

EAZA Position Statement on the EU Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (1143/2014)



Approved by EAZA Council
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This statement presents the position of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) on the EU Regulation on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (1143/2014) that entered into force in 2015.

This Regulation (hereafter referred to IAS Regulation) defines invasive alien species as 'species whose introduction or spread has been found to threaten or adversely impact upon biodiversity and related ecosystem services'. Species that have changed their natural range without human intervention, in response to changing ecological conditions and climate change, are not considered invasive alien species under the IAS Regulation.

Invasive alien species are known to be a major threat to native biodiversity as well as causing situations leading to negative economic consequences. The IAS Regulation sets out obligations for EU Member States and stakeholders to implement measures towards listed species as to limit these impacts.

EAZA and its more than 400 Members are committed to protecting biodiversity. We have decades of experience, working across all animal taxa, in a variety of *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation processes. Given this expertise, EAZA and its Members are considered scientific experts in the field of species conservation. Our Conservation Standards (2016) identify the specific responsibility we have towards the conservation of species native to the EAZA region and thus EAZA supports legislation that effectively protects native wildlife.

EAZA believes the following about the EU IAS Regulation:

- A. It provides a good opportunity to protect native biodiversity against invasive alien species.
- B. The recognition of the importance of *ex situ* conservation is a significant inclusion.
- C. It will be effective if all EU Member States develop management plans in accordance with each other to reflect national priorities but within a Europe wide context.
- D. The process for identifying species to be added to the list of species of Union concern has been inconsistent.
- E. The open-ended nature of the list of species of Union concern is a threat to the biodiversity conservation, education and research remits given to zoos under the EU Zoos Directive (1999/22/EC).

EAZA calls for:

The Regulation to be applied in a way that does not have a negative impact on the role of zoos and aquaria as organisations for conservation, education and research as defined under the EU Zoos Directive (1999/22/EC).

Through:

Recognition that:

- A. EAZA Members have a strong conservation role.
- B. 140 million visits are made to EAZA Members annually and thereby EAZA Members provide an excellent opportunity to educate EU citizens about invasive alien species by keeping them on display.
- C. The European Code of Conduct on Zoological Gardens and Aquaria and Invasive Alien Species (2012), jointly developed by the Council of Europe, EAZA and IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group, identifies that zoos present a low risk pathway for the introduction of invasive alien species in Europe. This Code of Conduct also recommends the ways zoos and aquariums should operate to ensure this continues.

Implementation via:

- D. EU Member States using the opportunity of providing permits as outlined in Article 8 to enable EAZA Members to carry out ex situ conservation.
- E. The biodiversity value of all species being recognised equally, irrespectively of their current threatened status, in the implementation process.
- F. The permitting process causing minimum financial and administrative burden for those involved.
- G. EAZA Members being categorised as non-commercial holders under the IAS Regulation.
- H. Member States involving EAZA Members in the implementation of the EU IAS Regulation on national level and the drafting of management plans for all fauna.
- I. The procedure of listing the species of Union concern being carried out in a way that ensures that decision making is solely based on robust scientific evidence.

Consultation via:

- J. Continuing with the general publication of the status of risk assessments, including opportunities for stakeholders such as EAZA to be involved in their development.
- K. Maintaining seats for EAZA on the Working Group on Invasive Alien Species, or equivalent consultative group(s), for the duration of the IAS Regulation.

Background to EAZA

EAZA is a non-profit conservation organisation, with Members across Europe and the Middle East. Its mission is to facilitate cooperation within the European zoo and aquarium community towards the goals of public education and engagement, scientific research and nature conservation. EAZA believes that zoos and aquariums have a strong role to play in the conservation of nature and wildlife both at our Member institutions and out in the field, and believes that wild animals in human care are central to this mission.

EAZA is Europe's key centre of excellence for scientific knowledge about wild animal welfare and management, and one of the continent's foremost environmental education networks. With more than 400 Members in 44 countries, out of which 26 are EU Member States, EAZA is the world's largest regional zoo association and is represented in EU Member States through National Zoo Associations and individual zoos.