



EAZA Reproductive Management Group Action Plan 2026-2031

Vision & Mission

Vision

Holistic, evidence-based reproductive management to strengthen global conservation outcomes.

Mission

To collaborate across disciplines and institutions to deliver holistic, evidence-based reproductive management that supports healthy individuals within sustainable, conservation-focused zoo and wildlife populations. Through research and collaboration with EAZA and other partners, and guided by the One Plan approach, we bridge *in-situ* and *ex-situ* efforts to secure populations of greatest conservation need.



Foreword from the EAZA RMG Chair

Effective reproductive management plays a vital role in the long-term sustainability of wildlife populations in human care and in the wider conservation mission of zoos and aquariums. The decisions we make about whether, when, and how animals reproduce can have profound consequences—not only for individual animal welfare, but also for population health, genetic diversity, demographic stability, and the conservation value of ex situ populations.



Since its establishment in 2008, the EAZA Reproductive Management Group (RMG) has brought together researchers, veterinarians, animal managers, and other specialists with a shared commitment to advancing evidence-based reproductive management. Through close collaboration with EAZA Ex situ Programmes, Taxon Advisory Groups, the Population Management community, and international partners, the RMG has become an important source of expertise, advice, and support for the EAZA community.

The years ahead present both significant opportunities and challenges. As our understanding of reproductive biology continues to develop, so too does the need to translate research into practical guidance, strengthen the quality and accessibility of data, and ensure that expertise reaches those making reproductive decisions on the ground.

Our 2026–2031 strategy builds on this strong foundation and sets an ambitious direction for the future. Its four strategic priorities—Research & Data, Training, Communication & Collaboration, and Operations—reflect our commitment to strengthening the evidence base, sharing knowledge, supporting the next generation of professionals, and ensuring that the RMG is well equipped to respond to the evolving needs of our community.

At the heart of this strategy is a holistic approach to reproductive management—one that recognises the important connection between individual animal welfare, population management, and conservation. We must continue to ask questions, collect and share meaningful data, challenge established practices where evidence is lacking, and turn scientific knowledge into practical solutions that can make a real difference.

Achieving these ambitions will depend on collaboration. Reproductive management is complex, and no single organisation, discipline, or individual can address its challenges alone. By strengthening our existing partnerships and building new connections across EAZA and the wider conservation community, we can share knowledge more effectively and increase the impact of our collective expertise.

This strategy is both a commitment and an opportunity: a commitment to responsible, evidence-based reproductive management, and an opportunity to strengthen the contribution that zoos and aquariums can make to conservation. **Together, we can ensure that the decisions we make today help create healthier, more sustainable populations for the future.**

Yedra Feltrer

Yedra Feltrer Rambaud
EAZA RMG Chair



Who are the EAZA RMG?

Established in 2008, the EAZA Reproductive Management Group (RMG) is a working group under the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria's (EAZA's) Veterinary Committee. The EAZA RMG consists of *in* and *ex situ* researchers, veterinarians and animal managers with an interest in the reproductive management of exotic wildlife. The work of the EAZA RMG complements that of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Reproductive Management Center (RMC).

Within EAZA, the RMG's role is to support the work carried out by EAZA *Ex situ* Programmes (EEPs), Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) and animal managers at Member institutions by providing specialist advice in reproductive management. This includes ensuring the safe and informed use of contraception in wildlife in human care based on sound scientific data. The RMG's goal is to promote a holistic approach to individual and population reproductive management in *ex situ* conservation. The working group identifies gaps in the current knowledge on the effects of reproductive decisions (breeding/non-breeding, contraception), and advocates for the collection of data to inform current practices.

Our Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives for 2026-2031 are outlined in this document. To achieve our Vision and Mission, the EAZA RMG developed four Strategic Objectives for 2026-2031. These are outlined below:

- Research & Data
- Training
- Communication & Collaboration
- Operations

Research & Data

The RMG holds a strong foundation in evidence-based reproductive management, with recognised expertise, published research, and broad taxonomic guidelines. Research output and inter-institutional collaboration are at the core of the RMG, and all strategic decisions should serve to strengthen and expand that foundation.

To do this, our objectives are to:

- Strengthen links with the EAZA Population Management Centre (PMC) and EAZA Population Management Advisory Group (EPMAG) to determine priority species for reproductive research.
- Ensure that priority EEPs and TAGs have access to reproductive advisors.
- Recruit specialist advisors for non-mammalian aquatic species and herptiles.
- Improve data quality and data entry to the Contraception Database.
- Advise the community on all aspects of reproductive management.

Training

Training and knowledge-sharing within the community are central to the RMG's mission. Training will be shaped by community need with the aim of improving community confidence about reproductive decision making. Training will take place in person and through online channels, increasing the scope of the audience we are able to reach.



To do this, our objectives are to:

- Survey the community to identify gaps and priorities.
- Expand training to broader audiences and engage newer generations of zoo professionals directly.
- Develop in-person practical reproductive management workshops for different professional audiences.

Communication & Collaboration

Communication and collaboration are at the heart of the RMG's impact, underpinned by strong international partnerships, particularly with the AZA RMC, diverse working group expertise, and meaningful partnerships with EEPs, TAGs, and other EAZA entities. These relationships are a defining strength and the foundation for all future growth.

To do this, our objectives are to:

- Have a targeted promotional drive that will raise awareness of the RMG.
- Promote a holistic approach to reproductive management.

Operations

The RMG's operational effectiveness depends on a stable, well-resourced, and clearly structured foundation.

To do this, our objectives are to:

- Formalise the distinction between advisors and core members, enforcing membership terms, and advertising for new members.
- Secure sustainable resourcing.

A full list of current EAZA RMG members is in Appendix 1 and a comprehensive overview of our actions for 2026-2031 are in Appendix 2.



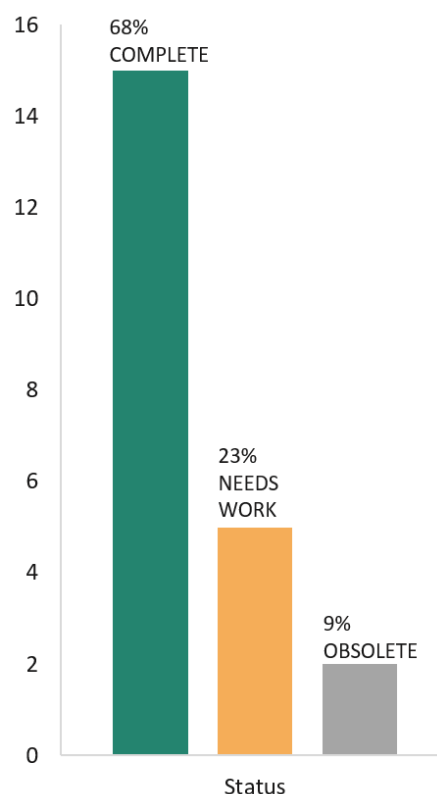
Evaluation of 2021-2025 action plan

Of the 22 objectives that the EAZA RMG set for the period 2021-2025, we successfully completed 68%. These completed objectives include:

- Developing a successful Reproductive Management Massive Open Online Course, to which over 2,000 people have now registered;
- Creating the EAZA Cryopreservation Interest Group and Cryopreservation Network, in partnership with the EAZA Executive Office and the EAZA Biobank Working Group;
- Developing in-person practical and theoretical reproductive management workshops;
- Publishing 5 peer-reviewed papers using data from the Contraception Database.

Ongoing priorities that have been incorporated into the 2026-2031 strategy include:

- Updating the EAZA RMG website to ensure that it is futureproof and up to date;
- Exploring connections with other databases, for example with the Species360 Zoological Information Management System;
- Securing funding to ensure that the RMG is financially secure and not dependent on a single institution.



Lastly, we determined that it was no longer a priority to develop a new database to record reproductive data. Instead, we would work together with animal managers and breeding programme coordinators to highlight key information that should be recorded to improve reproductive management within their populations. Additionally, we are no longer looking to have a list of collaborators on our website as these are quickly out of date. Instead, we will aim to have an RMG Research Meeting in the autumn to highlight recent collaborations and research efforts.

Lastly, the end of the 2021-2025 strategic period saw a change in the leadership of the RMG. We would like to thank Dr. Sue Walker, previous RMG co-chair and co-founder of the RMG for her hard work over the last 18 years.



Appendix 1: RMG members and supporting institutions

EAZA RMG members

Chair: Yedra Feltre¹

Vice-chairs: Veronica Cowl² & Tai Strike³

Support officer: Chris Rettig²

Ashley Franklin⁴

Barbara Biancani⁵

Cheryl Asa⁴

Cyriel Ververs⁶

Dominik Fischer⁷

Gabby Drake²

Gidona Goodman⁸

Giovanna Massei⁹

Henk Bertschinger¹⁰

Hester van Bolhuis¹¹

Holly Farmer¹²

Imke Wiemann¹³

Isabel Callealta¹⁴

Jenny Zahmel¹⁵

Johanna Painer¹⁶

Katie Edwards²

Kimberley Frank¹⁷

Kit Heawood¹⁸

Maja Rütten¹⁹

Manel Lopez Bejar²⁰

Mary Agnew⁴

Monica McDonald⁴

Robert Hermes²¹

Sarah Forsyth³

Sue Walker²

Suzannah Williams²²

Tobias Knauf-Witzens²³

Tullis Matson²⁴

Institutions supporting the EAZA RMG

¹ Independent Zoo and Wildlife Consultant

² Chester Zoo

³ Zoological Society of London, Independent Zoo and Wildlife Consultant

⁴ AZA RMC, Saint Louis Zoo

⁵ European Association for Aquatic Mammals

⁶ Sharjah Equine Hospital

⁷ Wuppertal Zoo

⁸ University of Edinburgh

⁹ Botstiber Institute of Wildlife Fertility Control

¹⁰ University of Pretoria

¹¹ AAP Rescue Centre for Exotic Animals

¹² Paignton Zoo

¹³ Allwetterzoo Münster

¹⁴ ECOLifes

¹⁵ PreserVet

¹⁶ University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

¹⁷ Science and Conservation Centre, Zoo

Montana

¹⁸ Tynedale Deer Vets

¹⁹ PathoVet

²⁰ Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

²¹ Independent reproductive specialist

²² University of Oxford

²³ Wilhelma, The Zoological and Botanical

Gardens, Stuttgart

²⁴ Nature's SAFE



Appendix 2: RMG Action Plan 2026-2031

Objective 1: The EAZA RMG drives research in reproductive management in key areas of need.			
	Action	Timeline	Partners
1.1	Reinforce links with EAZA Population Management Centre (PMC)/EAZA Population Management Advisory Group (EPMAG).	2026-2027	VC, YF, SW, TS, EAZA liaison
1.2	Determine priority species for reproductive research in partnership with the EAZA PMC.	2026-2027	EAZA, VC, YF, SW, TS, EAZA liaison
1.3	Identify internal capacity for developing, funding and conducting research. The use of students and involvement in non-RMG led student reproductive research is only conducted when projects target specific RMG-identified gaps in knowledge and/or are a WG priority.	2026+	EAZA liaison and all working group (WG) members All WG members
1.4	Develop academic partnerships to carry out research on EAZA species priorities.	2027+	All WG members
1.5	Develop behavioural data collection protocols.	2027	HF, BB
Objective 2: The EAZA RMG provides an evidence-based reproductive management advisory service for diverse taxa.			
	Action	Timeline	Partners
2.1	Recruit specialist advisors to the WG who specialise in non-mammalian aquatic species and herptiles.	2026+	All WG members, EAZA liaison to advertise roles
2.2	General taxon guidelines and product sheets on the RMG website are all up to date. A list of guidelines that require updating will be sent to all working group members with suggestions for reviewers.	2026+	All WG to update sheets and review
		2026	Support Officer



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2.3	TAG/EEP reproductive advisors – look internally at who is a reproductive advisor, speak to TAGs to see who would like one. Focus on priority species (from EAZA list).	2026+	VC,TS,YF
2.4	Use the EAZA species priority list to develop pre-shipment reproductive assessments on specific species/individuals.	2026+	YF, TS, VC to develop, WG to review

Objective 3: The EAZA RMG collects high quality data on contraceptive use within the European zoo community.

	Action	Timeline	Partners
3.1	Improve compliance with completing data in the Contraception Database, for example information on behavioural or physical effects. To do this, we will push for data completion: At professional conferences In the EAZA eNews and European Association of Zoo and Wildlife Veterinarian (EAZWV) newsletters In contraceptive guidelines that are disseminated	2026+	All WG members
3.2	Encourage institutions to allow animal care staff to add information about physical and behavioural effects of contraception by advertising the 'Animal Care' user level.	2026+	All WG members
3.3	Promote data entry to the Contraception Database outside EAZA, for example with sanctuaries and non-EAZA members.	2026+	YF, VC, TS, HvB, BB, others in the WG
3.4	Change contact email from contraception@... to RM@... or similar.	2027+	VC
3.5	Improve contraceptive data recording in ZIMS through discussions with Species360 and by promoting the 'Suggest Features' function on the Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) in guidelines and during workshops.	2026-2027	VC, YF, TS, EAZA liaison



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3.6	Discuss amendments to the ZIMS Animal/Medical sections regarding the use of contraceptive drugs so that links to the RMG/RMG for recommendations are provided.	2026-2027	YF, EAZA liaison, Species360
Objective 4: The RMG provides training and capacity strengthening on all aspects of reproductive management.			
	Action	Timeline	Partners
4.1	Survey the community about what reproductive management needs they have.	2026+	VC, YF, TS, BB
4.2	Develop a regular webinar series based on community feedback/needs – aim for 3 a year.	2027+	All WG members to contribute, EAZA liaison
4.3	Create general reproductive assessment guidelines to add to Best Practice Guidelines & a simple reproductive assessment checklist.	2026+	Relevant WG members to create guidelines
4.4	Increase attendance to workshops by accrediting them e.g. through the VetCEE.	2027+	Support Officer
	Source resources to accredit workshops and training opportunities.	2027+	All WG members
4.5	Review and update the MOOC:		
	WG members to look through MOOC and identify areas that need updating.	2026	All WG members
	Source resources to update the course.	2027	YF, TS, VC
	Accredit the course through the VetCEE.	2026	VC, Support Officer
4.6	Continue to develop in-person, practical reproductive assessment workshops.	2026+	YF, TS, VC and other relevant WG members
4.7	Develop a Summer Schools programme for (ECZM) residents – a 2-3 week training package in different areas of reproductive management, initially with a regional focus.	2027 planning, 2028 start	VC, YF, TS, GD – planning/organising All WG mentoring and support
	Identify funding and regional partners	2027+	



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Objective 5: The EAZA RMG raises awareness of reproductive management and RMG services within the zoo community and wider audiences.			
	Action	Timeline	Partners
5.1	Promotional drive to newer generations to raise awareness of who the RMG are & what we do. EAZWV news, EAZA eNews, get the PMC to advertise the RMG, vet advisor training/awareness.	2026+	EAZA liaison and all WG
5.2	Promote the holistic approach to reproductive management through:	2026+	All WG members responsible
	EAZA eNews, EAZWV newsletters, and other communications	2026+	EAZA liaison
	Reproductive management workshops at relevant conferences	2026+	YF, TS lead
	A plenary at the EAZA Annual Conference	2027-2028	YF, TS, VC
	A pre-EAZA conference workshop, possibly in partnership with the EAZA PMC/EPMAG. This could be specifically targeted towards coordinators and institutions who may need additional support.	2028	YF, TS, VC, BB
	Non-zoo based professional conferences targeting free-ranging wildlife (for example through Botstiber Institute conferences) and sanctuaries (for example through the European Alliance of Rescue Centres and Sanctuaries (EARS)).	2027+	YF, TS, GM, HvB, BB
5.3	Explore white paper/review of reproductive management including contraception and promoting breeding in and ex situ.	2028+	GM, YF, TS, VC, supported by other WG members
Objective 6: The RMG is comprised of active and engaged members.			
	Action	Timeline	Partners
6.1	Define & formalise roles of advisors vs. core members.	2026-2027	YF, TS, VC
6.2	The RMG will enforce membership terms & voting for renewed membership.	2026-2027	YF, TS, VC



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6.3	Advertise for new RMG members both general & with a specific taxon focus.	2026-2027	EAZA liaison
Objective 7: The EAZA RMG is no longer financially reliant on a single institution.			
	Action	Timeline	Partners
7.1	Secure external funding for the RMG coordinator role so that it is a full-time position.	2027	YF, TS, VC, SW, EAZA Executive Office (EEO)
7.2	Increase buy-in from EAZA for RMG activities, such as for web development, the coordinator role etc.	2027	YF, TS, VC, SW, EEO
7.3	Identify funding for necessary tech updates, including: The Contraception Database and associated website Species360 integration	2026-2027 Phased	YF, TS, VC, SW, EAZA liaison
7.4	Identify external resourcing for RMG activities including research, workshops, courses, travel, etc.	2026+	RMG WG

