Okapi International Studbook

Since 1977

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1919

First okapi to leave the DRC alive

ISB #1 BUTA – Antwerp ZOO, Belgium

1937

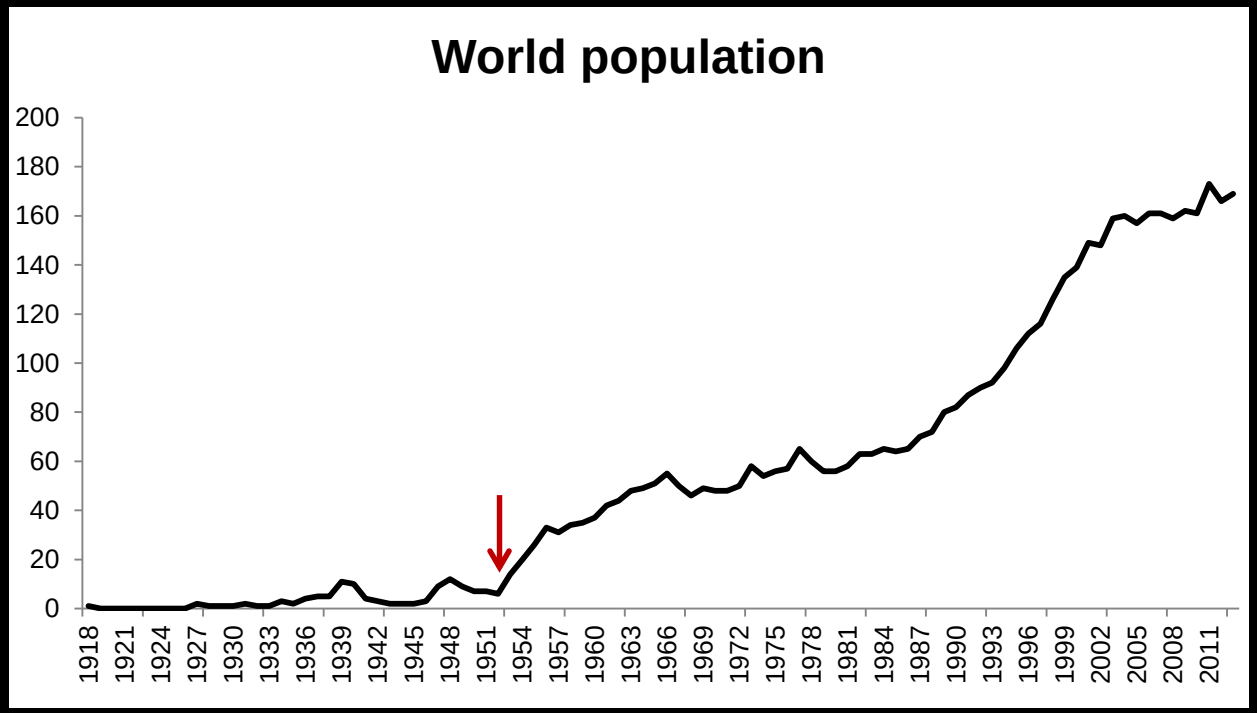
First okapi in North America

ISB #10 CONGO – New York

1952

Fully operational transit station for capture and rearing okapi. Station permanently moved to Epulu in 1954:

- house animals in suitable enclosures
- ensure that animals were healthy before being transported to scientifically managed zoological institutions
- organise the distribution of breeding pairs across the world

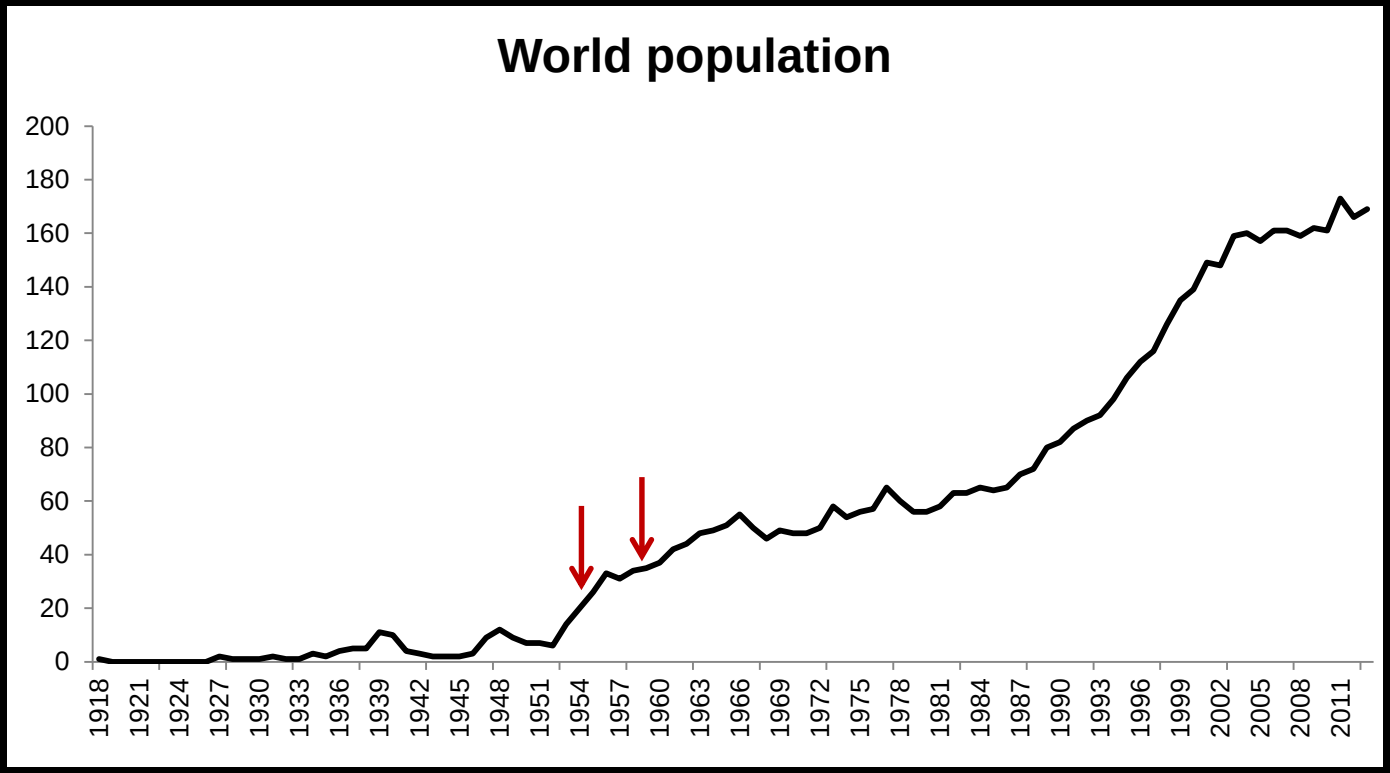


1954

First birth in captivity outside DRC – Antwerp Zoo

1959

First okapi born in the US – Brookfield Zoo



1977

International okapi symposium organized at Antwerp Zoo, attended by various scientists and European and US zoos actively involved in captive mangement of the okapi.

Outcome of the symposium:

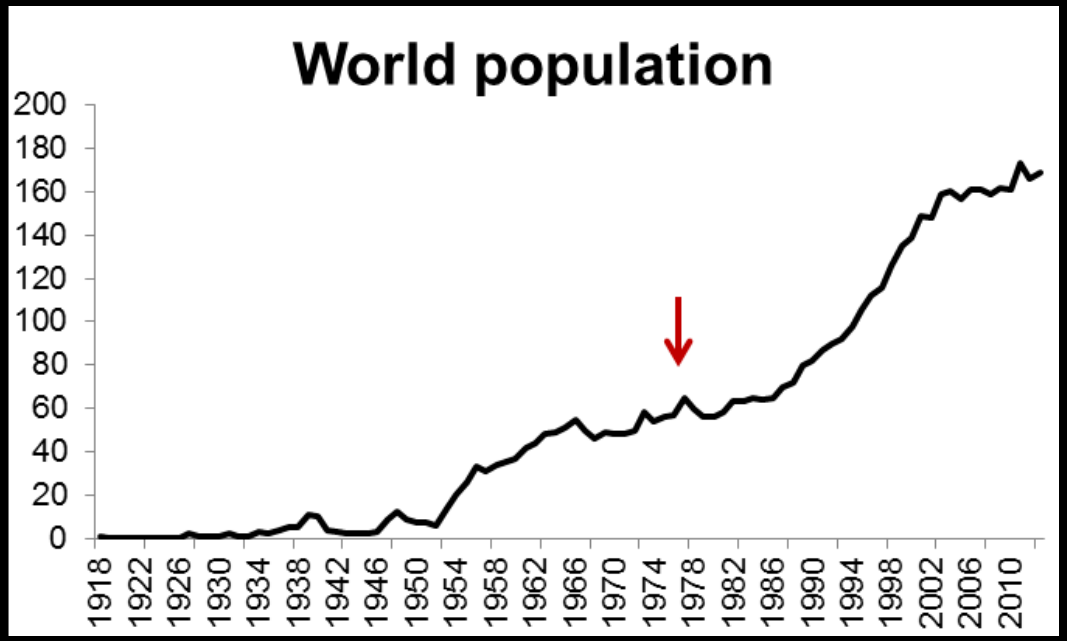
- **Formation of a breeding consortium** with the goal to donate animals to a common breeding pool to be able to non-commercially exchange animals between zoos to enhance breeding
- **Start of International Studbook**
- **Zoos are expected to contribute to *in situ* okapi conservation**

1981

Establishment of the okapi SSP

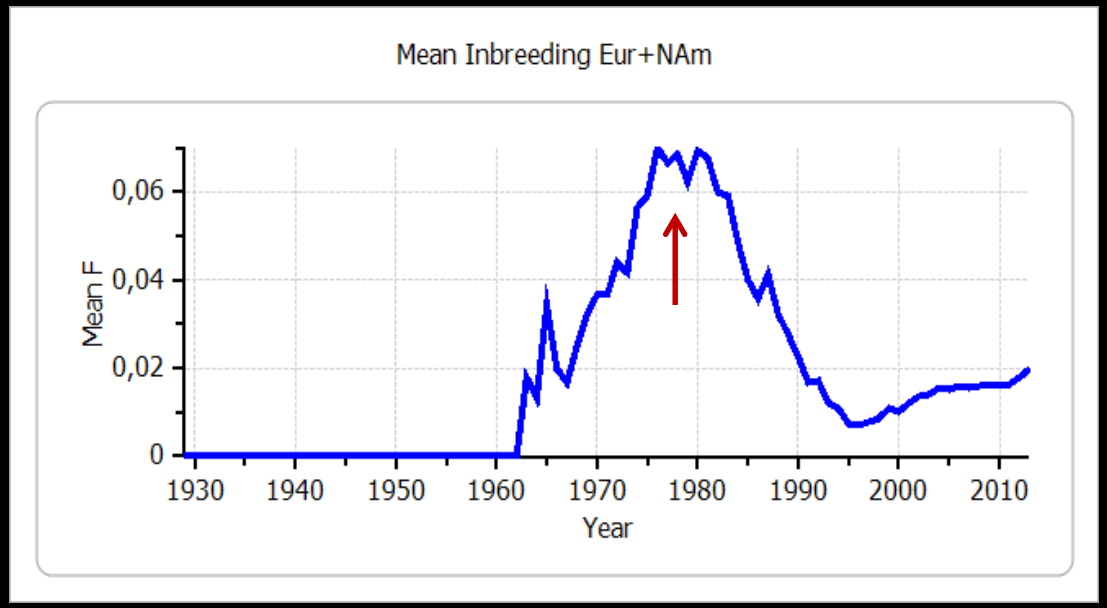
1985

Establishment of the okapi EEP



Since start breeding consortium in 1977:

Population numbers up!



Mean inbreeding down!

Last Joint SSP/EEP Meeting in Jacksonville and White Oak in 2011:

Mission

Maintain a sustainable, cooperatively managed global ex situ okapi population that through conservation awareness, education, fundraising, the exhibition of animals and focused scientific research contributes to a viable in situ population.

Excellent interregional cooperation

The SSP and EEP work independently, but can easily identify when cooperation is needed. We have a very clear overview of the past, present and future status of the world *ex situ* population also because we are working with an international studbook for almost 40 years! 100% Pedigree known!

The communication between regions is excellent and based on scientific input:

- population biologists have always worked closely together with the regional coordinators
- the regions share data on genetics, husbandry, nutrition, reproduction, veterinary care, conservation, etc. for the benefit of the species.

Strong link with *in situ* conservation

Zoos are major funders for the
Okapi Conservation Project

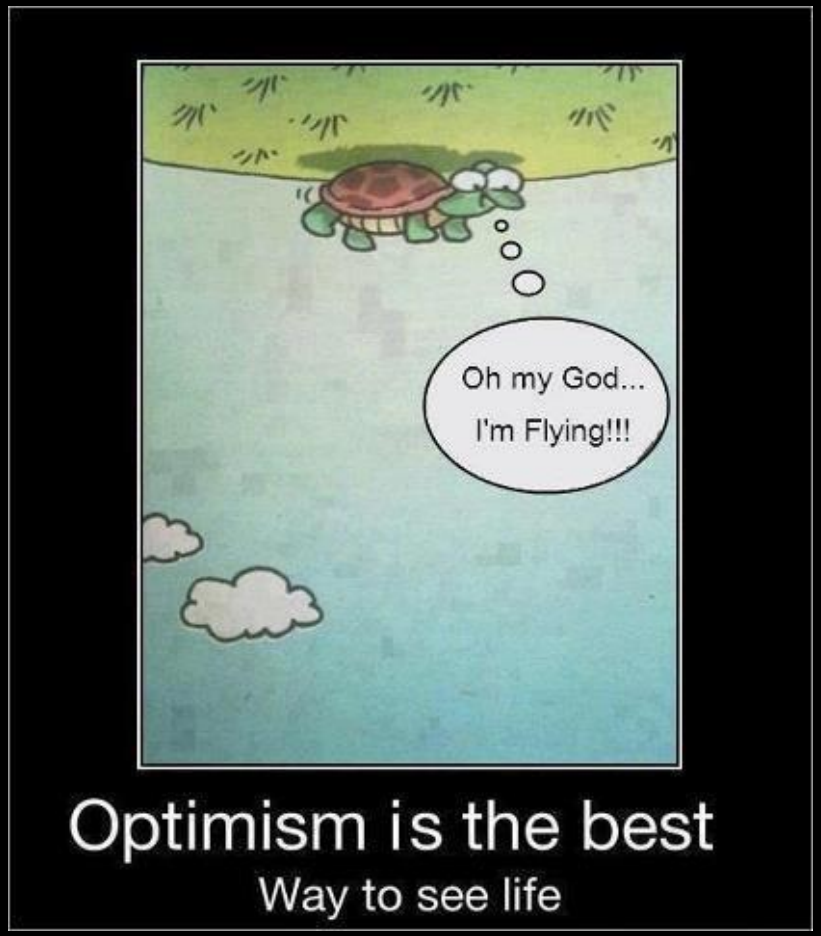
Programme coordinators (SSP/EEP/ISB)
are member of the IUCN Giraffe and
Okapi Specialist Group (established in 2013)

http://www.giraffidsg.org/resources/okapi-conservation-strategy-and-status-review/Go to

How to manage the species into the future

Continued close cooperation between the regions through the ISB is the only way to maintain a healthy, sustainable *ex situ* population.

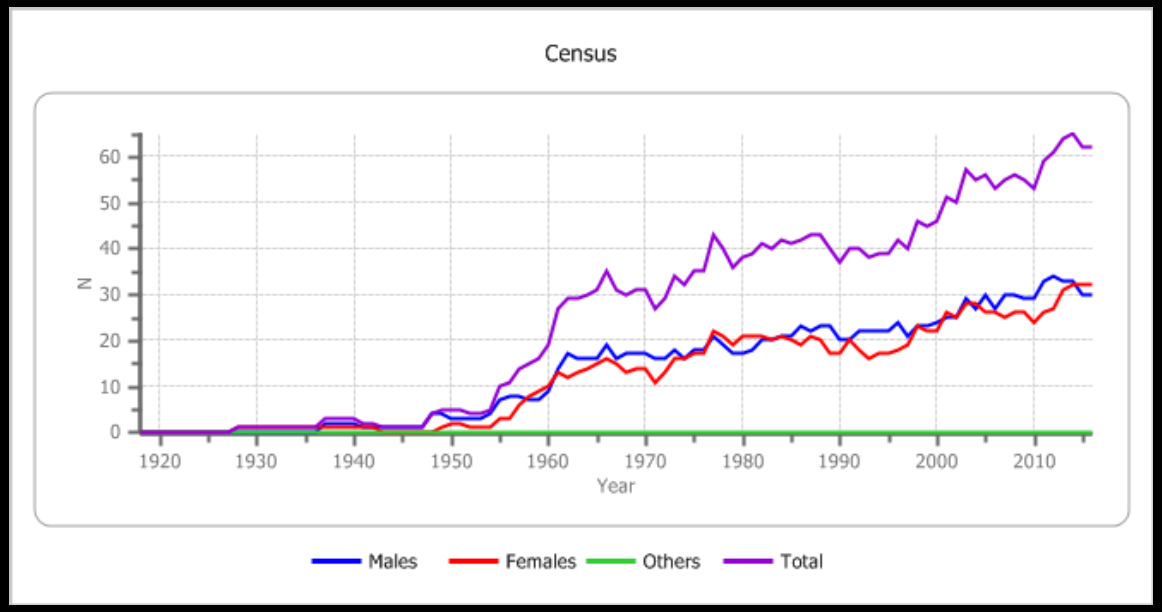
Work with our *in situ* partners to secure the wild population



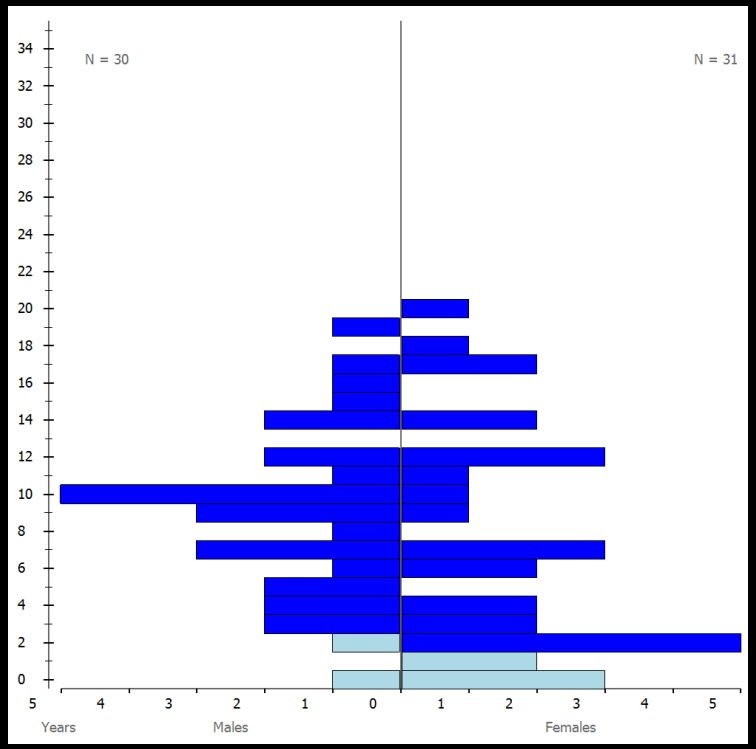
Status of the Okapi EEP

Stuma and Usala at Chester Zoo

Current population size:	30.31.0 (61)
Number of holders:	21
Waiting list:	+20
Population trend:	stable ☹



Status of the Okapi EEP



Some challenges:

- Skewed sex ratio
- Inbreeding
- Loss of genetic material
- Transfer restrictions between countries
- Bad luck….

Status of the Okapi EEP

Bad luck….

Kisanga and Libembe at Cologne Zoo

Status of the Okapi EEP

Libembe with Blue Duiker at Antwerp ZOO

Best Practice Guidelines under development

Please also visit the Okapi Management website: www.theokapi.org