

ZB9.1.1



Ottawa
November 22, 2011

**CAZA Institutional
Members**

British Columbia

British Columbia
Wildlife Park
Greater Vancouver Zoo
Kicking Horse Grizzly
Bear Refuge.
Vancouver Aquarium
Marine Science Centre
Shaw Ocean Discovery
Centre

Alberta

Calgary Zoo, Botanical
Garden & Prehistoric
Park
Marine Life Department,
West Edmonton Mall
Valley Zoo & John
Janzen Nature Centre

Saskatchewan

Saskatoon Forestry Farm
Park and Zoo

Manitoba

Assiniboine Park Zoo
Club Regent Casino
Aquarium

Ontario

African Lion Safari
Bowmanville Zoological
Park
Indian River Reptile Zoo
Jungle Cat World Inc.
Marine Land of Canada
Inc.
Riverview Park and Zoo
Safari Niagara
Toronto Zoo

Québec

Aquarium du Québec
Biodôme de Montréal
Ecomuseum
Parc Safari (2002) Inc.
Société Zoologique de
Granby Inc.
Zoo Sauvage de St.
Félicien

New Brunswick

Cherry Brook Zoo Inc.
Magnetic Hill Zoo

Mr. Joseph Torzok
Chair,
Toronto Zoo Board of Management
361A Old Finch Ave.
Toronto, Ontario
M1B 5K7

Dear Mr. Torzok,

The recent Toronto City Council decision to move the Toronto Zoo elephants to a California sanctuary has raised serious questions with respect to the Accreditation Standards maintained by the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) and therefore to Toronto Zoo's accreditation. Specifically, the concerns relate to the responsibilities of the Director and professional staff for the welfare of the animals at the zoo, and to the requirements for transfer of animals to any non-accredited facility. CAZA's Accreditation Commission has requested a full report from the zoo regarding these two important accreditation requirements and will consider what actions are appropriate following receipt of that report.

In both respects, our standards are designed to ensure that the best interests of the animals are the highest priority in decision making. It is CAZA's firm position that the professional staff at the zoo have the responsibility and are in the best position to make judgements about animal care, and in particular to carefully assess any facilities to which animals are to be transferred.

The Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums is very proud that Toronto Zoo is one of our accredited members and we are particularly proud of its long-standing reputation as one of North America's leading zoological institutions. It is our conviction that the ongoing collaboration between Toronto Zoo and CAZA has worked to the benefit of both.

CAZA Accreditation is the foundation stone for Canada's leading zoos and aquariums and is increasingly recognized by the public, the news media and by policy and decision makers in government as the essential qualification for such institutions. Our national Association is committed to maintaining the integrity of our accreditation standards in order to ensure that the animals entrusted to the care of our member institutions receive the best in quality care, and that all other aspects of their operations meet similar high standards.

Our Accreditation Standards have been developed over some 35 years of experience and reflect the leading edge of knowledge of animal care; they are under continual review and are frequently modified to take into account emerging knowledge in the field. Over many years we have worked closely with other accrediting bodies such as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums in the U.S. to ensure that our standards are equal to or surpass international standards.

As a result, visitors to our accredited institutions are assured that the welfare of the animals they are visiting is their highest priority. As well, CAZA accreditation is a publicly recognized symbol signifying excellence in, and commitment to, collection management, veterinary care, ethics, physical facilities, staffing, conservation, education, safety and security, finance, and supportive bodies.

An accredited facility merits public confidence by attesting in an independent, measured, and documented manner that it meets or exceeds current professional standards as established by CAZA, based upon a periodic thorough review and site inspection conducted by zoological experts in operations, animal management, and veterinary medicine.

Accreditation is important in guiding private and governmental agencies that frequently need expert opinion as a basis for qualitative judgment in connection with contributions, grants, contracts, and in establishing and enforcing policies that have a bearing on the keeping of wildlife. Several provinces are now considering making CAZA accreditation compulsory for all zoos in their jurisdictions (this is already the case in British Columbia).

Membership in CAZA facilitates animal exchange through access to specimens from other CAZA accredited facilities for loan and/or breeding; provides access to information and knowledge exchange with top experts and colleagues within the zoological and aquarium professions; as well as access to CAZA's National Office office resources and to leading experts in other national and international zoological organizations.

Accreditation is also a fundamental requirement for zoos - such as Toronto Zoo - that take part in the many population management programs dealing with threatened and endangered species. Such programs are now recognized as a basic responsibility for modern zoos and CAZA encourages all of our members to take an active role in this vital work. Participation is, however, limited to facilities accredited either by CAZA or AZA. As well as advancing work in ensuring the long term survival of threatened animals, such programs also provide access to specimens from other accredited facilities for both breeding and exhibition purposes, and significantly, permit the participants to inform their visitors and other interested publics of the valuable role they are playing.

In short, accreditation is a widely-recognized assurance to the public of the status, the value and the quality of the institution.

To merit this status, the zoo must, of course, comply with all requirements set out in our standards. Failure to do so in any significant way requires that our Accreditation Commission review the accreditation status of the institution and determine what action is appropriate.

CAZA would be pleased to provide any further information in this regard at your upcoming meeting on November 24th.

Yours sincerely

Bill Peters
National Director