



STAFF REPORT

To: Animal Acquisition Committee

From: William. A. Rapley
Executive Director of Conservation, Education & Wildlife

Subject: **BIRD ACQUISITION – NEW SPECIES**

Date: 2011-11-21

Summary:

This report is seeking approval for the acquisition of one female Steller's Sea Eagle from Europe.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the following species be added to the collection:

One pair of Steller's Sea Eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*)

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

The Steller's Sea Eagle would cost 15,000 Euros (\$21,000 Cdn). Therefore a pair would be as much as \$42,000. The cost of this acquisition would be obtained from the Animal Acquisition Budget. Costs would also include quarantining outside of Canada, transport and brokerage fees for a total of approximately \$50,000.

This species is part of the North Development Eurasia plans. The exhibit is one of two exhibits being designed for a large bird of prey. They are not easily obtained. The pair would come from Kazakhstan via a quarantine in Prague. Only one unrelated pair is available. If not obtained, we run the risk of having a finished display empty until they again become available.

Background:

The birds will be purchased from Animal Source Group, an animal dealer in Prague. The birds come from two lineages found in zoos in Kazakhstan. There is a limited population in North America. Presently one pair resides in Winnipeg. In North America there are two breeding pair and several zoos use males for shows. These birds would bring important new genetics to the North American population. Management practices for the species are underway and it is hoped that if enough unrelated pairs are brought into the population, then a PMP (Population Management Plan) will be developed. The species is in the Bird Collection Plan for the new Eurasia Area of the North Site Development set to begin construction in 2012.

As a temporary measure, the birds will be held in the old wolf pen in the Canadian Domain. The covered pen is large enough to allow the birds room for short flights but small enough to allow a keeper to work on them and calm them down before going to a larger exhibit.

The specimens would originate in Kazakhstan. Due to CFIA rules, they would need to be first quarantined in a different country for 60 days (the Czech Republic) and then shipped to Canada. Once here they would be processed through a Canadian quarantine and moved to the exhibit where they would remain in a permanent Canadian quarantine but on display. At the present time, the species is in high demand in the United States and Canada.

Comments/Discussion:

The Steller's sea eagle is one of the most impressive birds in the world. On average it is the heaviest eagle in the world and can weigh up to 9 kg (20 lbs). It is more than double the weight of a bald eagle. A female is too large to fly in the bird show, but are great exhibit species. Staff will need to tame this bird before putting it out on exhibit. They will also have to be extremely careful when working with them. The exhibit in Eurasia is being developed this year. Time will be available during construction for keepers to work closely with the birds, to help reduce the level of risk associated with working with them. They can be compared to working with a large cat species if not properly trained. The species is destined to be an important species for larger zoos in North America and is one of the most impressive raptors in the world. As they are very limited in availability, it is recommended to obtain them at this time.

John Tracogna
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