



British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums

## **BIAZA Policy Statement**

### **Intentional Breeding for the Expression of Rare Recessive Alleles**

March 2018

Breeding practices that increase the phenotypic expression of single rare alleles through intentional inbreeding, such as the white colouration in tigers, can cause abnormal or aberrant external and internal conditions and characteristics which can impact on the welfare of individual animals. Such practices are not considered to be within BIAZA's values of best practice. Animals expressing these alleles do not constitute a significantly increased value in terms of education, population management or conservation.

Whilst BIAZA recognises that some species will have a small percentage of such rare alleles which may be naturally expressed within the population, BIAZA institutions must refrain from intentionally engaging in breeding practices designed to maximise the expression of these alleles in species not normally domesticated within the UK.

Inappropriate breeding practices by others may result in animals expressing rare recessive alleles, and those animals may at times be in need of rescue. Providing holding and care for such animals and responding to requests from local or national governmental agencies are appropriate activities for BIAZA members, provided that the delivery of thoughtful, educational messages about the unfortunate results of inbreeding are part of any public display. When rescuing or rehoming any such specimen, due consideration should be given to the needs of any relevant conservation breeding programmes.