



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.

AAZK San Diego Board Members

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Maureen Duryee – San Diego Zoo  
Vice President

Hali O'Connor – San Diego Zoo  
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Conservation Partner Officer

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Yvette Kemp – San Diego Zoo  
Chapter Liaison

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# The Keeper

## The American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter - Spring 2014

### President's Message

By Ann Knutson, AAZK San Diego President

For the last 7 years, Yvette Kemp has put in the time and effort to take on the challenge of being the AAZK San Diego President. She has done an amazing job of leading the organization and has passed on the torch to me. I'm excited about this opportunity and continuing the spirit of excellence she has left behind.

Although she is no longer president, she will still be actively involved with the board as Chapter Liaison. She will be continuing to put together the newsletter and working on the AAZK San Diego website, as well as leading trips down to work with the zoos in Mexico as part of her personal conservation project.

My involvement with national and local AAZK began when I became a full-time keeper at the Sedgwick Co Zoo in 2009. I was active in the SCZ AAZK chapter for the 4 years that I was a full-time keeper and held positions of secretary and vice president.

Since taking a position in the Avian Propagation Center at the San Diego Zoo in 2012, I have been the Fundraising Officer and Event Coordinator for AAZK San Diego. Once taking on these roles, I organized the annual Bowling for Rhinos event, which was able to raise over \$40k in the last two years. I have also helped organize the first inaugural Pints for Preservation and Croctoberfest.

After working with the board over the last two years, I have really come to realize how important AAZK San Diego is for me, giving me an outlet for some of the skills that I am not able to utilize as a zoo keeper. My goals for the organization for the next two years as president are 1) to increase our membership by 20%, and 2) to continue to boost our reach among animal staff and the community.

With the change in presidency, there also came a change with our Social Media Coordinator. Lindsey King had been taking care of AAZK San Diego's Facebook page and Twitter accounts. I would like to send a thank you to Lindsey for all she did to extend AAZK San Diego's reach through those outlets.

And on that note, I would like to welcome Robbie Clark to the board. Robbie will be picking up where Lindsey left off and continuing to reach AAZK San Diego members and friends through Facebook and other social media outlets. Robbie is an elephant keeper at the San Diego Zoo and is full of passion for his career and the animals in his care. We are thrilled to welcome him to the board!

With the changes we have made recently we are all very excited for the year to come!

Please join us in our upcoming events such as workshops, Pints for Preservation, and Bowling for Rhinos. Continue reading to learn more details.

And you can always get the latest updates on our website at [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org).

# Keepers and Conservation

By Grace Porreca, AAZK San Diego Chapter Conservation Officer

After attending last year's National AAZK Conference in North Carolina, I came back with the understanding that we, as zoo keepers, play one of the biggest roles in educating the public on the topic of conservation.

With this in mind, I started to research different conservation programs and organizations, locally and globally. I found it very difficult to find various programs unless I knew specifically what I was looking for. There were, however a few websites that listed groupings of conservation organizations, but nothing pertaining to volunteers, interns, careers, research, sponsorships, species specific, habitats, news, and current events.

This also made me curious as to what keepers in zoos, aquariums, and rehabilitation facilities were doing for conservation. I would like to hear what programs fellow keepers are involved in and what they have to say about their experiences. I have started a website called Conservation Finder ([www.ConservationFinder.com](http://www.ConservationFinder.com)) whose mission is *"to connect passionate individuals with organizations that promote conservation globally and locally."* Conservation Finder provides direct links to many conservation organizations as well as being a place for us to share information about our likes and experiences. It is a work in progress, but it is up and running. My intention is to add a Keeper Forum tab where keepers can discuss conservation efforts.

If there are conservation organizations that you are passionate about, please feel free to go to the website and enter them. Be sure to tell your fellow keepers here and elsewhere. Also like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/conservationfinder.com](http://www.facebook.com/conservationfinder.com).



## Mexico Zoos Outreach Project

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK San Diego Chapter Liaison

I have always believed that keepers and fellow animal care professionals are a wealth of information. Throughout our careers, we've had the opportunity to work with a wide range of animals and have had many amazing experiences. We each become "knowledge authorities" of the animals we work with and many of us have worked with numerous animals. So one of my goals throughout my career has been to share what I have learned with others, as well as to learn from others in the field.

With that in mind, I started the Mexico Zoos Outreach Project.

The project is an opportunity for U.S. keepers to share information about husbandry, exhibit design, enrichment, and program design and implementation. We all have a wealth of information and sometimes it is difficult to be able to share it. Participating in the Mexico Zoos Outreach Project gives animal care professionals a place to share their knowledge while being able to design and teach programs. They are also able to help design and propose policies that will benefit their facility. And this isn't just for animal care staff. This project invites everyone to participate: educators, nutritionist, construction staff, horticulturists, volunteers. Everyone who is involved in animal care have an important role that benefits animals in captivity and conservation. That's the beauty of animal people, no matter who or where they are, they want to share information and make animal care better. Reason: we all have the same goals – conservation, education, and animal care.



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Actually, you can say I really started this project many years ago. Having grown up in Mexico, I know that there are differences in how animals are viewed and displayed at zoos. I compare several Mexican zoos I have visited to something like U.S. animal facilities some 15 years ago. The intentions are good, but the knowledge and teachings are a little behind. Since I go to Mexico on a regular basis, I take the time to visit the zoos in the area, meet with personnel there, and share whatever information I can. Information about husbandry, training, and enrichment tend to be the main topics and it is always exciting being able to teach and learn with the staff there. I have had the opportunity to assist at places like the 3 zoos in Mexico City (Chapultepec, Los Coyotes, and Aragon) as well places closer to home like Parque Morelos in Tijuana. These “working vacations” are always gratifying and give me the chance to met many people and learn new things.



Years ago I started attending conferences in Mexico. About 4 years ago I was invited to and attended a conference in Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico. A good friend of mine works at the local zoo and they were hosting the AZCARM Conference. AZCARM (Asociacion de Zoologicos y Acuarios de Mexico) is Mexico’s equivalent to our AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums). It was during this conference that I met Fernando Gastelo, director of the Parque del Nino

zoo located in Valle de Guadalupe just outside of Ensenada. We struck up a friendship and have been in contact ever since. Fernando had mentioned that they were building a zoo and had invited me to visit them. Parque del Nino is a new zoo, only 3 ½ years old, and Fernando is an architect by profession. Although the zoo’s goal is to teach conservation to the children in the area, he admitted that his knowledge of the needs of the animals was not his strength. His hope was that I could help him and his staff become a better zoo. Fernando and some of his staff had visited the San Diego Zoo several times, meeting with zoo and Safari Park staff, trying to learn about the best exhibit designs and animal needs. In 2010, bird department staff visited their facility to see the new flamingo exhibit they were building. Later staff from the zoo and park visited

again to discuss the possibility of working together on the pronghorn project.

So in November of 2013, I led a group of 27 keepers and staff to Parque del Nino. Parque del Nino is not only a zoological institution with over 50 species, but a waterpark and recreation area. Many locals visit the park to spend the day, especially in the hot summer months. The day we went, we were able to get to know the staff and their facility. Even though our intention had been to work, their intention was for us to see the park and want to come



back. It actually worked out for the best. It gave us the chance to see what the zoo’s needs were and come back with a plan, because we did want to come back.



Our next trip in December was a 3 day event and involved 15 keepers and staff. We arrived at the zoo on a Friday afternoon and devised a plan and goals for our working day on Saturday. The staff took us throughout the zoo and we discussed ideas as we went about. Early Saturday morning we hit the ground running: altering exhibits, making enrichment, and helping with husbandry needs. A big bonus was showing the staff how to perform hooftrims without having to anesthetize the animals each time. That

was a long hard day, as we worked from 7:00 am until around 4:00 pm. Sunday was a touch up day, where some of us continued with some exhibit alterations while another part of the group continued with hooftrims.

Our last trip was a one day event in February with 19 people participating. The goal for this trip was to assist the zoo staff as they continued with enrichment and help them with species natural history, the basis for all animal care and educational needs. We were also lucky to have 2 horticulturists join the group this time. They were able to help the zoo staff identify the plants on grounds and teach them about utilizing browse as part of the diet and enrichment.

The trips to Parque del Nino and other zoos are always enlightening and gratifying, but sometimes a little frustrating too. Regardless, they are always informative. We are able to share our knowledge and leave every time knowing that the animals and staff at that facility are better off than when we arrived. We are also able to learn what teaching methods work best and how better to communicate with others. And coming up with ideas that best fit each facility and finding ways to implement them is beneficial to everyone. Being able to learn how to work in teams and how to devise and implement plans is important in any field. Regardless of how much we love our jobs and the animals we work with, being able to communicate not only to fellow workers but the general public is key in making an impact on animal care and conservation.



The project is an exciting and a great opportunity for me and those who join me. It is a learning experience and makes each of us involved have a greater understanding of the needs and requirements of all animals, their facilities, and how to best to make those concepts come to life while working with others. I will continue to travel to Mexico and share information as best I can. Those interested are welcome to join me as long as they are willing to work hard, be open, are able to work with others, and have a passport. Spanish is not needed. Sometimes not knowing the language helps us make that extra effort to communicate our ideas and goals. Regardless, it is a fun and stimulating relationship where everyone benefits!

## Thank You To Our AAZK San Diego Sponsors & Supporters



Café On Park has been a supporter of AAZK San Diego for several years, hosting and donating all proceeds from our annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraisers.

Thank you Andy and all of the staff at Café on Park!



San Filippo's has hosted our annual Run For Wildlife Training Sessions the last 2 years. Thank you Joe and the staff at San Filippo's!

Bobbi Brink and Lions Tigers & Bears are Institutional Members of AAZK San Diego. Thank you for your support!



## Conservation Corner

By Grace Porreca, AAZK San Diego Chapter Conservation Officer

This spring we kick off our local volunteer efforts with a day at Lions, Tigers and Bears. The date is March 5<sup>th</sup> at their facility. We will be helping with painting their new feed room and making enrichment items for the Lions birthday on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

Then April 25<sup>th</sup> finds us welcoming Bill Konstant, Program Director from International Rhino Foundation. He will be speaking about IRF's work protecting rhinos and their support of rhino conservation, as well as BFR's fundraising impact on IRF's efforts. So keep your eyes on our website for information regarding Bill's presentation!

We then jump into our summer efforts. We have tentative dates of June 4<sup>th</sup> and June 6<sup>th</sup> for volunteer dates at the California Wolf Center.

This year we celebrate National Zoo Keeper Week July 20 through the 26<sup>th</sup>.

We will also be planning a Volunteer Day at San Diego River Park Project in August and September will find us again at the California Coastal Clean-up.

So keep checking our website for dates and details of these fun and rewarding events!

## Meet the 2014 AAZK San Diego Board Members!

AAZK San Diego held its board elections in February. Thanks to our voting members, the following is the result from that election. Here's a little about each one of them.

**Ann Knutson, President & Fundraising Officer.** I believe in what AAZK is about. The ability for a keeper to take their passion for wildlife and conservation and raise money for the projects that we as a chapter decide on is such a great thing. I also like the ability to utilize my other talents that I don't necessarily get to use on a daily basis in my career with the Zoo.

**Maureen O. Duryee, Vice President.** We can increase our local membership through social events that include education and assistance to zoological personnel in their roles as animal caretakers, public educators, scientific researchers, wildlife conservationists.

**Kym Janke, Secretary.** I enjoy the challenge of educating others on the importance of the zoo keeper's role in conservation and education projects and love that AAZK allows me to contribute in large way to these efforts. I believe that a zoo keeper's job is not just an 8 hour day but is rather a never-ending passion to make a difference in animal care and conservation.

**Hali O'Connor, Treasurer.** I am all too aware that our jobs are more than an 8 hour day with core beliefs that encompass our whole lives. It's exciting being a part of AAZK's promotion of professional development and education for all the amazing and dedicated animal care professionals in the world.

**Yvette Kemp, Chapter Liaison.** AAZK has always been an organization that I believe in and the people involved have always been passionate about their careers and the projects they support. The role of zoo keepers has changed throughout the years, placing us in the front line of conservation and as public educators.

**Linda Henry, Public Relations Officer.** As Public Relations Officer, Linda is responsible for all press releases, media appearances and advertising opportunities for AAZK San Diego.

**Grace Porreca: Conservation Partner Officer.** I joined AAZK San Diego with the desire to increase the conservation efforts in our community and to bring more global awareness. As keepers, we are role models to the community and to each other, and we need to become more involved in conservation. I have started my own website,

Conservationfinder.com, with the mission to connect passionate individuals with organizations that promote conservation globally and locally.

**Ashley Roberts: Professional Development Officer.** My goals for our chapter are to increase growth and learning opportunities for our members and to increase what I like to call 'cross-campus camaraderie.' I am hoping to create more opportunities for animal care professionals from several different institutions to get together, share ideas and information, network, and maybe even build a new friendship or two.

**Robbie Clark, Social Media Officer.** I joined our San Diego chapter board because I feel I can share my passion and drive for my own career with animals to our group through hard work, dedication and team-work. My experience serving with other organizations I believe can strengthen our chapter's support through an increase in membership from fellow professionals, build our professional development program and help raise funds to meet our conservation goals.

## Pints for Preservation Fundraiser – March 11

The San Diego chapter of AAZK will be hosting 4 Pints for Preservation fundraisers this year and we are very excited to be able to repeat our past format! Again we had our members and friends select the conservation organization. Organizations were sent to our conservation officer for review and research, then placed on our Facebook page for voting. The organization with the most "likes" is the beneficiary.

**Our 1st Pints for Preservation taking place on March 11th will benefit the Clapper Rail Study Team! The Clapper Rail Study Team had 108 votes, more than double any other organization! Congratulations!**

The Clapper Rail Study Team was formed in 1985 in an effort to expand volunteer opportunities to rail recovery effort. Study Team members help observe the rails, trap and band, search for nests, do call counts, etc. The participants have come from all walks of life including students, engineers, policemen, mathematicians, administrative assistants, homemakers, and retirees, among many others. Folks start as volunteers and once they catch on, they share in whatever grant money and donations we may have available.

"Thank you AAZK San Diego for including us in this. Those who may not know, this is a cooperative effort between San Diego Zoo's Safari Park, SeaWorld San Diego, and Living Coast Discovery Center. This group has hatched and released just over 400 rails since 2001 - more than doubling the wild population!"



### PINTS FOR PRESERVATION

**WHEN: March 11, 2014**

**TIME: 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm**

**SILENT AUCTION: 5:30 until 7:30 pm**

**WHERE: Tiger! Tiger! Tavern  
3205 El Cajon Blvd. San Diego  
92104**

Our goal is to raise at least \$1,000! 15% of all sales will go towards the organization PLUS we will have great pint glasses for sale and a silent auction that will also be dedicated to the conservation organization.

Be sure not to miss it!



# AAZK San Diego Membership Form

Check here if you are renewing

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional (must already be an AAZK National; adding local San Diego membership w/access to online courses) | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full (must already be an AAZK National; adding local San Diego membership)                                    | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supporter (local AAZK San Diego Membership Only)  | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional (organizations/institutions; requires board approval)   | \$50.00 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Zoo Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Work area \_\_\_\_\_ Species you work with \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional AAZK San Diego Member.** Benefits include:

- Access to online animal professional courses offered through CollaborNation Collaborative Learning Environment
- Free admittance to all our hands-on workshops and events
- Opportunity to sign-up for hands-on workshops before it is offered to others
- One-year subscription to our quarterly newsletter, *The Keeper*
- Free admission to special presentations by guest speakers
- Support of local and international conservation projects
- Free admission to our annual SDAAZK photo caravan at the Safari Park
- Ability to participate in local board member elections
- All National AAZK membership benefits

**Full AAZK San Diego Members.** Benefits include:

- One-year subscription to our quarterly newsletter, *The Keeper*
- Free admission to special presentations by guest speakers
- Support of local and international conservation projects
- Free admission to our annual SDAAZK photo caravan at the Safari Park
- Ability to participate in local board member elections
- All National AAZK membership benefits

**AAZK San Diego Supporter.** Benefits include:

- One-year subscription to our quarterly newsletter, *The Keeper*
- Free admission to special presentations by guest speakers
- Support of local and international conservation projects

Please fill out form and send to:

**AAZK San Diego  
Membership  
P.O. Box 632984  
San Diego, CA 92103**

**AAZK San Diego**  
**P.O. Box 632984**  
**San Diego, CA 92103**

Tel: (619) 231-1515 ext. 4672

Email: [TheKeeperSDAAZK@cox.net](mailto:TheKeeperSDAAZK@cox.net)

Web site: [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org)

FaceBook: <http://www.facebook.com/sdaazk>



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## **CALENDAR 2014**

visit [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org) for updates

- **March 5: AAZK SD Community Project.** Lions Tigers & Bears. Spaces are already filled!
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- **March 6: AAZK SD Professional Development Series: Browse Workshop.** This workshop will cover identification of browsable plants, as well as toxic plants. A how-to portion on cutting your own browse while maintaining the health of the plant. Space still available. **Register on our website now!**
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- **March 11: Pints for Preservation benefitting the Clapper Rail Study Team. Location:** Tiger! Tiger! 3205 El Cajon Blvd., San Diego CA 92104. **Time:** 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Great food, silent auction, and so much more for a great cause. Visit our website for more details.
- 
- **March 18: AAZK SD Board Meeting. Location:** San Diego Zoo Warner Board Room. **Time:** 5:00 pm. Email us at [AnnKntsn@yahoo.com](mailto:AnnKntsn@yahoo.com) for details. Our meetings are open to all. Become more involved in what your AAZK chapter does!
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- **April TBD: AAZK SD Professional Series: Hoof Trimming, Part I.** Details to come.
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- **April 25: Bill Konstant, Program Director from International Rhino Foundation.** He will be speaking about IRF's work protecting rhinos and their support of rhino conservation, as well as BFR's fundraising impact on IRF's efforts. **Location/Time: TBD.**
- 
- **April 5 – May 12, 2014: Rhino Crash Fundraiser: Saving Rhinos.** Crash a friend's house and support rhino conservation! For a donation our wooden rhino herd will show up in a friend's yard as a surprise and spread the word on the plight of the rhino. These are the same rhinos that graced the Carlsbad Kook last year. Don't miss out. Reservations are required and only select dates are available beginning April 5<sup>th</sup> 2014. All proceeds go to support the AAZK San Diego Bowling for Rhinos campaign. See photos of 2013's Rhino Crash at [www.facebook.com/sdaazk](http://www.facebook.com/sdaazk). **Details to come soon.**
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- **May 16, 2014: Bowling for Rhinos** at the Kearny Mesa Bowl. Join AAZK San Diego at our annual rhino fundraiser where 100% of the profits raised go directly towards rhino conservation. Event includes bowling, silent auction, special drawings, awards for best dressed team, dance-off, live music, and more fun than any fundraiser should contain! Teams and individuals are welcome to join. **Visit our website now.**

**Details about these and all our events available on our website at [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org)!**

**Visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/sdaazk](http://www.facebook.com/sdaazk)**