# BIAZA Research Committee: Top Tips for Supervisors

## Sources of data for remote projects suggestions:

- Video footage from camera traps and webcams can be useful, provided you have access to the equipment and have means of transferring large amounts of data.
- Ask zoo staff if they have data sets from older projects where further analysis could be done (either on multiple datasets or individual datasets)
- Using online databases such as IUCN Red List, taxonomic databases etc.
- Projects that can be done based on existing photographs of animals (everything from developing individual photographic IDs and tracking over time to looking for links between morphology/size/pigmentation/etc and other measures such as mass/breeding success/etc. to developing body condition scoring systems)
- Audio data such as vocalisations (please note, in most cases the student will need to provide the equipment for this).
- Questionnaire-based projects, focussing on animal-based questions (husbandry surveys etc.) and visitor studies (public perception, education benefits etc.)
- Biological samples from storage or non-invasive collection e.g. faecals, blood/saliva/hair through positive reinforcement training. Also could be possible for opportunistic sampling during routine veterinary procedures; however this may be difficult to plan in a timeline. Logistics of sample collection and transport would need to be facilitated by the student.
- Use of ZIMS: all data on ZIMS remains ownership of the inputting institution, and therefore to use this data official application and approval will be necessary. When sharing data, zoos and aquariums need to ensure GDPR compliance, so please allow time for this process within your research schedule.
- Have a look at the BIAZA Research Priorities spreadsheet for more ideas.

## BIAZA Research Support

- If appropriate students can apply for BIAZA Research Committee Support if they are working on a multi-zoo research projects. Successful applications receive a signed letter of support encouraging member collections to assist with their work wherever possible.
- Please ensure your student's submission is complete - a clear, precise, but sufficiently detailed methodology, including statistical analysis, is needed. In addition, please ensure the submission includes a copy of all relevant supporting documents, for example a copy of the questionnaire, interview question list, etc.
- Please make sure your student has included in their application exactly what support is needed from the zoo - that considered estimations about the time it will take for keepers and other zoo staff to help your student achieve their data collection are included. While the student is planning their research they

should select methods carefully and knowing that zoo practitioners have very little time to support research.

- The committee looks to avoid duplication of research projects wherever possible so would encourage considering collaborations where two or more students are interested in the same research.

Lastly, please ensure your student has engaged with the BIAZA Research Resources (https://biaza.org.uk/research-resources) and has read the BIAZA Research Handbook. Here your student will find many helpful hints about conducting research in zoos. It is also useful to remind students to organise virtual meetings with their in-zoo supervisors using a secure platform. Although we expect ethical approval to be handled within your institution's protocols, please ensure that you have considered all relevant aspects, especially those such as informed consent and GDPR for studies such as questionnaires where human participants are involved.