



NEWS RELEASE

WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE SEES AN INCREASE IN ANIMALS DONATED TO THE PARKS

- 637 Animals Donated in 2007

Singapore, May 16, 2008 – The total number of animals donated to the Singapore Zoo and Night Safari rose to 460 in 2007, a sharp increase from the 118 animals donated in 2006. Jurong BirdPark received a total of 177 donations in 2007.

The majority of these were either brought in by the police or confiscated by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA). Confiscations from AVA constituted a seven-fold jump from 25 to 175, over the previous year. The animals were mainly reptiles, and included star tortoises, green iguanas, fly-river turtles and Southeast Asian soft-shell turtles.

Donated animals are quarantined upon arrival, to prevent the potential spread of diseases to the rest of the parks' animal collection. During the quarantine period, the animals are cared for and administered by the parks' team of vets and keepers. The team inspects the animals for signs of injury and illness and provide them with a diet comprising appropriate food, nutritional supplements and medication, if necessary.



Brought to you by : Wildlife Reserves, Singapore

The need to feed and care for donated animals is a responsibility that the Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) institutions take in their stride. Designated as Singapore's official wildlife rescue centres, the Jurong BirdPark, Night Safari and Singapore Zoo are able to provide expert specialist care to a spectrum of exotic animals that enter the facilities. Over the last three decades, WRS parks have cared for and rescued more than 10,000 animals from all over the world, including Singapore.

The expertise to provide this assistance comes with years of experience in handling over 4,000 animals and 7,000 birds on a daily basis through the running of the three parks. WRS enjoy excellent relations and maintain constant communication with zoological institutions all over the world to keep abreast of the latest veterinary know-how. Staff are regularly sent on numerous overseas learning attachments, ensuring we are able to deal with anything from tarantulas to orang utans.

Ms Fanny Lai, CEO of Wildlife Reserves Singapore, said, "We see many cases each year of exotic animals brought in and subsequently abandoned when the host family realises they do not have the necessary skills or resources to care for them. These animals can be extremely difficult to upkeep and I strongly urge members of the public and animal lovers not to buy or raise exotic animals as pets."

Management of donated animals

WRS' parks manage these donations and confiscations in a variety of ways. Integration into the parks' animal collection is one method. For example, a 2-week old slow loris that was donated by the public in August 2007 was hand-raised and is now in Night Safari's collection. Slow lorises are listed on CITES* Appendix I, which means trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

In August 2007, a total of 139 confiscated Southeast Asian soft-shell turtles were brought in. Thirty-two had to be euthanased and 107 housed in Singapore Zoo. Of these, 61 are now surviving and the population have since stabilised. These turtles are on CITES Appendix II, which includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival. Also listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List**, these turtles are considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

Native wildlife that were donated to the parks, such as the pangolins, have been microchipped, rehabilitated and released back into the wild. Some exotic animals have also been repatriated to the various countries of origin or to other zoo collections to participate in breeding programmes. For example, 15 star tortoises were sent to Lisbon Zoo for display and breeding purposes in March this year. Another donated slow loris will be making its way to Augsburg Zoo in Germany this June. Two male-female pairs of white-handed gibbons were sent to Canada and Sri Lanka respectively in 2006. Two thousand star tortoises were sent back to India in 2002 and 15 shingle-back skinks, a green tree python and a crocodile skink were sent to Detroit Zoo for re-homing and breeding purposes.

WRS would like to urge the public not to import or keep exotic animals as pets. To reiterate, under The Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act (ESA) it is an offence to import and export any endangered species without a permit from AVA. It is also an offence to possess, sell, offer or expose for sale, or display to the public any of these species, if it has been illegally imported. Any person or company caught violating the ESA is liable to be prosecuted in Court and fined up to a maximum of S\$50,000 for each animal or plant, and/or imprisoned for a term up to 2 years.

About Wildlife Reserves Singapore

Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) is the parent company of the award-winning attractions – Jurong BirdPark, Night Safari and Singapore Zoo. WRS strives to be a world-class leisure attraction, providing excellent exhibits of animals (and birds) presented in their natural environment, for the purpose of conservation, education and recreation. Last year, Singapore Zoo served more than 1.5 million visitors, Night Safari more than 1.1 million visitors and the Jurong BirdPark 830,000 visitors. WRS parks have been conferred the Best Leisure Attraction Experience Award at the Singapore Tourism Awards 16 times. The record achievement affirms WRS parks' status as Singapore's premier leisure venues.

About Jurong BirdPark

Opened in 1971, Jurong BirdPark is one of the largest bird parks in the region, offering a 20.2-hectare hillside haven for 7,000 birds representing 600 species. Committed to its efforts in conservation and exhibiting birds in naturalistic settings, the BirdPark creates simulated natural habitats – from the grasslands of Africa to the rainforests of South America – for different bird species. Key attractions include the Waterfall Aviary (housing the world's tallest man-made waterfall), Lory Loft and Southeast Asian Birds Aviary. The Park also holds daily shows to educate and entertain, including the popular “Birds of Prey” and “Birds & Buddies” shows.

About Night Safari

Night Safari, the world's first nocturnal safari park and five-time winner of the “Best Leisure Attraction Experience Award” by Singapore Tourism Board offers eight geographical zones which can be explored either on foot via three walking trails, or by tram. Almost 1,000 animals from 130 species (of which 30% are threatened species) inhabit the 40 hectare park. Other must-experience highlights for the more than 1.1 million visitors yearly include the “Creatures of the Night” show, Fragrant Walk (with 4,000 scented plants) and the Giant Flying Squirrel exhibit. Night Safari is part of Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

About Singapore Zoo

Set in a rainforest environment, Singapore Zoo's world famous "Open Concept" offers the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the wonders of nature. Home to over 3,000 specimens from 290 species, 21% of which are threatened, the Zoo has attained a strong reputation internationally for its conservation initiatives and breeding programmes. To better meet the healthcare needs of its animals and working towards its aspiration to become a leading global centre of excellence for veterinary healthcare and research, a purpose-built Wildlife Healthcare and Research Centre was set up in March, 2006. In 2007, 1.5 million visitors enjoyed the experiential learning experience at the 28-hectare award-winning Zoo. Singapore Zoo is part of Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

***About CITES**

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

****About the IUCN Red List**

IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) Red List is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It uses a set of criteria to evaluate the extinction risk of thousands of species and subspecies. These criteria are relevant to all species and all regions of the world. With its strong scientific base, the IUCN Red List is recognised as the most authoritative guide to the status of biological diversity.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF : Wildlife Reserves Singapore
BY : Citigate Dewe Rogerson, i.MAGE Pte Ltd
1 Raffles Place
#26-02 OUB Centre
SINGAPORE 048616
CONTACT : Ms Eileen Bakri /Ms Yu Poh Leng
at telephone
DURING OFFICE HOURS : 6534-5122 (Office)
AFTER OFFICE HOURS : 9781-0737/9667-5837 (Mobile)
EMAIL : eileen.bakri@citigatedrimage.com/
pohleng.yu@citigatedrimage.com

May 16, 2008