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EEP Proposal for

Common Species Name: Cichlids

Scientific Species Name: *Cichlidae*

Prepared by

Name(s): Freshwater Teleost TAG

Year: 2023

1. Contact information

Contact details of proposed EEP Coordinator

Name: Peter Petersen

Institution: Den Blå Planet (National Aquarium Denmark)

Email: ppe@denblaaplanet.dk

2. Taxonomy information

Taxonomy of the species

The family *Cichlidae* in the order *Cichliformes*, consists of 250 genera, 1759 species (March 2023, Fishbase).

IUCN assessments (March 2023)

EX: 5, EW: 0, CR: 113, EN: 79, VU: 108, NT: 58, LC: 845, DD: 224, NE: 327.

Main Focus

Critical endangered (CR) species will be the main focus of this EEP. The Extinct in the wild category contains zero species at present time (March 2023) but this can change rapidly, and focus will be on the status of this group as well preventing the further extinction of cichlid species. Species rarely kept by private aquarists, breeders, zoos, aquariums, and other institutions will have highest priority.

Specimens excluded from the EEP

Domesticated strains are excluded from this EEP.

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Identified roles

Identified role(s) description *(From the Species Assessment Sheet in RCP)*

Insurance: This direct conservation role contemplates the possibility to maintain long-term ex situ populations to preserve options for the future. The ex situ populations are a potential future source to build up (long-term) populations for reintroductions.

Monitoring: This role would focus on finding out what is the real status in the wild and if there is any opportunity for EAZA to get involved.

Research in situ: There is need for research and supporting research in country with focus on background information such as habitat, biology and threats and developing Best Practice Guidelines to tackle any issues with breeding.

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Programme participants and governance

EAZA institutional scope *Participation in EEPs is obligatory for EAZA Members. If you wish for an exemption, identify which institution(s) holding this species is/are not part of the EEP and explain the underlying reasons.)*

All EAZA institutions are expected to participate.

Non-EAZA holding institutional scope

- *EAZA population/community is the dominating driver of the EEP and any non-EAZA Members will occasionally join and are not integral to the structure of the EEP.*
- *In addition to EAZA, there are other drivers of the EEP (e.g., breeders, Aquarist groups, other aquariums etc.).*

Additional information:

Essential non-EAZA partners not holding animals *(List the organisations, define their role, and how they will work with the EEP).*

Several non-EAZA aquariums that are members of EUAC, (European Union of Aquarium Curators) which has a Memorandum of Understanding with EAZA, are likely to participate. Additionally, some hobbyists and research institutions hold the species in this family, and they contribute to the overall total population size and provide valuable knowledge and research that benefits the programme. They are therefore important to the aims of the EEP. Furthermore, very few EAZA members hold the species in this family so there is insufficient participation from only EAZA zoos/aquariums to establish and maintain strong populations of the species represented in this EEP.

According to species360 only 24 of the 113 CR categorized species are kept by members (February 2023). ZIMS users are only a small part of the list of holders.

Due to the large number of species included in this EEP, cooperation with hobbyists, private breeders, Breeder associations, smaller aquariums and commercial breeders will be necessary.

Members of the EEP core group (Species Committee + non-voting members)

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- *By default, EEPs have a Species Committee (a democratically elected representation of the holders) as part of their EEP core group (information on the Species Committee and its associated default decision making process can be found in the Population Management Manual). If that will not be the case for this EEP, explain why and define the composition, structure and decision-making process for the EEP core group.*

The species committee consists of members of EAZA institutions, Non-EAZA institutions, EUAC members, and members of hobbyist cichlid associations.

- *List the EEP core group members (names and institutions) (if already known): Species Committee members, Advisors, others.*

Brian Zimmerman (Bristol Zoological Society) UK

Pete Liptrot (Bolton Aquarium) UK

Wouter Van Der Valk (Ouwehands Dierenpark Rhenen) NL

Jim Cumming (Hobbyist, Cichlids associations) CA

Becky Goodwin (Chester Zoo) UK

Lars Skou Olsen (Den Blå Planet) DK

Collaboration with EAZA Working Groups and Committees *(Explain any current and/or future proposed links to existing EAZA groups and committees, such as the Animal Training Working Group, Biobanking Working Group, EAZA Group on Zoo Animal Contraception (EGZAC), EAZA Population Management Advisory Group (EPMAG), EAZA Education Committee, EAZA Nutrition Working Group, EAZA Research Committee, Reintroduction and Translocations Group, Transport Working Group, EAZA Veterinary Committee, EAZA Conservation Committee, Animal Welfare Working Group, Palm oil Working Group).*

EAZA Biobank working group (In order to avoid misidentification of species and share materials). Other family EEP programs and committee members etc. EAZA conservation committee.

3. Programme characteristics

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The detailed programme characteristics, goals, objectives and management strategies to fulfil the roles and goals of the EEP will be developed at a later stage as part of a Long-Term Management Plan (LTMP). The questions below are intended to help paint a rough view of what is currently intended/expected for the general EEP programme characteristics.

- *If there is a recent/active Long-term Management Plan for this species, list the demographic, genetic and other goals determined (if they still apply post RCP workshop).*

Not a present time.

- *What is the anticipated duration of the programme?*

The duration of the programme is unlimited. Holders are expected to commit to a long-term participation. The scale of habitat loss in freshwater ecosystems is massive and many species in this family will require a long-term management plan.

- *What is the anticipated likelihood and time scale of the use of the EEP population for restoration in the wild (reintroduction, reinforcement, etc.)?*

At present time (March 2023) IUCN does not categorize any species in this family as Extinct in the wild **EW**, but it is most likely that several species from the Category Critical Endangered **CR** (113 species) already are extinct in their habitat. It is only a matter of time before the EEP population will be necessary for reintroduction.

- *Are some or all the individuals within this EEP intended to be held in specialist ex situ centres in the species' native range? Specify.*

Some ex-situ centres already exist for some critical endangered Madagascar species:

- Fish Net Madagascar (Guy Tam Hyock, Tsilavina Ravelomanana, Charles-Edouard Fusari are involved).
- Madagasikara voakajy (supported by Eaza member, Chester Zoo)

- *Is it expected to be necessary that the whole population, or a certain proportion thereof, will need to be held off exhibit in order to fulfil the roles of the programme? If yes, please explain. (this question does not refer to the temporary housing of individuals off exhibit for space reasons)*

No. But some institution has done this as an extra precaution. (Not to put all eggs in the same basket).

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- *Does a part or the whole of the EEP population need to be held in bio-secure facilities? And/or are there known diseases that have an above average effect on fulfilling the roles of the EEP?*

No, there are issues with *Mycobacterium* in some populations though. *Hexamita intestinalis* and *Ichthyophthirius multifiliis* also have a above average effect, but bio-secure facilities should not be necessary.

- *What is the expected estimated number of individuals and institutions required to fulfil the selected roles? (this question will be answered in detail during the LTMP session for the taxon, but if some indication of scale is clear already, this should be stated here)*

1-3 EAZA institutions, and support of private/commercial breeders, per. Species would be desirable. Number of specimens is very much dependent on the species and should be assessed continuously with each species.

- *Is this EEP intended to include rearing of wild eggs/young (i.e. head-starting)?*
Not at this time.

- *Is this EEP intended to include ex situ breeding?*
Yes, the full scale of this is still unknown.

- *Is there likely sufficient expertise for this, or a model, taxon to achieve the roles of the programme and provide conditions for good welfare? Please indicate if Best Practice Guidelines already exist and if yes, include publication date.*

This large group's target species contain mostly species that current holders have successfully bred. Species missing from the program will most likely be relatively easy to breed from compiled experience of the family committee members and NGO's.

- *Will (non-)breeding and transfer recommendations be issued? If yes, with what frequency? (naturally problems will need to be solved throughout the year, but with what frequency will recommendations be issued for the whole population at once)*

Not at this time.

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- *Do you anticipate that the EEP population will be (largely) closed or will there be regular planned additions of individuals? In case of the latter, will this be for genetic and/or demographic reasons and what will be the source (other ex situ sources and/or from the wild)?*

There will be additions of individuals from the wild and from previous unknown breeders/hobbyists. The larger number of species and holders can reveal relatively small numbers of each species in captive populations. These cases will need additional groups.

The species in this family are held by Hobbyist all over the world in large numbers but some less attractive or difficult species are rare in the hobby and in aquariums and zoo's. Furthermore, a clear pattern emerges of the origin of the species compared to the exporting countries. Countries with exporters for the aquarium trade have many represented species in zoos, aquariums, and hobbyists. Most species lacking in this program comes from areas with little or no exporters present, and the future of these cichlids-species are of a particular high concern.

- *Do you expect genetic and demographic management in this EEP to be individual and/or group-based?*

Group-based

- *Do you expect genetic management in this EEP to be based on pedigree analysis, group history analysis, and/or molecular genetics?*

No

- *Do you anticipate, or proactively plan for, biobanking and/or assisted reproduction to be key components of this programme?*

No

- *Do you anticipate certain national or international legislation to form a particular hindrance (more than average) to achieving the roles of your EEP (e.g., CITES, BALAI, governmental ownership, etc.). If so, explain how.*

The AHL (Animal Health Law) is still new, and some issues might turn up later. Many countries have not implemented this law to their national systems yet.

TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System) is difficult for many exporters and issues with permits for transportation can make some species impossible to procure.

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The complexity of TRACES and AHL is already causing problems with the cooperative breeders and exporters and importers.

- *Are there any other issues/plans related to in situ conservation support that you feel should be mentioned and are not evident from the role description of the EEP?*

No

- *Is there a research component/aspect to the EEP that is expected to have important consequences for the design of the EEP programme (e.g. housing and husbandry of a significant proportion of the population, etc.)? If yes, explain.*

No

- *Do you anticipate there to be any sizeable political, social, or public conflicts of interest related to the EEP programme and how do you plan to deal with them?*

No

- *Any important additional programme characteristics that you would like to mention?*

Cooperation with private/commercial breeders and exporters/importers play a key role in tracking down the species not yet found in EAZA or EUAC institutions. Aquarium Glaser in Germany and Ruinemans in the Netherlands are already helping with this program. Many private breeders around the world have given their support to this EEP and hopefully many more will come.

4. References (if any)

EAZA Freshwater teleost TAG, Regional Collection Plan

IUCN Species survival Commission Guidelines on use of Ex situ Management for species conservation.

The IUCN Red list of threatened species

Fishbase.org

Eschmeyer's Catalog of Fishes

Madagascar Endangered Fishes