



Dr. Pierre Comizzoli

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, U.S.A.

Education

Veterinary College of Maisons-Alfort, France, D.V.M., 1994

University of Paris VI, France, M.S. Reproduction, 1997

University of Tours, France, Ph.D. Life Science, 2000

Professional History and Interests

Pierre Comizzoli started his career 25 years ago as a research veterinarian in French Guyana to study the seasonal reproduction of different mammalian species living in the rain forest. His next appointment was in the African Sahelo-Saharan region where he was in charge of health and reproduction monitoring programs for livestock species. These first professional experiences allowed him to acquire a good basic knowledge in the reproductive biology of various animal species. Dr. Comizzoli then completed a PhD in 2000 on in vitro fertilization in bovine and deer species. He characterized a new paternal effect on the early embryo development in both species and produced in vitro the first transferable embryos of red deer and Japanese sika deer. After receiving his PhD, he worked on the implementation of reproductive technologies and Genome Resource Banking for the conservation of wild ungulates at the National Museum of Natural History of Paris. In 2002, Dr. Comizzoli joined the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute at the National Zoological Park in Washington, DC as a staff scientist to develop new cryo-banking projects on gametes and gonadal tissues from rare and endangered species. His comparative research on gamete biology and fertility preservation (mainly using the domestic cat as a model) has been supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health for the past 12 years. Interestingly, his studies on germplasm cryobiology and alternate preservation methods in non-traditional animal models build new bridges with human reproductive medicine. Dr. Comizzoli also is integrating reproductive science into conservation projects of wild carnivores and ungulates in Northern Africa as well as in South-East Asia. Specifically, he has coordinated the reproductive monitoring and performed artificial inseminations in different species (including giant pandas, clouded leopards, or Eld's deer) resulting in the births of healthy individuals that contribute to the sustainability of these rare species. Dr. Comizzoli has published >100 peer-reviewed papers and book chapters. He has received several professional awards including the Smithsonian Secretary's Research Prize (2008, 2012, and 2015) and the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (2011) for his innovative work on fertility preservation. Dr. Comizzoli has been serving in diverse leadership positions at the Smithsonian Institution. He is coordinating since 2007 a Smithsonian-wide initiative to improve the management and use of biomaterial and environmental repositories within the Institution. He has been Director of the Consortium for Science (2014-2015) and is now Senior Program Officer for Science in the Office of the Provost for Museums, Education and Research.