

Editorial

JZAR Special Edition: Proceedings of the 12th European Zoo Nutrition Conference in Riga, Latvia, 20–22 September 2023

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Appropriate zoo animal nutrition is one of the bases of good animal husbandry and welfare. Diet plays an important role in health, reproductive success, longevity, and the avoidance of suffering, whilst a suitable feeding regime should not only cover an animal's requirements in terms of nutritional and digestive physiology, but also in terms of activity budget and cognitive employment.

During the summer of 2022, the EAZA European Nutrition Group, of which Marcus and I are a part of, carried out a survey to identify the nutrition expertise within zoos and aquariums across EAZA collections*. The results revealed that across 307 EAZA member collections, there were only 11 zoos that employed animal nutritionists as permanent staff members. Additionally, zoo animal and wildlife "nutritional advisors" also existed within animal keeping staff, veterinary specialists, academic researchers, and independent consultants. Collectively across Europe, 14 of these "nutritional advisors" were identified and were found to assist with 27 of EAZA's 42 Taxonomic Advisory Groups (TAG) providing evidence and experience-based nutrition and feeding guidelines for the TAG (examples of their work can be seen within some of EAZA's Best Practice Guidelines). However, it remains evident that resources for knowledge sharing, expertise, and guidance within this important area of zoo and aquarium animal husbandry remains scarce within our field.

In order to promote good welfare and best practice within zoo and aquarium animal nutrition, EAZA's European Nutrition

Group organise a biennial European Zoo Nutrition Conference which is open to anyone with an interest in this topic. What we present here in this Zoo Nutrition Special Edition of JZAR is some of the research presented at this year's conference, EZNC2023 (proceedings summarised in Samet et al. 2023). They are in-depth studies into the diets, nutrition, and feeding behaviours of the inspiring species that some of us have the privilege to work with. With great thanks to the authors, reviewers and JZAR team for making this possible, we hope you enjoy the issue.

Guest Editors
Lauren Samet and Marcus Clauss
EAZA Zoo Nutrition Group Members

References

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- Samet L., Clauss M., Fens A., Byrne S., Depauw S. (eds.) (2023) *12th European Zoo Nutrition Conference*. Riga, Latvia: European Zoo Nutrition Group. Available online: <https://www.eaza.net/assets/Uploads/Events/2023/EZNC23/EZNC2023-Programme-booklet.pdf>