



Animal Husbandry

Background Information

All five SeaWorld and Busch Gardens parks are home to more than 40 animal species classified as endangered or threatened. Some of these species are bred at SeaWorld and Busch Gardens adventure parks. Many of these propagation programs are under the direction of individual parks, but some are administered by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. AZA's Species Survival Plan (SSP) is one among many worldwide breeding programs. Their goal is to preserve, in zoos and aquariums, species that are threatened or endangered in the wild. SSPs are designed to be a supplement, not an alternative, to preservation in nature.

The Busch Gardens parks in Tampa and Williamsburg participate in 12 SSPs species; addax, black and white colobus, giant panda, ring-tailed and red ruffed lemurs, lowland gorilla, Bornean orangutan, chimpanzee, Asian elephant, black rhinoceros, scimitar-horned oryx and Grevy's zebra. Among the SeaWorld parks in San Diego, San Antonio and Orlando, three species come under an SSP; the Humboldt penguin, the palm cockatoo, and the Asian small-clawed otter (even though this species is not endangered). Both SeaWorld and Busch Gardens oversee the SSP for four species of cranes and the white-winged wood duck.

Owing to the excellent care and husbandry procedures at SeaWorld and Busch Garden parks, many other species of non-endangered animals have given birth. Firsthand knowledge gained from day-to-day contact between animals and veterinarians, animal care specialists, and trainers contributes to the success of these programs. Data on reproductive biology includes gestation, nutritional needs, and growth rates. Sometimes impossible to collect from wild populations, this data contributes to the continued success of these programs and others.

Other species that have successfully propagated at SeaWorld and Busch Gardens include whales (beluga, killer, bottlenose, and Commerson's dolphin), pinnipeds (Pacific walrus, harbor seal, and California sea lion), California and Alaska sea otters, reticulated giraffe, birds (blue-eyed shag, penguins, flamingos, Hawaiian nene goose, and ostrich), fish (sharks, rays, African ciclids, and four-eyed fish), reptiles (red-eared slider), and invertebrates (giant African millipedes and chambered nautilus).



SeaWorld aviculturists hand raises ducklings hatched at the park.