

REVIEW

International Zoo Yearbook — Volume 44

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As with every volume since its inception, Volume 44 covers a particular topic throughout the bulk of the first portion of the book; this year it is bears and canids. Canids, along with felids, were the specialist topic of Volume 8, but this is the first time for ursids. Bears have historically been less well cared for within the zoo community than other groups of animals and, unfortunately, it is not at all uncommon to still find them living in small, boring and inappropriate zoo enclosures under husbandry regimes that are wildly outdated. If a zoo wanted a single resource that would give them a 21st century picture of how bears should be managed, then the relevant papers included in this volume would give an institution a very detailed picture of what is required. 'Veterinary Issues Related to Bears' by Bourne *et al.* covers a wide range of health issues that affect this group of animals, much of which is pitched at the family level but, where required, species-specific detail is included. A particular problem for almost all zoos that maintain bears is that even in substandard facilities and husbandry regimes, these species often live well beyond their normal wild lifespan, which can generate a further range of health problems, some of which are not necessarily obvious, that compromise the welfare of the animal. This situation presents zoos with a dilemma on how best to deal with geriatric animals and the subject is covered in some detail in Kitchener & Asa's editorial.

Law & Reid's paper on bear enrichment and Dorman & Bourne's review of canids and ursids in mixed exhibits are superb, with both covering their subject from historical and current perspectives. These types of review papers are, I think, one of the *International Zoo Yearbook's* continuing strong points. Historically, the bulk of the papers published within the *International Zoo Yearbook* covered the husbandry, veterinary issues or enclosure design for a single species at a specific zoo but there was always the occasional overview of a topic. In Volume 44, the majority of the papers presented look further afield than how a species is managed at any one zoo and collect data from a number of collections that shed a brighter light on the subject matter, often demonstrating the increasingly cooperative effort with like-minded institutions outside of the zoo community.

That said, the institution and species-specific papers presented are of the usual high standard. Itoh *et al.*'s paper on the Japanese black bear hibernation unit at Ueno Zoo presents a whole new angle to exhibiting a northern Palaearctic ursid, and Tschudin *et al.*'s evaluation of hand-rearing techniques for Spix's macaw at Al Wabra is a key reference for those managing this species, which is extinct in the wild.

Possibly the most thought-provoking piece is Dave Morgan's PERSPECTIVES on the development of zoos on the African continent, the importance of their role locally, and the need for a broader and more robust level of involvement from the zoo community in the developed world. In Volume 6 of the *International Zoo Yearbook*, Robert Golding published a short paper entitled 'The Concept of Zoos in Africa'*. The thrust of this paper dealt with the western myth that Africans see wildlife on virtually a daily basis, hence zoos are not required. Golding explained that, in general, sub-Saharan Africa's wildlife is confined to national parks and the increasingly urbanized population was no more likely to see an elephant or a zebra than an inhabitant of London or New York, other than in a zoo. Morgan details the even more dramatic shift to an urban-based population and that the justifications given for zoos in Europe and North America are as valid in Africa. He eloquently covers the rather delicate subject of the cultural differences that often result in a less than empathetic view of animals and the difficulties this represents for developed world institutions and individuals that work in the region. As western zoos increasingly look to extend their contribution to the conservation of biodiversity beyond the perimeter of their own institutions, a greater involvement with the zoos of Africa will be required.

Once again the Zoological Society of London has produced a publication that informs us about a range of issues that are at the cutting edge of what our industry does, the boundaries of which are becoming increasingly blurred as our institutions are operating more and more outside the zoo grounds.

* Golding, R. R. (1966): The concept of zoos in Africa. *International Zoo Yearbook* 6: 293–296.