AZA Board approved Policy, be sure to indicate to which policy (e.g., Acquisition, Transfer, and Transition Policy [updated 2014], Policy on the Presentation of Animals [2005], Program Animal Policy [2011]) the Guidelines are related.

Please use Arial 10pt font for all text and separate each paragraph within a section by a 5pt. space.
Appendix Q: AZA Animal Programs Chart

Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs

Cooperatively Managed
Criteria:
AZA published Studbook
≥ 20 animals
≥ 3 AZA institutions
-OR-
If extinct in the wild, critically endangered, or endangered (IUCN or US ESA):
AZA published Studbook
TAG has developed 3 goals

Green SSP
≥ 90% genetic diversity

Yellow SSP
≥ 50 animals

Red SSP
≥ 20 animals

Candidate Programs

TAG Managed
Criteria:
< 20 animals
< 3 institutions
TAG wants program to become an SSP
Appendix R: Citation Formats

Citation of an SSP Breeding and Transfer Plan:
*SSP Coordinator should be the first author, then Studbook Keeper, then the Population Biologist.

SSP Coordinator last name, first initial., Studbook Keeper last name, first initial., and Population Biologist last name, first initial. Year published. Species common name (Scientific name). AZA Species Survival Plan® Designation color Program Population Analysis & Breeding and Transfer Plan. AZA Population Management Center: Chicago, IL.


Citation of a Global Species Management Plan
GSMP Coordinator last name, first initial. and Population Biologist last name, first initial. Year published. Species common name (Scientific name) WAZA Global Species Management Plan. Institution name: City, State.


Citation of an AZA Regional Studbook:
Studbook Keeper last name, first initial. Year published. Species common name (Scientific name) AZA Regional Studbook. Institution name: City, State.


Citation of a Population Viability Analysis:
(all Last name, First initial) Population Biologist., SSP Coordinator., Studbook Keeper., TAG Chair., and TAG Vice-Chair. Year. Species common name (Scientific name) AZA Animal Program Population Viability Analysis Report. Lincoln Park Zoo: Chicago, IL.


Citation of an SSP Sustainability Report:
SSP Coordinator last name, first initial. Year published. Species common name (Scientific name) Species Survival Plan® Sustainability Report. Association of Zoos and Aquariums: Silver Spring, MD.


Citation of a Survival Statistic Report:


Citation of PMCTrack:

Citation of an Animal Care Manual: