

Institutional Collection Plan

Introduction

As outlined in the AZA accreditation standards, the ICP should include a statement of justification for all species and specimens in the institution's planned collection and should, at minimum, require that all species in residence and/or being considered be evaluated with regard to:

- Special welfare considerations
- Status in the wild
- Status in zoos and aquariums
- Recommendations stated in AZA TAG's RCP
- Existence and priorities of cooperative management programs
- Ability to maintain the species in a physically and psychologically and socially healthy environment
- Exhibit value
- Exhibit suitability (may include climatic considerations)
- Need for husbandry and other behavioral research

Regional Collection Plans

Regional Collection Plans (RCP's) prepared by AZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) specifies the optimal manner in which populations should be managed. A TAG RCP identifies a list of species recommended for management, the level at which each should be managed, detailed explanations for how those recommendations were developed, and an evaluation of how much space is needed for each species. For RCP's to be successful, institutional collection planners must consult TAG recommendations before making their own plans. Institutions are not bound to follow RCP recommendations, but by choosing to exhibit species approved in an RCP, institutions know they will have increased access to animals when needed, and will benefit from the collective husbandry and veterinary knowledge of other institutions following the TAG guidance.

The two main aquatic TAG's, the Freshwater Fishes TAG and the Marine Fishes TAG, have only recently completed, or recently revised, their respective Regional Collection Plans (RCP's). The RCP process was particularly challenging because of the somewhat non-applicable nature to aquatic collections. Ripley's staff have participated in the Marine Fishes TAG RCP development and Ripley's staff member are involved in program leadership for the Species Survival Plans for Pristids and Sand Tigers. Several of the managed species have not yet bred in captivity, but all RCP recommendations are being followed with designated species.

While the ICP provides guidance, it should be considered a flexible document that allows the aquarium to react to the changing availability of animals, the development of new programs, and the changing focus or needs of existing programs. The ICP needs to reflect a collection that is diverse, providing the visiting public an opportunity to view and learn about a variety of species.

Criteria for Taxon Selection and Program Development

Criteria for taxon selection were developed using Ripley's Aquarium of Canada's mission statement as a guiding principle, with a good helping of common sense and using professional industry-accepted standards.

Mission statement:

"Our mission is to provide a top quality, world-class marine life facility that will foster environmental education, conservation and research, while simultaneously providing entertainment for visitors of all ages".

The following criteria were employed in the ranking and selection of species to include in the institution's animal collection:

- Can specimens be acquired?
- Do we have the applicable resources and facilities to maintain the well-being and welfare for this taxon?
- Can we establish an exhibit program for this taxon?
- Does this taxon have public appeal?
- Does this taxon have strong education value?
- Does this taxon have conservation value?
- Are there research opportunities that will be developed for this taxon?
- Will a program be developed for this taxon?
- Does the taxon have use as an ecological utility species?

Ripley's Aquarium of Canada's Institutional Collection Plan will:

- Insure proper utilization of Ripley's Aquarium of Canada's physical, financial, and human resources.
- Provide a method to insure the animal collection reflects Ripley's Aquarium of Canada's stated goals and mission.
- Help prevent unwanted surplus animals and provide a clear picture of planned collection activities to staff and management.
- Insure compliance with Ripley's Aquarium of Canada's Responsible Population Management Policy.
- Stabilize the animal collection while continuing to enhance exhibits, promote animal health and provide educational opportunities.
- Reflect Ripley's Aquarium of Canada's desire to be a leader in marine conservation and education.

Methodology

Each existing and candidate taxon was evaluated using a decision tree (attached) for either an exhibit or off-exhibit program. The rankings not only prioritize selection; they also delineate some level of functionality. For exhibits, taxa were ranked for display program compatibility and public appeal, followed by conservation, education, and research value. These ranks are designated as E1 through E7, with E1 being the highest priority. In some instances, animals are in the collection for the "utility" they perform (gastropods cleaning algae from tanks, acting as dither species, etc.) These are categorized as "Utility".

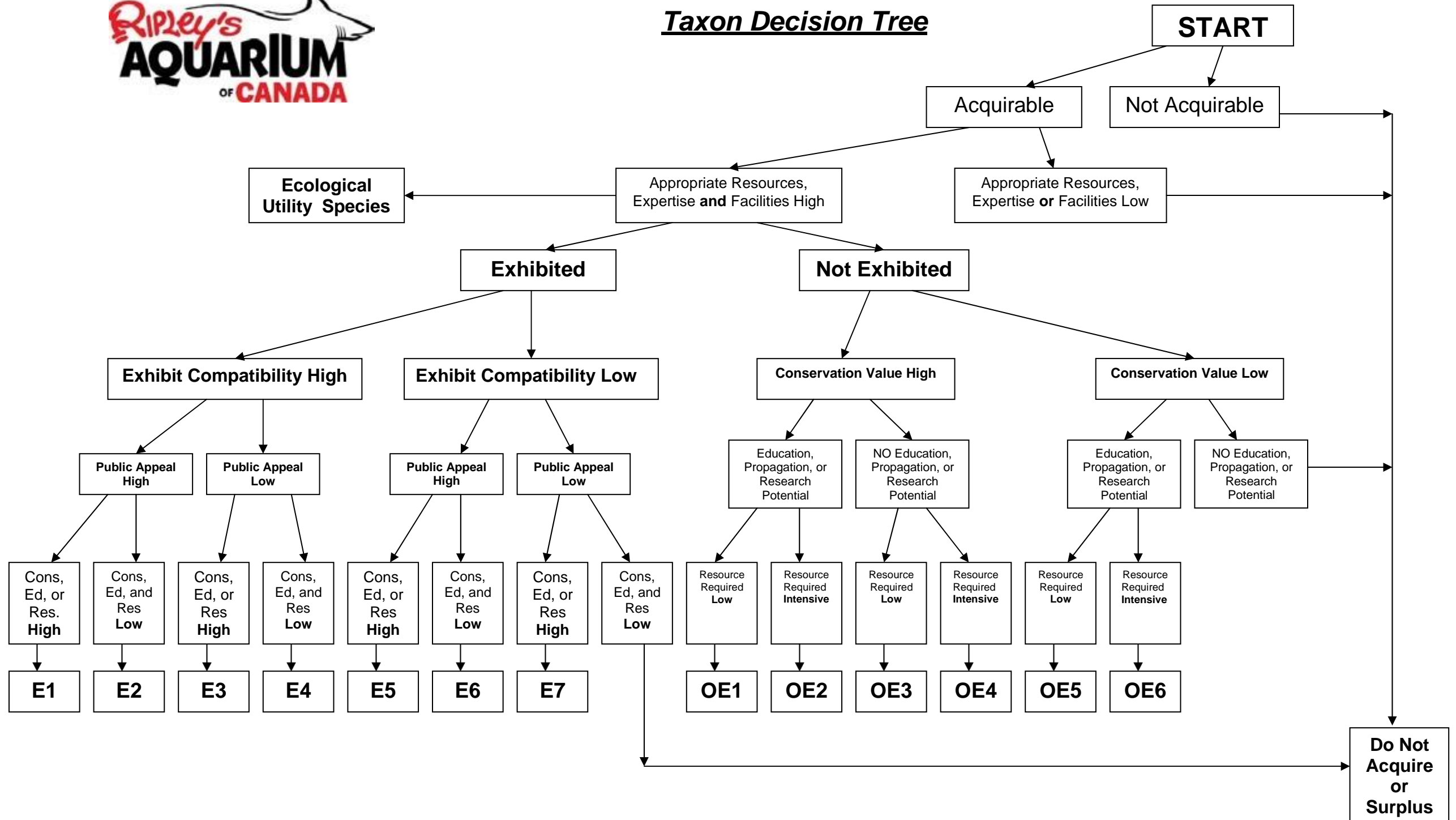
For off-exhibit taxa, priority was given to conservation value, followed by education, propagation / grow-out, and research potential merit. For economy, necessary resource allocations were also factored into the off-exhibit rankings to favor the maintenance of less costly taxa. These rankings are designated OE1 through OE6 with OE1 being the highest priority.

Taxa that cannot be maintained adequately, and those of the lowest priority rankings for both on and off exhibit programs, are designated as "Do Not Acquire/Surplus" (DNA/S).

For higher profile species, or species with known conservation status assessments, specialized species database tables are developed (examples are enclosed).



Taxon Decision Tree





Institutional Collection Plan – Species Database

Scientific Name:	<i>Pristis zijsron</i>
Common Name:	Longcomb (Green) Sawfish
Status in the wild: (From where species collected)	<u>ESA</u> : Listed as Endangered as of December 12, 2014 <u>CITES</u> : Appendix 1 as of June 2007 <u>IUCN</u> : 2013 Red List – Critically Endangered (A2cd) Previously listed as Endangered EN in 2002 <u>EA</u> : Australian Commonwealth <i>EPBC</i> not listed. Previously listed under the <i>EPBS Act 1999</i> Schedule 1: as Vulnerable in February 1999. ASFB listed as Endangered. Recovery Plan being prepared as of August 3, 2010.
Status at other aquariums:	<input type="checkbox"/> Common <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rare <input type="checkbox"/> Never displayed
Acquirable?:	NO: Not anymore; previously easy. Australia no longer issuing export permits and is CITES I.
Appropriate Resources and Facilities?	YES: Senior staff all have many years of experience with this genus
Cooperative Management Programs:	YES: In development with aquariums that display this species
Exhibit Value / Public Appeal:	HIGH: Large animals; dramatic saw bill
Educational Value:	HIGH: May be only way people get to see sawfish
Conservation Value:	HIGH: Ambassador species for other Pristids
Exhibit Suitability:	EXCELLENT: No problems in large multi-taxa exhibits historically.
Research Needs:	GOOD: Especially captive husbandry and clinical veterinary
AZA TAG RCP Recommendations:	NONE. MFTAG still developing RCP. Elasmobranchs are 1 of 2 MFTAG focus areas.
Other aquarium or mission issues:	HIGH in all areas: (Education, Conservation Research and Entertainment)
Display Plan:	Display in Dangerous Lagoon
Decision Tree Ranking:	E1