



Using Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs as Resources for Conservation and Research

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Abstract: Seahorses are one of the most iconic and popular aquatic species in zoo and aquarium collections. The pot-bellied or big-belly seahorse, *Hippocampus abdominalis*, and the lined seahorse, *H. erectus* are the two most represented seahorse species in Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) member institutions. AZA's Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Programs are one of the tools that help to maintain sustainable and genetically diverse captive populations, as well as advocate husbandry advancements and public education objectives. These programs can also serve to promote and facilitate research and conservation of wild animals. As the program leaders for these species, we will address the challenges and successes for each program, as well as discuss potential opportunities. Because we also represent these species outside of the zoo and aquarium community, we can be a resource to research, aquaculture, and other groups working with them. Developing networks for collaboration between in situ research and captive management is an important element in advancing our programs.

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