



To promote and establish good relationships among professional zoo keepers.

To promote and establish a means to stimulate incentive and greater interest in the zoo keeping profession.

To support deserving conservation projects that include educating the general public about the need for preserving our natural resources and animal life through these worthwhile efforts.

To establish materials beneficial to zoo keeper education.

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# The Keeper

## The American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter – Summer 2013

### President's Message

By Yvette Kemp, SDAAZK President

Our chapter has been quite busy lately. We started the year by balancing our budget and believe me, that was a feat in itself! I am happy to say that San Diego AAZK has a balanced budget for 2013 and now a true guideline of how we will operate financially from this day forward. This is definitely not why I joined AAZK, but a reality that must be dealt with. And it turns out to be a good reality because we can now project exactly how much we can do to help conservation organizations, which is why I joined AAZK!

Our mission has always been to “support deserving conservation projects” which we will continue to do. In this issue of *The Keeper* you'll learn of people who take that extra step beyond and participate in conservation projects that they are passionate about. Board member Ann Knutson and SDAAZK member Holly Border share their experiences of conservation and education outside of their everyday jobs. The work they do and the excitement that comes through as they share their experiences with us is evident and inspiring.

SDAAZK is proud that we are able to continue helping our inspiring members through financial aid. The Shirley Busch Professional Development Award is now accepting applications. Recipients must be SDAAZK and AAZK members in good standing and must use the grant for professional development, such as a conference or workshop that contributes to the advancement of animal care. The grant can also be used to participate in an international conservation project. Applications are due by July 1<sup>st</sup> and details can be found on our website.

Bill Konstant is another person we were able to meet recently and who truly inspired us with his dedication to rhino conservation. His presentation of how the International Rhino Foundation is able to help rhino conservation motivates us all to do the best we can. Bowling for Rhinos is just around the corner and being able to connect the dots of our actions with rhino conservation has motivated our fundraising chair Ann to think of new ways to raise money for rhino preservation.

There are many great causes out there and many people who do so much to help them. SDAAZK is proud to be able to do as much as we can when we can, be it financially or hands on assistance with projects. We have many ways that you, too, can become involved. Participating in upcoming fundraisers or assisting with various scheduled projects is a great way to give back to the community both locally and internationally. If you have an organization you would like to see receive funding, we have a fun way you can nominate them in our Pints for Preservation Fundraiser in July. All nominations must be received by May 1<sup>st</sup> and will be placed on our Facebook page to be voted upon. Send your nominee to [annkntsn@yahoo.com](mailto:annkntsn@yahoo.com).

Come join us at Bowling for Rhinos and our other events. Proceeds from SDAAZK events benefit conservation projects, which is a big reason why we join AAZK! Thank you for that.

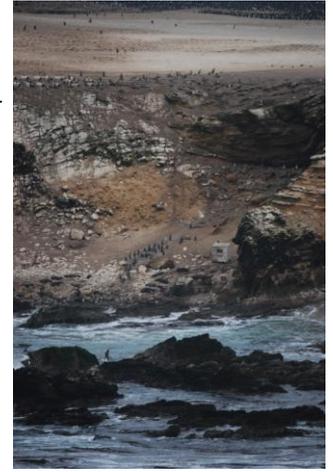
# My Journey to Punta San Juan

By Ann Knutson, SDAAZK Board Member, Sr. APC Keeper, San Diego Zoo

(This article was reprinted from The Penguin Conservation newsletter of the penguin TAG)

The Punta San Juan Reserve in San Juan de Marcona, Peru was created thirty years ago to preserve safe nesting and roosting habitat for birds such as guanay cormorants, Peruvian pelicans and Peruvian boobies and to allow for regulated and sustainable harvest of their guano.

My journey to Punta San Juan began 5 years ago when I started taking care of a colony of Humboldt penguins at the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas. As a penguin keeper, I talked about Punta San Juan on a daily basis. The basic facts were ingrained in my head better than my own parent's birthdays. I had pictures of Punta San Juan that I shared year round. In the fall of 2011, I learned that the Sedgwick County Zoo planned to send two keepers to Punta San Juan the following summer to help monitor the Guano Harvest. It was an exciting opportunity to be involved with a conservation project that was dear to my heart but I was considering another opportunity at the same time. I had been offered a job as a keeper at the San Diego Zoo.



I chose to join the San Diego Zoo with the resolution that no matter what it took, I was going to get myself to Peru to volunteer at Punta San Juan. I took time off from work and started saving the money and gathering the gear that I would need. As I began to prepare, I was surprised to find out that my husband wanted to participate as well and we continued to prepare for the trip together. A week before the trip I read a couple of blog posts written by Rick Urban from The Newport Aquarium. He spoke of Punta San Juan, the beauty all around, and the TICKS! That is when I started looking at what I was doing. I was spending my "extra" money and my vacation time and leaving my human family for three weeks to go sit in ticks!?! I hoped that it would all be worth it!

After a 9-hour flight to Lima, we connected with other keepers from different states and boarded an overnight bus to Marcona. Along the way we began to get to know each other and shared the different trials and tribulations that we had each endured to be on this trip - some people had loss of funding, multiple layovers, hours upon hours of traveling, language barriers, health issues, etc. - but we all had one thing that inspired us and kept us going - the love of Humboldt penguins!

We arrived at Punta San Juan at 0600. The bus parked in the middle of a dark dirt road with other abandoned buses on the road but no sign of where we were. When we finally found the courage to get off the bus, we were met by Marco Cardena. Marco is one of two head scientists for the Punta San Juan reserve and his dedication to the penguins and animals of PSJ is, in itself, very inspiring. We piled all our belongings into the back of his pick-up truck and then took off for the reserve.

The drive took us through the most barren desert that a person can imagine. When we got to the reserve, we entered through a gate in the wall that spans the width of the small peninsula which protects the reserve from predators and human contact that could threaten the penguins and other sea birds. We had reached the research station, our home for the next two weeks.

The research station is a house with 8 rooms, each with a bunk bed and small closet. There are two bathrooms with limited water hooked up to the sinks, but not to the toilets. We had to do a bucket brigade from the ocean to the bathroom to fill a trash can that we could then use to flush the toilets. We had electricity for 3 hours every night, which was provided by a generator, but otherwise we used headlamps and candles to see in the dark. We were able to shower every other day, when 8-10 of us would pile into the small pick-up truck and drive over to the "G-house" on the outskirts of Marcona.

What the research station may lack in common luxuries, it makes up for in the view from the front porch. It sits up on a hill overlooking the ocean. From the porch we could see penguins, boobies, fur seals, sea lions, and a plethora of other sea creatures. When we saw the view on that first early morning it stopped us in our tracks, and not one of us could remember how tired or cranky we were after our overnight bus ride. There is such bountiful life at the reserve. In that moment, I began to realize that everything we had been through to make it on this trip was worth it.

We began our stay with a tour of the beaches of Punta San Juan during which we were each given our respective assignments and shown where the majority of our time would be spent. There were three different jobs that we could be assigned to for the two weeks that we were there: doing census counts, checking tags, or monitoring the guano harvest. Each job was done in two 3-hour shifts every day, a morning shift that began at 0600 and an afternoon shift that began at 1500.

Those volunteers doing census counts counted hundreds and sometimes thousands of penguins, fur seals, and sea lions each day. The animals of course, were not waiting around in a helpful line to be counted and getting an accurate count of such a large and dynamic assembly was a challenge. Each of the census counts had to be within five of each other or they would count everything again, sometimes recounting the same area nine or ten times!

The tag checking group, which I was a part of, checked and documented South American fur seal tags. Fur seals are tagged during the breeding season when mothers are very protective of their pups. The pups are grabbed and as the mother follows, researchers take measurements, tests, and samples and then tag them with a specific color of tag for that year. Each tag can tell you whether the seal is a pup, yearling, or adult, what year it was tagged, and whether it is a male or female. Both the census group and tag checks did their jobs from the tops of cliffs looking down with binoculars, telescopes, and cameras.

The guano harvest monitors worked in teams of three which went out to monitor disturbance of the birds by the workers harvesting the guano. They also kept track of the number of trucks that carried the guano away and recorded GPS coordinates for the area that was harvested that day. Another part of the guano monitors job was to create and move a blind that shielded the workers from the view of the penguins in the largest breeding colony that was very close to where the workers were harvesting.

To date, monitoring the guano harvest at Punta San Juan has successfully maintained an environment in which the guano-producing birds have flourished. In turn, more guano can be harvested. In the 11 years since monitoring began, the Humboldt penguin population has increased 367%. Due to the success of the project, the Peruvian government has created a system of national reserves to try to replicate what has been done in Punta San Juan. There are now 33 islands protected in the system of national reserves.

When we were not working, there were other amazing opportunities to contribute to. One of those was assisting with penguin nest checks. When we found a nest, we marked it on a map, then scooped the eggs from it using a little basket on a pole and marked and measured the eggs. We marked adults with toe tags rather than wing bands which have been shown create drag on swimming penguins. In the wild where that drag makes them slower than the penguin next to them, it can be the difference between life and death.

Throughout the two weeks, we all worked very closely with our groups to accomplish our different jobs and we grew very close to these strangers that we had only met days before. Every day, a cook came in and made amazing Peruvian dishes for lunch. We would all sit around a giant dinner table and share stories from our morning shifts or from our lives outside of the reserve. After two weeks of working together and living together, we were a family. We laughed together, sang together, danced, and sometimes even argued together. When the time came to leave, we all looked forward to getting back to our families and lives at home, but at the same time, we were sad to leave our Punta San Juan family. Even though most of us are very far apart, I know that we have made a bond that will last a lifetime. Together we made memories that will continue to inspire us in our lives and careers.

As I sit here writing about my experiences at Punta San Juan, I am flooded with images, sounds and memories that will be with me for the rest of my life - the sound of a South American fur seal pup calling out to its mother, watching penguins scale fifty foot cliffs to their nest burrows and their mates waiting to take their turn to return to the ocean, watching Inca terns bring their mates squat lobster from the ocean. All these memories will stay with me and inspire me to keep fighting for the ocean and all the amazing creatures that call it home.





# IRF Program Officer Speaks to SDAAZK

By Linda Henry, SDAAZK PR Officer, SeaWorld San Diego Supervisor



Bill Konstant, Program Officer for the **International Rhino Foundation**, recently spoke to SDAAZK about IRF's work to protect rhinos and to support rhino conservation. Bill is a great cheerleader for IRF and for BFR. He kicked off his remarks by saying that monies raised by **Bowling For Rhinos** (BFR) events directly benefit rhino protection. And of the more than \$300,000 donated in 2012 through AAZK's BFR fundraising (more than \$16,000 of that from SDAAZK), \$111,000 went towards funding IRF efforts in Asia and Africa. This amount represents 10% of IRF's annual program budget.

Bill spoke about rhinos from the fossil record through historical contact with humans to their present day conservation status. He provided a brief description of each of the five rhino species: white, black, greater one-horned or Indian, Sumatran and Javan.

Of these, the white rhino is currently the most numerous. Found largely in southern African, this species numbers at greater than 20,000 animals representing approximately three-fourths of the total world rhinoceros population. Considering that the white rhino was reduced to as few as 100-200 individuals less than 100 years ago, the story of the white rhino represents what success can be achieved through dedicated conservation efforts. However, more work is needed. Last year 668 white and black rhinos were killed in Africa. Bill translated this loss in terms that can be shared more easily when raising money through BFR: 668 rhino deaths per year mean about 1-2 rhinos per day or about 1 rhino killed every 13 hours!

African rhinos are not the only rhino species at risk. The Asian species face unique challenges and their populations are much smaller. Just over 3,500 individuals remain among all three species. The Javan is the most at risk at fewer than 50 individuals. And it is the most secretive. No good photos exist, only those captured on game cameras. Bill described traveling to western Java to attempt to take the first photos. He never saw a rhino during his several week stay, even though he found signs the animals had been in the area. He added that Javan rhinos have been eliminated from their former range; the Ujong Kulon National Park holds the only remaining viable population. Again, Bill interpreted the impact of this reduction: It would be like a species that formerly had a range from San Diego to New York suddenly being restricted to Central Park alone.

The news is not all bad. IRF works with in situ and ex situ specialists worldwide to improve rhino conservation techniques. The development of Rhino Protection Units or RPUs is protecting rhinos in Asia. Thanks to the efforts of RPUs, no Sumatran or Javan rhinos were killed by poachers in the last 10 years. And their efforts are not only protecting rhinos but other species as well, including tigers, elephants and tapirs. Habitat restoration and rhino translocation techniques for the Javan rhino are being developed.

Bill emphasized that BFR is making a meaningful contribution to rhino conservation in both Africa and Asia. Along with the support for Lewa and Cheetahs for Conservation, rhinos in Zimbabwe and Asia are being conserved through IFR. More than 1.4 million acres is being protected in Indonesia. Furthermore, U.S. dollars go a long way to continue their conservation efforts. Just \$25 funds one RPU member for one day, \$500 funds a vehicle fleet for a month and \$1,000 can fund 4-5 acres of Javan rhino habitat. Take a moment to visit the IFR website at [www.rhinos.org](http://www.rhinos.org) to learn more about how IFR is protecting rhinos and rhino habitat. There is a lot of good information on the website to help keepers translate the conservation need into donation dollars for BFR. There is no time to waste. Rhinos need help and SDAAZK's BFR event is on May 18<sup>th</sup>!

<b>RHINOS IN CRISIS</b>	
Javan Rhino:	35-44
Sumatran Rhino:	152-199
Greater One-horned Rhino:	3,270
Black Rhino:	4,837
White Rhino:	20,143

Some additional resources:

- Visitors to southern California should take advantage of the fact that it is one of only two places in the world where you can see four species of rhino within a few miles of each other. The Los Angeles Zoo has a Sumatran rhino and the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park have white, black and Indian rhinos between them.
- Recommended reading: **Clara's Grand Tour: Travels with a Rhinoceros in Eighteenth-Century Europe** by Glynis Ridley. The Curse of the Unicorn at <http://intlrhinofoundation.wordpress.com/2013/03/15/the-curse-of-the-unicorn> .

- A North American male Sumatran rhino was moved to the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary to mate with a wild-caught female; **Andatu** is their new calf born last June. Like **Andatu's** facebook page and help IRF reach their goal of 1,000 friends at [andaturhino@facebook.com](http://andaturhino@facebook.com).

## Bowling for Rhinos 2013

By Ann Knutson and Yvette Kemp, SDAAZK Board Members

This year's Bowling for Rhinos will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Kearny Mesa Bowl. Although last year we were able to raise over \$16,000, which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest amount ever raised by our chapter, we want to continue to improve and excel this year. Not only do we want to increase the amount of money raised, but we would like to raise the bar on our outreach and education on the plight of the rhino. With the number of rhinos poached already hitting an all-time high, outreach is just as important as fundraising.

As far as the event goes, we are speeding up the registration process and really looking to add to the experience. We invite you to register online at <http://sdaazkbfr2013.eventbrite.com>. Spaces are filling fast so if you'd like to bowl, you should register ASAP!

Not only can you register online, you can also fundraise online! Visit our website and set up your personal fundraising page. There are prizes for the top fundraisers so online fundraising will defiantly give you an edge.

Adding to this year's experience we have a few new exciting additions to BFR: a best dressed contest, live music, rhino house crashes, BFR t-shirt sales, and local celebrities helping bring rhino awareness!



How about participating in a House Crashing! You may have heard of flocking, well crashing is similar. You can pick a date for a place to be "crashed" and that evening 6 large rhino cutouts appear. It's a great way to send a special message, get a friends attention, or play a fun prank and contribute to rhino conservation at the same time!

We will also be selling BFR t-shirts that you can pre-order. The winner from our BFR t-shirt design contest will have their artwork grace t-shirts raising more money for rhinos!

At the BFR event itself the best dressed contest will definitely get everyone in the mood for fun. Last year we had a few teams come out in their finest wears but this year we are inviting everyone to get in on the action. Then at 8:00 pm the 80's cover band "*Hott Thing*" will be playing live on Kearney Mesa Bowl's stage.

And local celebrities are joining forces to bring awareness to rhino conservation needs. Weather person Dagmar Midcap, NBC 7/39, and Allen Haff, Auction Wars, will not only be present at BFR, but will also be sharing BFR information with their friends and fans worldwide!



Of course we'll have a lot of the same excitement as past years with prizes for the top fundraisers, a silent auction, opportunity drawings, bake sale, and more.

If you have a passion for rhinos and conservation and would like to be more involved in Bowling for Rhinos let us know, we'd love to get you more involved! Visit our website at [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org) to learn more about BFR and SDAAZK.

You can sign up for all our BFR fundraisers and SDAAZK events at [www.sdaazk.eventbrite.com](http://www.sdaazk.eventbrite.com). You won't want to miss out!

## Updates from National AAZK

By Yvette Kemp, SDAAZK President; shared with you from Bob Cisneros, President of AAZK, Inc.

Every month Bob Cisneros, AAZK National President, sends information to be shared with the local chapters.



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
of ZOO KEEPERS

AAZK has partnered with NP Training Works to bring AAZK members the chance to expand their professional skills through online programs! *“On April 1<sup>st</sup>, advancing excellence in the animal keeping professions and fostering effective communication beneficial to animal care will go live!”* This is an exciting opportunity for AAZK members and we welcome you to learn skills important to our great profession from the convenience of your home. You’ll want to check their website ([www.aazk.org](http://www.aazk.org)) for more information and details as it gets closer.

On another note, the International Rhino Foundation is bringing back trips to Indonesia for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place winners during Bowling for Rhinos. Trip winners will fly to Indonesia and visit the Rhino Protection Units (RPUs) at the rhino camps. This is a great incentive for everyone participating in BFR this year. Remember, San Diego’s AAZK will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup>!

AAZK’s National Awards Committee is accepting nominees for 7 individuals that deserve to be recognized for their efforts and achievements. These individuals will be recognized at the 2013 Conference in North Carolina. The deadline for nominations is May 1<sup>st</sup>. Learn about the various awards and more information can be found at <http://aazk.org/committee/awards-committee/>.

The 40<sup>th</sup> National AAZK Conference will be hosted by the North Carolina AAZK Chapter September 22 – 26. “The conference theme is connecting Zookeepers to Wildlife.” The deadline for abstracts for papers and posters is May 15<sup>th</sup>. Topics should relate to the conference theme and/or showing advances in animal care and the profession of zoo keeping. Visit their website for more information at <http://www.ncaazk.com/2013nationalconference.htm>.

You can always go to [www.aazk.org](http://www.aazk.org) to learn all about what is new with National and how you can become more involved.

## New Avicultural Society of America Chapter Starts in San Diego



Laurie Conrad, Assistant Curator of Birds for SeaWorld San Diego, announced in April that she will be establishing a San Diego chapter of Avicultural Society of America (ASA). Laurie hopes to foster renewed interest and membership in this oldest of Avicultural organizations.

The ASA was established in 1927 in New York by a group of bird breeders. The organization began publishing its own newsletter, the “Bulletin,” starting in 1929. By 1934 the Society moved its base of operations to California. At that time ASA boasted more than 400 members.

ASA now has a worldwide membership including some of the most successful and innovative aviculturist in the field. The Bulletin is now known as the **ASA Avicultural Bulletin** and is published bi-monthly by ASA, Inc.

The new San Diego chapter will meet on the second Thursday of each month. The first meeting was on April 11 at Tio Leo’s on Napa Street, San Diego. Among the attendees were Frank Todd, Joan Embery, Jerry Jennings and Dick Schroeder. More than 15 members of SeaWorld’s Bird Department were also in attendance. The next meeting is scheduled for May 9<sup>th</sup>, 5:00 – 7:00 PM at the Hubbs (Scripps Meeting Room). Frank Todd will be the featured speaker and give his talk titled “Jungle Jewels and Other Neotropical Creatures.”

For more information and details on meeting times and locations contact Laurie Conrad at [laurie.conrad@seaworld.com](mailto:laurie.conrad@seaworld.com). Learn more about ASA and its mission at [www.asabirds.org](http://www.asabirds.org).

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## **CALENDAR 2013** visit [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org) for updates

**May 1, 2013: Deadline to submit nominees of a conservation organization** that should benefit from our Pints for Preservation Fundraiser on July 17. Only AAZK members can submit a nominee. Nominees will then be posted on our Facebook page. The one with the most “likes” benefits! Submit nominees to [AKnutson@sandiegozoo.org](mailto:AKnutson@sandiegozoo.org).

**May 18, 2013: Bowling for Rhinos. Location:** Kearny Mesa Bowl on Clairemont Mesa Blvd. On-line registration at <http://sdaazkbfr2013.eventbrite.com/#>. Check in is at 5:15 pm, bowling from 6:00 – 9:00 pm. There will be a best dressed contest, drawings, silent auction, bake sale, live band, and much more!

**June 1 – July 31, 2013: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual SDAAZK Photo Contest “Capturing Conservation.”** The contest will highlight photography’s vital role in capturing conservation issues worldwide. Entries must be received online between June 1 and July 31, accompanied by 2-5 sentences describing a related environmental issue. Visit our website for details.

**June 5 & 6, 2013: CA Wolf Center Project. Location:** CWC in Julian. **Time: TBD.** Join us as we help our CWC friends with various projects at their facility. Come one or both days. Must be 18 or older to participate.

**June 22, 2013: Brew Night for Pints for Preservation Fundraiser. SOLD OUT.**

**June 23, 2013: Brew Night #2 for Pints for Preservation Fundraiser. Location:** The Homebrewer, 2911 El Cajon Blvd., SD CA 92104. **Time:** 5:30 pm. **Cost:** \$11.54 (online, \$10 through SDAAZK Board Member). Limited to 10 people. Learn how to brew beer then share it during the Pints for Preservation Fundraiser on July 17. Visit our website for tickets.

**July 21 - 27, 2013: National Zoo Keeper Week.** More details to come soon.

**July 17, 2013: Pints for Preservation. Location:** The Local Habit, 3827 5<sup>th</sup> Ave SD CA 92103. **Time:** TBD. Funds will be going to a conservation project yet to be determined. Send in your nomination before May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**September 21, 2013: CA Coastal Clean-Up.** More details to come soon.

**October: Safari Park Photo Caravan.** More details to come soon.

- To see pictures from our events, visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/sdaazk](http://www.facebook.com/sdaazk)