

**Animal Care Manual Development & Revision Processes**

- 1) The Animal Care Manual (ACM) template is available to all TAGs and SSPs and is located on the AZA website.
- 2) TAGs and/or SSPs will identify a contact person (Coordinator) who will serve as the main communications conduit between the TAG/SSP and the AZA Conservation Staff. The Coordinator will be responsible for seeking input from the TAG/SSP, collecting TAG/SSP-based information, composing and editing the ACM, updating the TAG Chair on the ACM progress, and communicating ACM issues with the AZA Conservation Staff. Requests for ACMs from TAGs or SSPs that do not identify a Coordinator will be placed on a "Hold" list that will be maintained by the AZA Conservation Staff, and will be reviewed twice a year by the AZA staff, Animal Welfare Committee, and the corresponding TAG/SSP until a Coordinator is identified.
- 3) The AZA Conservation Staff will consult with the Coordinator to monitor the progress of the ACM, be available to answer questions and assist with challenges as requested, and will ensure that the Coordinator and the TAG/SSP are informed of relevant issues or concerns regarding the ACM development, review, or approval processes.
- 4) The Coordinator will work with the TAG/SSP to compile all scientific data and professional information about the natural history and management strategies of the taxa(on) and will incorporate this information into the pre-existing sections of the ACM template. All sections of the ACM should be completed unless:
  - The Coordinator explicitly states that the section is not relevant to the taxa(on) and provides justification for omitting this section in writing.
  - The Coordinator determines that information for the section does not exist, in which case, an explicit statement should be included that recommends the need for research in this area. These research recommendations should also be listed in the Research Chapter of the ACM.
- 5) The Coordinator and TAG/SSP may add additional chapters or sections to the ACM if they believe the information is warranted and not included elsewhere.
- 6) The Coordinator will ensure that the TAG/SSP has conducted a complete literature search and has incorporated and referenced relevant published scientific information for all sections within the ACM and will provide detailed citations in the Reference Section of the ACM.
- 7) The Coordinator will ensure that Institution names are NOT included in the content of the ACM (except when listed as a contributing author or editor on the second page). The ACM is a compilation of "best practices" that the authors recommend to use or "problematic practices" that the authors recommend to avoid and institutions may not be associated with either.
- 8) If the TAG/SSP and Coordinator identify specific methods of care for the taxa(on) that should be considered required but are not identified as current AZA Accreditation Standards, the AZA Conservation Staff will assist the TAG/SSP in completing a 'Standards of Care' submission form, and in submitting the form via the Animal Welfare Committee (AWC) to the AZA Accreditation Commission for review. Until the Accreditation Commission has ruled on the submission, these methods should be denoted as "should" comments in the ACM with the statement "this standard of care is considered of high importance and has been submitted to the AZA Accreditation Commission for consideration of becoming an Accreditation Standard" in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

- 9) If the Accreditation Commission approves the submission and creates a new Accreditation Standard, the AZA Conservation Staff, working with the TAG/SSP, will provide an explanatory statement for the Standard and incorporate it and the specific Standard into all relevant ACMs, and will switch all corresponding “should” statements to “must” statements. If the Accreditation Commission does not approve the submission, the AZA Conservation Staff will remove the pending review statement from the section and will maintain the “should” statements.
- 10) The Coordinator will communicate with the TAG/SSP to identify two or more external review experts (including one who specializes in the natural history of the taxa) who are willing to review the final Draft ACM within 30 days of its receipt.
- 11) The Coordinator will submit the contact information of the external review experts and their comments on the Draft ACM to the AZA Conservation Staff.
- 12) The AZA Conservation Staff will acknowledge receipt of the Draft ACM and the external review expert information to the Coordinator and will initiate the editorial process.
- 13) The AZA Conservation Staff will confirm that any removals of ACM sections are justified and will communicate any disagreements with the Coordinator. The AZA Conservation Staff will work with the Coordinator to resolve any disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved.
- 14) The AZA Conservation Staff will document research needs and recommendations by taxa.
- 15) The AZA Conservation Staff will edit all sections of the Draft ACM, will remove confusion between “must” and “should” statements, and whenever possible, ensure that sensitive topics (aggression, disease, stress, death of an animal, etc.) are contextually framed in a manner that relates these occurrences with those that occur with animals in the wild, identify research needs and identify sections that are inconsistent and/or lack content or clarity.
- 16) The AZA Conservation Staff will work with the Coordinator and TAG review members to resolve any editorial disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved, at which time the AZA member comment and external review process of the final Draft ACM will be initiated.
- 17) The AZA Conservation Department will post the final draft of the ACM on the TAG’s Program page of the AZA website and send it to the following for the required 30-day member comment period: External Reviewers; TAG Steering Committee; appropriate Program Leaders; and the Chairs the Animal Welfare, Wildlife Conservation and Management, and Research and Technology Committees, the Wildlife Contraception Center, as well as the appropriate Scientific Advisory Groups (i.e. Avian, Behavior, Biomaterials Banking, Endocrinology, Nutrition, Reproduction, Research, and Veterinary).
- 18) The AZA Conservation Staff will advertise the posting of the final Draft ACM, its availability for comment, and the contact information to which all comments should be sent in the monthly Animal Programs Update.
- 19) The AZA Conservation Staff will collect all comments from these reviewers, organize them according to their corresponding ACM sections, and distribute them via email to the Coordinator at the close of the 30 day review period.
- 20) The Coordinator will work with the TAG/SSP to review all comments, incorporate suggestions as deemed necessary and provide a written justification report for omitting suggestions as deemed

unnecessary. The Coordinator will submit the now Pending-Approval ACM and justification report to the AZA Conservation Staff within one month.

- 21) The AZA Conservation Staff will review the written justification and will edit the Pending-Approval ACM within two weeks of its receipt. If any edits are made, the AZA Conservation Staff will work with the Coordinator to ensure that they are warranted and to resolve any editorial disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved.
- 22) Once completed, the AZA Conservation Department will provide final approval and post the ACM on the AZA website accordingly.

#### **Non-Required Annual Revision of the Animal Care Manual**

- 1) The AZA Conservation Staff will contact the Coordinator on an annual basis regarding potential updates that should be included in the ACM.
- 2) If updates exist, the Coordinator will work with the TAG/SSP to compile all suggestions and any newly published scientific information that should be included in the annual ACM update. The Coordinator will then incorporate this information into the pre-existing sections of the ACM via the Microsoft Word Track Changes feature, and will submit the Revised ACM to the AZA Conservation Staff within 60 days of the request.
- 3) The AZA Conservation Staff will acknowledge receipt of the Revised ACM to the Coordinator and will initiate the editorial process. The AZA Conservation Staff will work with the Coordinator to ensure that any edits made are warranted and resolve any editorial disagreements until mutually agreeable solutions are achieved.
- 4) The AZA Conservation Department will provide final approval and post the revised ACM on the AZA website accordingly.
- 5) If absolutely necessary, edits can be made to the ACM before the annual update. Requests for urgent modifications must be submitted to the AZA Conservation Staff by the Coordinator with approval from the TAG/SSP.

#### **Required Five-Year Revision of the Animal Care Manual**

- 1) Within 5 years of approval, and based on a schedule chosen by the TAG/SSP, the AZA Conservation Staff will contact the Coordinator to initiate a required revision of the ACM.
- 2) The Coordinator will work with the TAG/SSP to update and revise the ACM via the Microsoft Word Track Changes feature and will resubmit the Revised ACM to the AZA Conservation Staff within 60 days of the request to initiate the formal review process outlined above. Since the level of care provided to animals housed by AZA institutions are reliant on experience and research discoveries, it is expected that there will be changes to the pre-existing ACM reflecting this new information.
- 3) If a Coordinator cannot be identified or if the ACM is not updated and reviewed within the 5-year period, the ACM will be placed on the "Hold" list that is maintained by the AZA Conservation Staff, and the ACM will be removed from the AZA website until it is updated and completes the formal review process.