



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 – Fall 2013

President's Message

By Yvette Kemp, SDAAZK President

Recently I had the opportunity to speak at a local radio station about the people who work in the animal profession. We talked about what most of us animal care professionals consider a “regular” day (which you must admit, is pretty awesome in the sense of look at what we work with and are really doing). But, I wanted the radio announcer and the public to know that there is much more to our “regular” work days. Most of us do more animal and conservation work outside of our jobs. We volunteer, raise money for various organizations, and travel to participate in projects we believe in. Think about it, I don't know many financial analysts who visit other facilities, but I sure know a lot of keepers and animal care professionals who are a part of some conservation group that brings awareness to cheetahs, penguins, rainforest issues, or help out at other facilities. It's not just a job for us, but more of a lifestyle and a belief system.

Needless to say, the radio announcer was impressed and never had even thought about it that way. I'm impressed too. We work hard all day, share our conservation message with the general public through presentations and private tours, and then spend our weekends helping other conservation projects, despite our busy daily schedules.

Speaking of busy schedules, Bowling for Rhinos and National Zoo Keeper Week have now passed. Bowling for Rhinos was a huge success due to our BFR committee's great new ideas and the people and friends in our profession who believe in supporting an important cause outside of their work. So it makes me think that really, a week of “keeper” recognition isn't enough... but neither would be a month. What would be appropriate? Hard to say. I think many of us get excited when our favorite cause is recognized and supported. Maybe that would be the appropriate way to celebrate NZKW.

When you read this issue, notice how people in our profession are involved in so many conservation and educational projects. Each article you read today demonstrates the lifestyle the authors have chosen. One dedicated to a cause they believe in.

Now that's how to celebrate.

2013 Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner

By Kym Janke, SDAAZK Board Member, Sr. Mammal Keeper, San Diego Safari Park

As part of SDAAZK's mission to promote a greater interest in the zoo keeping profession, I attended the 2013 Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner that took place April 16th at the Admiral Kidd Conference Center on the Point Loma Naval base. This dinner recognized the hard work and accomplishments of the 2012 Eagle Scouts and Silver Venturing Award recipients. 216 scouts along with 202 sponsors attended the event making this the largest celebration of scouting excellence in the San Diego-Imperial Council of Boy Scouts of America to date!

It was a fun and inspiring event led by Chip Franklin, Morning Host of 600 KOGO-AM Talk Radio, who acted as the Master of Ceremonies. The keynote speaker was entrepreneur Mike Gibbons, an Eagle Scout who went on to study at Harvard and Stanford Universities. He is an accomplished mountain climber, having reached the highest peaks on 7 continents. His presentation focused on Mount Everest and the difficulties and challenges he faced while trying to climb this iconic peak. He challenged all in attendance to find our own goals and to not be discouraged by set-backs or adversity but rather know that hard work and determination will allow us to succeed.

I participated in Guiding, the international equivalent to the USA's Girl Scouts, growing up and know that this organization provided me with some amazing skills that are still useful to me today. Because of this, I was happy to represent SDAAZK at the Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner where sponsors acted as mentors to the scouts being recognized that evening. The Scouting organization did a fantastic job of pairing the youth with the sponsors and ensuring that each scout had the opportunity to interact with a professional in the industry of their choice. I was paired with a young lady who was being honored with the silver venturing award, one of the highest achievements in this partner program to the Boy Scouts where women are invited to participate. A freshman at UC San Marcos, majoring in biology, she is interested in pursuing a career in educational outreach with animals such as is found in the behavior and education departments at the Zoo and Safari Park. We were able to discuss potential volunteer experiences and I shared some of the inside scoop of working with exotic and endangered animals. My husband, an Eagle Scout himself, also attended the event and was paired with a new Eagle Scout who was a high school junior looking towards a career in my husband's profession, environmental engineering.

I hope that many more young scouts will be interested in the rewarding career of animal care and that SDAAZK can continue to support and encourage their growth and knowledge to help them succeed!



Mexican Gray Wolves Travel First Class

By Chelsea Davis, CA Wolf Center Animal Care Manager

Born at the California Wolf Center in 2007, Mexican gray wolves F1061, F1062 and F1063 spent their early years out of sight of many humans. At the time of their birth, it was unknown what the future would hold: release to the wild, becoming part of the captive breeding program or becoming ambassadors for their kind. In July of 2012, their wait was over. These three sisters would become important ambassadors for their subspecies. The Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan (SSP) had added a new facility to the program in Connecticut, and our three females would become their first pack of Mexican gray wolves.

Mexican gray wolves are a genetically distinct subspecies of gray wolf, historically found throughout the Southwestern US and Mexico. By the late 1970s, they were extirpated in the wild and only survived due to captive breeding efforts. The Mexican gray wolf SSP saved this critically endangered subspecies from going extinct. Once coming within only 7 unrelated animals of being extinct, the captive breeding program has been able to build the population back to 300 in captivity. In 1998, the first Mexican gray wolves were released back into part of their historic range. Today the wild population is 75.

Starting in July 2012 until they safely arrived in Connecticut in May 2013, there was a lot of planning, mainly involving discussions of what would be the least stressful and safest way to transport these shy wolves on a cross-country journey from the California Wolf Center in Julian, CA to Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, CT. A group of volunteer pilots working with an organization called LightHawk offered to help. Rather than fly commercial and having to deal with the noise and high levels of activity in the average airport, the three wolves would fly on a private plane with only one brief stopover for gas.

The three sisters' trip began late in the evening before the flight. They were given one last vet exam and loaded into their crates. At 3:30 am the next morning, they were loaded into a cargo van, and we headed down to the Ramona Airport. We were greeted by our LightHawk volunteer pilot, Jack Long, and his wife and daughter. We arrived at the airport around 5:15 am, and before 6 am, the wolves were loaded, and we were in the air. The flight was smoother than most commercial flights I have been on, and before I knew it, we were touching down in Austin for refueling. It only took 40 minutes to refuel the plane, and in that time, we had an AC unit hooked up to the plane to keep the wolves cool. The wolf area stayed around 68 degrees, compared to the 98 I was enduring on the tarmac. A quick check on the girls showed them all doing well, alert and wide eyed with the new experiences of the flight, but otherwise healthy. Another pilot joined us, and Jack's family got off. Now came the long flight from Austin to Bridgeport. Again the flight went smoothly, and observing how one of the wolves fell asleep in flight, I took the opportunity to catch a quick nap myself.

We touched down in Bridgeport at 8 pm local time and were greeted by the Beardsley Zoo staff. We unloaded the wolves from the plane and into the zoo van. Upon arriving at the zoo, we were greeted by peacocks, a noise that was curious for our wolves as they have never heard them before. A quick walk around their new habitat made me excited for the girls; large trees, lots of bushes, new smells and some red wolf neighbors. All in all, a great new home for the wolves.

While I knew this would be a wonderful home for them, the wolves' natural shyness made unloading them from their crates a slow process. For the last 24 hours, the crates the wolves had been in had been a safety zone, and they did not want to leave them. Well, all but F1063 who unloaded quickly and went straight for one of the new dens. The other two came out with some gentle encouragement from the zoo staff.

Three weeks later, we got our first update on how the three wolves are doing. They have been released out of the holding area and into the main exhibit yard. They seem to be adjusting very well, going near the viewing areas at times and exploring all the new sights and sounds.

It was hard to see F1061, F1062 and F1063 leave the California Wolf Center, but to help promote the SSP and the need for conservation efforts for these critically endangered wolves, this transfer had to happen. Luckily the transfer went extremely smoothly, thanks to the efforts of the SSP coordinator, Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, California Wolf Center staff and volunteers, and LightHawk.

To learn more about critically endangered Mexican gray wolves and the efforts to protect them in the wild, please visit the California Wolf Center at www.californiawolfcenter.org.

Carlsbad Marathon 2014, SDAAZK an official charity again!

We are once again an official charity for the Tri-City Medical Center Carlsbad Marathon & Half. This gives us a pedestal to reach thousands of people to share our passion for conservation and an opportunity to raise much needed funds that help to continue our grants and events promoting conservation.



There will be many fun events that lead up to the marathon and we hope that you will join us as we prepare for the race that will be held on January 19th, 2014. Some of the events are training runs, spaghetti banquet, and much more. We will be creating a marathon committee and are looking for anyone who is interested in helping.

Please contact Ann Knutson at aknutson@sandiegozoo.org for more information or if you would like to join the marathon committee.



Volunteer Days at the California Wolf Center

By Grace Porreca, SDAAZK Conservation Officer, SeaWorld San Diego

On June 5th and 6th SDAAZK got some great volunteers together to help out the California Wolf Center with various projects that they had planned for us. Before either of the days started, all of the volunteers were treated to a tour of the facility. Chelsea Davis, the animal and facilities manager, gave the volunteers a rundown of the wolves and how their Mexican grey wolf recovery program is working.

June 5th brought us 11 eager volunteers: Jasmine, Jackie, Gwen, Ashley, Jonathan, Kelly, Susy, Kaitlin, Emily, Rachel and Grace. These hard workers cleared out brush and trimmed plants in the center's M-3 enclosure. During the hot and windy day, these volunteers cleared 3 acres while enjoying the beautiful scenery. Jonathan was the volunteer of the day ripping out brush with his bare hands!

June 6th brought us 8 eager volunteers: Bob, Janet, Terri, Ann, Carey, Megan, Lara and Grace. This group of volunteers made owl boxes for the Wolf Center to help aid a natural pest control. Power tools were used, no fingers were lost – it was a good day.

Both days were a huge success filled with fun people, beautiful views and wonderful wolves. Thank you to everyone that participated and be sure to look for more volunteer opportunities to follow in the upcoming months.



Bowling for Rhinos 2013 – Tis The Season

By Ann Knutson, SDAAZK Board Fundraiser



With Rhino poaching on the rise and the situation becoming more and more dire, we wanted to increase the amount of money raised and the amount of people reached with the news. So this year Bowling for Rhinos morphed from a single event into a whole season. Because of the increase in different activities, SDAAZK decided to create a Bowling for Rhinos committee and we are so grateful for all the ideas and time they dedicated to making a successful BFR season. The BFR committee consisted of Sasha Stallard, Jenna Duarte, Corrie Barcroft, Carey Knutson, Ann Knutson, and Ashley Roberts.

The season began with Bill Konstant from the International Rhino Foundation giving a presentation. He spoke about the plight of each species of rhino and what IRF is doing to help keep rhinos from going extinct. One of the most inspiring topics he addressed is how even the smallest donation can make a difference. For example, a \$25 donation pays for one day of a rhino protection unit.



Soon after Bill's presentation we began The Crashes. Crashes were purchased by individuals wishing to surprise someone with six stand-up rhino cut outs placed in their yard. This was one of our newest ideas and we were not very confident about its success. However, it turns out that everyone wanted to be crashed! In fact, the rhinos were so popular that they were all stolen once and then we had two stolen after they were all returned.

One of the families that were crashed spent a Sunday morning talking with their church congregation about the plight of the rhino. Similar situations occurred with every house we crashed. Often, when removing the rhinos the next night, the home owners would come out and beg us to leave them, telling us about all the attention the rhinos received.

Our goal for Bowling for Rhinos this year was \$20,000, which was quite a jump from the \$16,000 that we raised last year. In order to reach this goal, we knew we needed to change things at the event as well. We began by deciding to utilize activegiving.com, an online fundraising site that allowed each participant to build their own page. Because of this new idea there was some competitive fundraising. Our top fundraisers were Ann Knutson from the San Diego Zoo's APC with \$2,020, Marty Sawin, elephant keeper from the Safari Park with \$1,050.10, and Christine Miller, a vet tech from the San Diego Zoo with \$1,000.

We also wanted to increase the fun. Last year we had begun the process by holding a best dressed competition



and were impressed by the creativity of the teams who competed. This year we continued the new tradition and added another fun event. Ashley Roberts of the BFR committee had the genius idea of coming up with a Dance Off. Once again we were unsure of the participation in the dance off, but were BLOWN AWAY! As a judge it was hard picking one dance contestant per dance off. After much debate, the best team costume went to “Flying monkey fish” and best dance off went to Toby Appel, Safari Park/ Zoo Insect House volunteer.



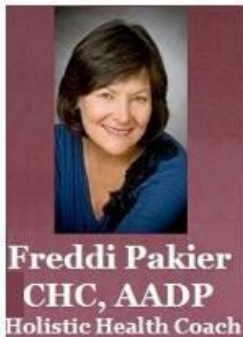
Another addition to this year’s BFR event was Hott Thing! Hott Thing is an eighties cover band who’s lead singer is Trevor Holland from the Zoo’s horticulture department. They donated their time to provide great eighties music and a great time.

This year we were able to raise over \$24,000, well over our goal of \$20,000! We also increased awareness more than we have ever done before. This was possible through the passion and dedication of many people and we want to send out a huge thank you to everyone who participated! We hope that you will join us again next year as our event continues to grow!

Thank You To Our BFR Sponsors

Black Rhinoceros Sponsors

Donation of Silent Auction Item



Thank You To Our BFR Sponsors

A Very Special Thank You to



**for their continued support of
Bowling for Rhinos!**

White Rhinoceros Sponsors

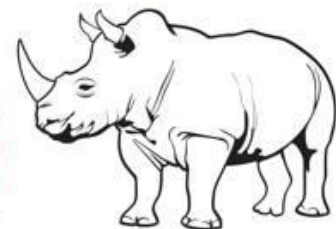
Donation of Raffle Item



California Wolf Center



Julian, California



Pints For Preservation

By Beau Parks, San Diego Zoo Keeper, Avian Propagation Center

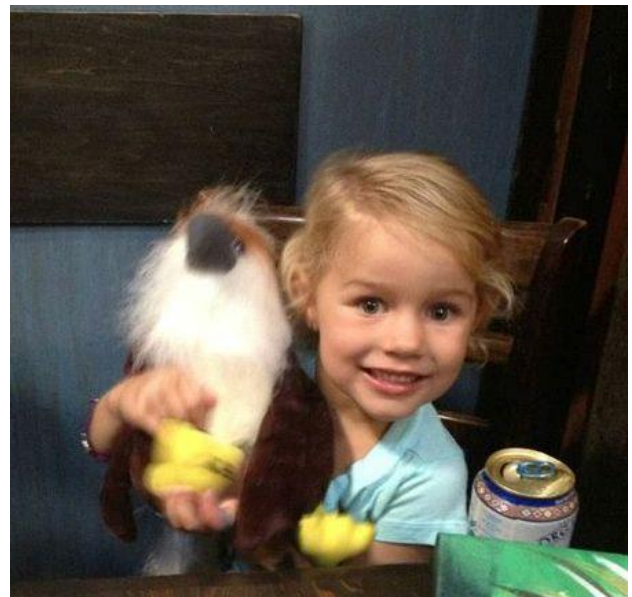
San Diego AAZK's Pints for Preservation fundraiser on July 17 was, by all measures, a great success. The turnout was phenomenal and the volume of beer consumed was impressive, so it's no surprise that a fun time was had by all who attended. Most importantly however, was the over \$2,000 (unofficial tally) that was raised for our friends at the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF).



The majority of the legwork for the fundraiser was done well in advance by APC keeper Ann Knutson. George Thornton of The Homebrewer in North Park invited keepers and friends to help brew two kegs of craft beer that he donated to the event. Then Barry Braden, owner of The Local Habit restaurant in Hillcrest, not only agreed to host the fundraiser, but also to donate 10% of their sales from the night!

When it came time to choose a beneficiary, social media, and the worldwide network of bird nerds came together to overwhelmingly select the PEF by a final margin of over 400 votes. Based in Davao, Philippines, the PEF works for the preservation of the Philippine eagle through field research, captive propagation, and conservation education programs at the Philippine Eagle Center and in local communities. The Philippine eagle is the longest eagle in the world and is the national bird of the Philippines. Threatened primarily by habitat loss, the Philippine eagle is listed as critically endangered by the IUCN and Birdlife International with an estimated population between 250 and 750.

Along with George and Barry's generous support, keepers and friends from around the country donated their time, services and creativity to coordinate the event and silent auction. Thank you so much to everyone who participated and attended the event. The money raised will make a big difference to a small organization working hard to save a very special bird.



National Zoo Keeper Week - Behind the Scenes Opportunities for Our Animal Care Professionals

By Robbie Clark, San Diego Zoo Elephant Keeper

As animal care professionals, one of the perks we have as local members of our San Diego AAZK chapter is the ability to network and socialize with many others in our career circle. The range of experience in conjunction with the number and species of animals in the area, gives us unlimited ways to share stories, while learning and growing from each other, all in the betterment of our passion for the world's wildlife. We tend to get caught up in our own world, focusing on our own animals, day in and day out. While this is exactly what we all love to do, we often wonder about our comrades and are curious about what it takes to care for other species. Having numerous organizations with representing memberships from all of them within our chapter, what better way to learn more about our colleagues than by taking behind the scenes tours?

During National Zoo Keeper Week, SDAAZK was able to offer the opportunity for everyone to participate in behind the scenes tours at Sea World, the Safari Park and the Zoo. Throughout the week there were close to 30 different tours between the 3 parks showcasing the broad spectrum of fauna we have here in San Diego. Ranging from the zoo's insect and reptile houses, to the birds at Sea World and even the elephants at both the Safari Park and Zoo, there were many exciting tours to take part in. This program was very successful with more than 130 individuals signed up throughout the week.

Thank you to the 3 participating parks, specifically those who were involved with creating these opportunities and those who led BTS tours during the week. We hope this was a great experience for everyone and that we can make it a yearly tradition.

Updates from National AAZK



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
of ZOO KEEPERS



Registration is now live for the 40th National AAZK Conference

The North Carolina Chapter AAZK will be hosting the National AAZK Conference - September 22-26, 2013.

Congratulations to the Cleveland and St Louis Chapters, winners of this year's Chapter Challenge for the National Conference to be held in Greensboro, North Carolina! Thank you to all the chapters that contributed to the challenge: Cleveland, Rosamond Gifford, *San Diego*, Milwaukee, Little Rock, St. Louis, Detroit, Fresno Chaffee, Oregon, and Philadelphia Chapters.

Also, the AAZK Board of Directors has selected Memphis AAZK Chapter as the host for the 2016 annual AAZK Conference site. Chapter leaders have 30 days to submit any comments on this selection if any. Ratification of this selection will then take place at the 2013 conference in North Carolina.



Become a San Diego AAZK Member Today!

Join SDAAZK and be a part of an organization dedicated to conservation!

SDAAZK has 2 different participation categories:

- 1) To become a **member** of SDAAZK, you must already be a member of National AAZK. SDAAZK recommends becoming a member of both local AND national AAZK.
- 2) You may join only SDAAZK and be acknowledged as a **supporter** of SDAAZK. Your contribution will go towards all SDAAZK conservation projects.

SDAAZK membership includes the quarterly newsletter, "*The Keeper*," the ability to vote during elections, free admission to local SDAAZK events, and discounts for special activities. If you are not sure of your National AAZK status or would also like to become a National AAZK member, please contact National AAZK at <http://aazk.org>

SDAAZK supporter includes our quarterly newsletter, "*The Keeper*," involvement in our conservation projects (local and international), and participation in our local SDAAZK events.

To join, visit our website at www.sdaazk.org or print, fill out, and mail the application form below with your payment to:

San Diego Chapter of AAZK
P.O. Box 632984, Hillcrest Post Office
San Diego, CA 923103

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

FaceBook: Yes _____ No _____ Twitter? Yes _____ No _____ Be sure to follow us at www.Facebook.com/sdaazk

Other contact information: _____

Zoo Affiliation: _____

Job title: _____

Work area: _____

Species you work with: _____

Special interests: _____

SD AAZK membership category (please check appropriate box):

- \$12 .00 – San Diego AAZK Membership; already a National AAZK member
- \$12.00 – San Diego Supporter, not a National AAZK member

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CALENDAR 2013 visit www.sdaazk.org for updates

4th Annual SDAAZK Photo Contest “Capturing Conservation,” Late Entry. The contest will highlight photography’s vital role in capturing conservation issues worldwide. Submit your entry, along with 2-5 sentences describing a related environmental issue. Late entries still accepted now; visit our website for details.

August 18, 2013: SDAAZK Community Project – Point Loma Native Plant Garden Clean-Up and Restoration. Help us help the San Diego River Park Foundation care for this beautiful garden area. **Location:** Mendocino and Greene Street in Ocean Beach. **Time:** 9:00 – 11:00 am. **Details:** Join us as we help care for this unique city park while giving back to the community. More information available on our website at www.sdaazk.org.

August 19, 2013: SDAAZK Meeting. **Location:** San Diego Zoo’s Warner Conference Room. **Time:** 5 pm. Let us know you’d like to join us at TheKeeperSDAAZK@cox.net. Our meetings are open to all and we’d love for you to join us! Become more involved in what is happening in your AAZK chapter!

September 21, 2013: CA Coastal Clean-Up. Join us as we clean up the Sweetwater Marsh site. **Location:** The Living Coast Discovery Center, 1000 Gunpowder Point Dr., Chula Vista, CA 91910. **Time:** 9:00 am until noon. **Details:** help us keep this local natural treasure clean for the amazing animals and plants that call our coastal region home. More information available on our website at www.sdaazk.org.

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

January 19, 2014: Carlsbad Marathon. Participants and volunteers needed. More information to come soon. Watch our website!

- To see pictures from our events, visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sdaazk