



MEDIA STATEMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: NOT TO BE USED UNTIL THE LAUNCH ON THURSDAY 16 MARCH 2006 AT THE PRETORIA ZOO.

WHO'S WHO IN THE ZOO: LITERALLY

“By publishing the first standard in the southern hemisphere and Africa for the management of zoos and aquariums, the SABS is literally saying who’s who in the zoo” said SABS CEO Martin Kuscus.

“This standard, (SANS 10379, *Zoo and aquarium practice*) can make a real contribution towards animal welfare in the whole of Africa” said Rick Allan, Manager of the Wildlife Unit of the NSPCA (National Council of SPCAs of SA).

“Zoos care for animals in a hands-on, in-your-face kind of way” said Dave Morgan, Executive Director of the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria. “This standard (also known technically as a code of practice) contains practical guidelines to promote this care by operating at international levels of professional competency.”

“Practical examples of this care mentioned in the standard include:

- . providing the right kind of enclosure for each type of animal – including a retreat where nervous animals can escape public viewing or touching (*Several aquariums use "touch pools" where tidal pool fauna are presented to the visiting public. Such animals need to be rotated regularly.*)
- . balancing the likely benefits to an animal of certain types of food against public sensitivities (*Visitors may be uncomfortable at the sight of a zoo lion or tiger occasionally feeding upon the whole carcass of a prey animal like a donkey or a calf.*)
- . ensuring that all clinical waste and refuse is removed and disposed of as the municipal authority requires (*The average zoo can generate several tons of waste material per week, ranging from used veterinary "sharps" to very large quantities of faecal matter.*)
- . having appropriate safety barriers in place, to protect the public from the animals, and the animals from the public (*Visitors have been known to throw all manner of missiles at*

animals in zoos ranging from glass bottles to lighted cigarettes, building bricks to packets of aspirins.)

. knowing what to do if a particular animal escapes (*In a well-run zoo, management documentation will cover every single conceivable situation that might arise with the animals, staff and visiting public*).

. not subjecting animals to abnormal demands and performances that compromise their well-being (*These would include excessive use of contact animals for educational purposes where the animals are allowed to be touched and petted.*), and

. managing breeding programmes efficiently to prevent overpopulation . (*Responsible zoos ensure that zoo-based animal populations are maintained for genetic diversity and demographic stability.*)

“There are currently some 35 zoos and aquariums in South Africa for which the standard would be applicable, while approximately 180 facilities in 48 African countries could benefit from the standard” he concluded.

Zoos around the world are also interested in the standard. As Karen Sausman, President of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) stated:

“As President of this Association, I am especially pleased to see that the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria, an Associate Member of WAZA, has developed a strong professional code of practice that will promote professional best practice, particularly in facilities across South and Southern Africa. SANS 10379 will also make clear the importance of zoos and aquaria in on-site and off-site conservation worldwide.

" Zoos have a major role to play in supporting the efforts of in-situ conservation agencies through activities such as research, science awareness and conservation programmes” said Willie Labuschagne, Executive Director of the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa (more widely known as the Pretoria Zoo). “The new standard will contribute to enhancing the facilities of zoological institutions, thereby promoting the preservation of Africa's biodiversity" he concluded.

For further information, please contact:

To purchase the standard: Standards Sales at the SABS, by telephone ((012) 428 6883), fax ((012) 428 6928), or email (sales@sabs.co.za)

More information on the standard: Dave Morgan, Executive Director of the African Association of Zoos and Aquaria, by telephone (082 893 4199) or email (davetsp@iafrica.com).

Media: Chris Meyer, Standards Communicator, SABS by telephone ((012) 428 6732), fax ((012) 428 6869), or email (meyercm@sabs.co.za)

ADDITIONAL INTERESTING INFORMATION

On South African zoos and conservation:

- . The first zoo in South Africa started in 1898 in Pretoria. This was followed by the Johannesburg zoo (1909), and the Bloemfontein zoo (1920). Although Cecil Rhodes kept a small collection of wild animals near his home in Cape Town, it never developed into a major zoo.
- . If zoos had been established earlier, it is possible that the Quagga, Blaaubok and Cape Lion would have been saved from extinction.
- . There are several examples of animals that were saved from extinction by zoos. Two important examples are Pere David deer, and the Arabian oryx. Breeding the oryx in zoos and returning them to their former natural environment ensured their survival. The Dodo, the Aurochs (extinct 1627), the Great Auk (extinct 1844), and the American passenger pigeon (extinct 1914) could have been saved if breeding animals had been placed in zoos.

On general history of zoos:

- . The first successful attempts to domesticate elephants appear to have been carried out in the ancient Indian city-state of Mohenjo-Daro around 2 500 B.C.
- . The first major zoo in Africa was established in ca 1 500 B.C. by Queen Hatshepsut in Saqqara, Egypt. She sent collecting expeditions to “The Land of Punt”(probably what is now Somalia), returning with greyhounds, monkeys, leopards (or cheetahs), many very tall cattle, many species of birds, and a giraffe (probably the first ever seen in Egypt). Her zoo included more domesticated animals (i.e. cattle) than modern zoos typically feature.
- . Around 1 250 B.C., Pharaoh Rameses II had several giraffes in his collection, besides several lions and ostriches.
- . A Chinese emperor Wen Wang established a zoological garden of some 1 500 hectares, called the Garden of Intelligence before 1 000 B.C. How intelligent his choice of animals was is not known.
- . The biblical king Solomon was well known as a farmer, zoologist and keeper of zoo animals such as peacocks and apes around 974 to 937 B.C.
- . Several Assyrian kings (from 900 to 625 B.C.) kept lions or leopards. King Ashurbanipal of Assyria (who died in 625 B.C.) enjoyed having wild lions caught, and then releasing them to be hunted for sport.
- . King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia (sixth century B.C.) also enjoyed keeping lions.
- . The Greeks are credited with having established the first zoos for educational purposes.
- . The zoo at Alexandria in Egypt was founded by the Greek ruler Ptolemey I. His successor, Ptolemey II, made it into the greatest zoo the world had yet known, and staged great ceremonies when the animals were put on parade. These parades were quite something: 96 elephants drew 24 chariots, and the procession also included 24 lions, 14 leopards, six pairs of one-humped camels, eight ostriches in harnesses, a giraffe, and a rhinoceros. How all

these animals were trained to walk in the procession is no longer known. (Source: "Zoos of the World" by James Fisher, Aldus Books, London, 1966).

. In 1827 the ruler of Egypt (then called a Pacha) sent two giraffes, one to England and one to France. This was the first time since the fifteenth century that giraffes had been seen in Europe. Then, one had been sent from Egypt to Lorenzo de Medici, the ruler of the Italian city-state of Florence. Instead of being caged, the giraffe was literally given the freedom of the city! It soon became "very familiar" with all in the city, being "accustomed to walk at perfect liberty about the streets, stretching its long neck to the balconies, to implore apples and other fruits whereupon it delighted to feed" (Source: p49 of "Portraits of the Game and Wild Animals of Southern Africa" by Capt W Cornwallis Harris. Reprinted from the 1840 edition by Galago Publishing Pty(Ltd), 1986.)

(For additional information on the history of zoology and zoological gardens (zoos), the website of the Wildlife Translocation Association at www.wta.org.za/info/history/zoos.htm)

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