

CBSG UPDATE



June 2007

Member Updates

CBSG Annual Meeting

The CBSG Annual Meeting is just around the corner! Our Annual Meeting will be held in Budapest, Hungary on 24-26 August 2007. More information and online registration will be available soon on the CBSG website, and notices will be emailed to our members as more information is available. We look forward to seeing you in Budapest!



Recent Workshops

Prairie Dog PHVA

A team of CBSG conducted a conservation planning meeting for two species of prairie dogs -- White-tailed and Gunnison's -- that are candidates for listing under the US Endangered Species Act. Following the completion of a population viability analysis the previous month, participants in the PHVA-style meeting included state and federal wildlife management officials, wildlife ecologists, livestock ranchers, and many other interested parties. Participants discussed management of sylvatic plague that can ravage prairie dog populations, and land management practices that can promote both economic vitality and ecological integrity in the surrounding landscape. The report from this meeting is expected later this summer.



JAZA Presentations

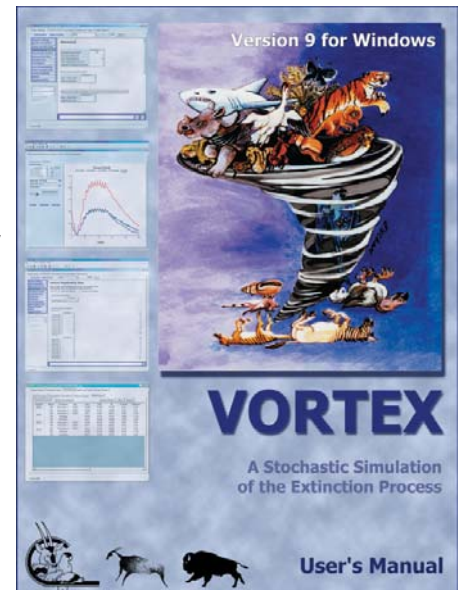
In mid-May, eight representatives from CBSG, WAZA, and ISIS traveled to Japan to participate in a series of meetings coordinated by the Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA). Invited presentations at the annual JAZA conference addressed current and future relationships among CBSG, JAZA and the world zoo community, while pre- and post-conference workshops in Osaka and Tokyo focused on the amphibian extinction crisis and on the implementation of the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy. CBSG also facilitated a discussion among various stakeholders regarding the acquisition of dolphins by Japanese aquariums in association with drive fishery practices. There was much interest in increased ISIS participation, population management, and CBSG-related activities within Japan.



JAPANESE
ASSOCIATION OF
ZOOS AND
AQUARIUMS

Metamodeling Design Meeting

During their involvement in the recent VORTEX training course at the National Zoo's Conservation and Research Center, Bob Lacy and Phil Miller took some time to work with a small group of researchers that have collectively been involved in CBSG's Biocomplexity Initiative. This research project is currently focused on developing linked "metamodels" that couple output from specific models of wildlife disease epidemiology and animal movement with input to our VORTEX PVA software -- thereby creating a more rich and informative modeling environment in which conservation biologists can explore the dynamics of population decline and extinction. The group made some excellent progress on both the science and the technology behind metamodel development and we foresee the presentation of functional linked models of population dynamics in the fall of this year.



Advanced Vortex Training Course

As a follow-up to previous training efforts, CBSG conducted an advanced Vortex training course at the Smithsonian National Zoo's Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, VA on 12-15 June. Topics included advanced program options, such as the use of state variables and functions to integrate greater complexity into species models, as well as modeling options for management strategies such as metapopulation connectivity, translocation, and genetic management. This course was held as part of CBSG's ongoing effort to increase modeling and facilitation skills among our CBSG members and colleagues within the conservation arena. A facilitation skills course is planned for 1-4 August at the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, NE.

ZIMS Standing Watch Workshop

Representatives from the US Department of Agriculture, the National Biosurveillance Integration System, and the World Organization for Animal Health joined members of the zoo and veterinary community in late June to discuss the potential for ISIS's new Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS)



ISIS International Species Information System

system to serve as an additional biosurveillance tool. Facilitated by CBSG and hosted by the Smithsonian's National Zoo, this three-day workshop outlined the needs and capabilities of various organizations for detecting disease-related events and threats, and explored potential partnerships among these organizations to maximize biosurveillance effectiveness while addressing data sharing and related concerns.



Upcoming Workshops

Costa Rican Amphibian CAMP

A Conservation Assessment and Management Plan Workshop for Costa Rican Amphibians is planned for 10-12 August in San Jose, Costa Rica. This workshop will build on the work done in the 2002 Costa Rican Amphibian CAMP, and the Global Amphibian Assessment (2004). CBSG Mesoamerica, Amphibian Ark and the Biology School of the University of Costa Rica are working together to conduct this workshop, and will use the CAMP results to draft a National Conservation Strategy for Costa Rican Amphibians.



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Amphibian Updates

Kihansi Spray Toad PHVA

The Kihansi spray toad is endemic to the spray area of the Kihansi waterfall in Tanzania, giving it a range of approximately two hectares – one of the smallest geographic ranges of any vertebrate species in the world. These toads have nearly lost their entire habitat due to the construction of a dam, which now provides 25% of the country's power supply. A new, elaborate sprinkler system has been installed to simulate the spray from Kihansi falls, which provided some habitat for the toads, and their population has rebounded to 20,000 animals.

Recently, chytrid fungus has recently been found in the wild population of Kihansi spray toads. The wild population has declined and is now nearly extinct, though small captive breeding colonies exist in the United States. Amphibian Ark/CBSG's Kevin Zippel and CBSG Southern Africa staff conducted a PHVA to address these threats to the Kihansi spray toad on 10-17 May 2007 in Bagamoyo, Tanzania, where they created conservation strategies to preserve the remaining toads. When the report of the PHVA is complete, it will be available on the CBSG website.



Amphibian Ark Global Campaign Meeting



On 27 June 2007, a global campaign meeting will be held in London, to plan for a coordinated global campaign to raise awareness and funds to benefit amphibian conservation efforts worldwide. We will share more information on these efforts in future updates.