

DESIGNING AN ONLINE HAND-REARING RESOURCE CENTER: FIRST STEPS

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In 2014, Safari West and the Safari West Wildlife Foundation (Santa Rosa, CA) hosted “The Inaugural AZVT (Association of Zoo Veterinary Technicians) Focus Group: The Art and Science of Hand-Rearing”, a symposium that was attended by 80 zoo professionals from around the globe. With the initial focus on carnivores and hoofstock, twenty international speakers provided their insights into both historical as well as new techniques. Discussions of hand-rearing zoo animals ranging from milk and colostrum composition to the special physiology and behaviors of neonates, and techniques for monitoring success. As a direct follow-up from the meeting, a steering committee comprising members from the zoo, wildlife rehabilitation, veterinary, and academic communities outlined criteria and developed a working model for data collection into a web based hand-rearing resource center. Phase I online data collection focuses on select mammalian species, working initially through SSPs, TAGs, AAZV, and AZVT communication liaisons for dissemination, followed by review and summarization of details of formulae and supplements, weight gains, developmental milestones, medical history and support materials. Additionally, we are partnering with the Avian Resource Center (<http://www.avianrearingresource.co.uk/index.php>; Burford, Oxfordshire, UK) in making available avian incubation and hand-rearing summaries that have already been compiled. Working collaboratively with aviculturists, we envision expanding these baseline incubation and rearing protocols and formats, as well as records of developmental milestones, for broader application to reptiles and amphibians.