



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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| Content: | PG |
|---------------------|-----------|
| President's Message | 1 |
| Outreach Committee | 2 |
| AZA Conference | 3 |
| WCN | 5 |
| Blood Lions | 6 |
| Orangutans | 8 |
| AAZK Membership | 10 |
| 2017 Calendar | 11 |

The Keeper

American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter – Fall 2016

President's Message

By Ann Knutson, AAZK San Diego President

This year I have been so fortunate to see our AAZK chapter and its members grow and take on new challenges. Bowling for Rhinos 2016 was an amazing success, and thanks to the dedicated efforts of our members, our San Diego chapter was able to contribute the third highest total of funds raised nationally! Because of this great accomplishment, AAZKSD member Jenny Tibbot has won a trip to Lewa Conservancy in Kenya which she will take in February.

Not only did our chapter get 3rd place in raising the most funds for Bowling for Rhinos, but Kym Janke, secretary for AAZKSD won the Anna Merz Rhino Champion Award and an honorary trip to Lewa for her years of dedication to BFR. She and a guest will get to travel to Lewa in Kenya in October 2017 to see first-hand all the amazing work Lewa does with the funds raised at BFR.

Jeremy Fontaine, Co-Social Media Officer AAZKSD, applied for and won the Professional Development Grant from National AAZK. This Grant helped fund his trip to India where he was learning about conservation efforts related to the illegal pet trade industry.

I myself applied for the BFR Conservation Resource Grant from National and was awarded over \$11,000 that will go to Vulture research and conservation in Kenya. With each of these Grants and Awards comes the chance to further our impact on conservation efforts. These Grants and Awards are open to all members and I am so proud of each of our members who have taken the chance to apply.



New AAZK Committee for International Animal Care Professionals

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK San Diego Treasurer

As some of you may know, I have been involved in assisting zoo's and keepers in Mexico and Latin America for several years. Animal care professionals throughout the world are always looking for better ways to improve the welfare of the animals they work with. Being able to share what I have learned has brought me great satisfaction, which is why I was very excited when AAZK National announced that they were looking into putting together a new committee designed to assist our colleagues and friends south of the border: the International Outreach Committee (IOC).

The IOC became official this month and consists of four committee members (Noah Shields, Cindi Cavallini, Flynn Vickowski, and Luis Soto), a vice-chair (Adriana De Los Santos), and myself as chair. The IOC's purpose is to provide resources and opportunities for training and continuing education for animal care professionals in Mexico and Latin America. We'll be focusing on sharing information regarding basic husbandry techniques and skills, record keeping, animal welfare, and more.

An exciting part of this committee is that we will be offering a yearly grant to a Latin American keeper to attend the annual AAZK National Conferences. This will enable the recipient to share their newly acquired knowledge and be a mentor to their co-workers. The IOC will also be offering a teaching program, sending committee and AAZK members as instructors to requesting Latin American institutions. The program is still in the works but our goal is to begin offering this service by early 2017.

There is still much to do and we are very excited about the opportunity to be able to increase communication between professionals from different countries. I will continue to travel to Mexico Zoo's and invite you to continue to join me, but I'm thrilled that AAZK has formally become involved in this international endeavor.

If you would like to learn more about the IOC or even join us, please feel free to contact me at yvette.kemp@aazk.org.



AZA Conference Meets AAZK San Diego!

By Ann Knutson, President AAZK San Diego

In August the AZA national conference was held in San Diego and co-hosted by San Diego Zoo Global and Sea World San Diego. AAZK SD was very fortunate to be able to have a booth in the vendor hall at the conference. We took this opportunity very seriously and had many discussions as to what information we wanted to share with those who attended the conference.



We decided that we wanted to highlight how AAZK SD or any local AAZK chapter benefitted their local institution, local community, and conservation. We put together a tri-fold poster that shared our projects such as, yearly events, The Keeper newsletter, amount of funds raised for conservation, and Shirley Busch Grant. Check it out on the next page!

Yvette also put together a great video that included pictures of Keepers at work over the last few years. The video had some amazing photos of dedicated keepers with their animals. The video, the tri-fold poster, and all the great discussions we had with conference attendees were great reminders of why we are all a part of AAZK SD.

While we were reflecting on the purpose of AAZK SD we were able to have a little fun and meet some of the other exhibitors! We of course took one of our Rhinos on the road and at the exhibitor hall crashed other booths, which was a huge hit with everyone! Not only did we get to meet some great people, but we were able to spread the word about Bowling for Rhinos and the plight of rhinos in the wild!

Although most of us ended up spending our weekends or time after work volunteering at the booth, we all came away with renewed passion and a few more friends along the way!



Wildlife Conservation Network Conference

By Grace Yambrach, Conservation Partner Officer



This past October I once again had the pleasure of attending the Wildlife Conservation Network in San Francisco. This event brings together leading conservationists to discuss their work in the field and how they are using that work to protect endangered species all over the world.

This year WCN also hosted a panel on climate change and its impacts on wildlife and the work of conservationists worldwide. The panel consisted of: Dr. Steven Amstrup of Polar Bears International; Dr. Pablo Borboroglu of Global Penguin Society; Elena Bykova of Saiga Conservation

Alliance; Rosamira Guillen of Proyecto Titi. The discussions dove into habitat and food sources melting away for polar bears and penguins, but we also learned about the lesser known effects in drastically different environments. For instance: increased fires destroying the forest homes of cotton-top tamarins in Colombia; lethal bacteria decimating herds of saiga antelope in the steppes of Central Asia; and the general direction that the warming of the earth will take us.

There were many other wonderful speakers, such as Frank Pope of Save the Elephants; Dr. Claudio Sillero of Ethiopian Wolf Conservation; Dr. Rachel Graham of Maralliance; Belinda Low Mackey of Grevy's Zebra Trust and Robyn Appelton of Spectacled Bear Conservation to name a few. For me it was a great day of learning, catching up with some old friends and making new ones.



If you would like to view the panel on climate change you can use this link

https://www.facebook.com/pg/wildnet/videos/?ref=page_internal

Or just find it on wildlife conservation network facebook page on their videos!!



AAZK Screening of Blood Lions

By Kym Janke, AAZK Secretary

AAZK San Diego was excited to share the incredible film, Blood Lions, with our members and supporters on Monday October 24 at the Digital Gym in San Diego. Despite a San Diego rain storm worthy of media coverage itself, we made it out to the theater and settled in with snacks and tissues in hand! We were joined by the film's director and writer, Bruce Young, who introduced the film and answered questions from the audience at the conclusion.

Blood Lions explores the secretive canned lion hunting industry in South Africa and their campaign urges people to **“THINK before you VISIT, CUDDLE, WALK, VOLUNTEER or SHOOT.** The Blood Lions goal is to bring an end to canned hunting and the exploitative breeding of lions and other predators on farms across South Africa.” (Blood Lions website, 2016).

The film was tastefully done and very little camera time was focused on lions being shot, instead it chronicled the life of the lions destined to be a trophy from a canned hunt and followed an American through the process of purchasing and participating in a hunt.



*Image from the Blood Lions website.
This is NOT conservation!*

The film exposed the audience to the for-profit lion breeding industry in South Africa and advised good intentioned volunteer tourists to do their research before participating in a “conservation” focused holiday where they would be raising lion cubs. Many of the lion farms pose as conservation organizations who are funded not only through the sale of the actual lions to hunting operators but also through the fees that volunteers pay to have the chance to hand rear orphaned lion cubs. In reality these cubs are not orphaned but rather have been pulled from their mothers at a very young age so that they can be reared by humans and therefore not develop a fear of people. Having the hunters be able to approach the lions very closely aids in the speed and ease of the “hunt”.

These breeding operations function much the same as a puppy mill, with the breeding animals kept in terrible conditions and pairings based on physical characteristics with no regard for genetics. If you are interested in volunteering with animals anywhere in the world ask some simple questions: How many cubs are orphaned? Where are the cubs going? How frequently are there cubs needing to be hand reared? Does the facility offer the ability to come back and visit “your lion”? Can you walk with adult lions? What accreditation or affiliations does the organization have?

Blood Lions also followed an American hunter through the process of booking a lion hunt. Photos of available lions are sent and each lion comes with its own price. Hunters hand pick their trophy and are guaranteed a kill in just 3 days! There is no tracking required and skill/marksmanship is an afterthought since the gun will be fired at such close range. No matter your feelings on hunting in general, the canned hunt eliminates the “sport” from the process, all that is required is a credit card.

If you weren't able to come out and watch the film with us, I urge you to watch it on your own or even better with a group of your choosing. Visit their website at <http://www.bloodlions.org/> and learn more about the film and its mission. You can also find locations of upcoming screenings and information on how to stream it to your own device. Everyone involved in the film is as passionate about conservation as we are and remind us that we can all contribute to the education of our peers on the truths surrounding the breeding and killing of lions in Africa.



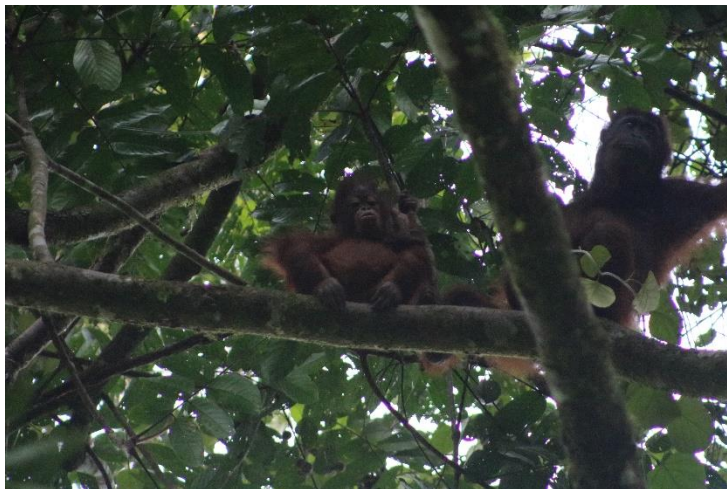
*Blood Lions director Bruce Young
with AAZK San Diego board members
Grace, Kristen and Kym.*

For the Love of Orangutans

By Yeleny Smith, AAZK San Diego Volunteer Coordinator

Everyone dreams of traveling to see their favorite animal in the wild. My favorite animal is the Bornean orangutan. I never thought I would have the courage to travel to Southeast Asia but when the opportunity presented itself this past summer I gladly traveled the 30 hours, plus some more, to Borneo, Malaysia to be with the orangutans.

It all began in 2014 when I enrolled in the Applied Inquiry Master's Program (AIP) through San Diego Zoo Global Institute for Conservation Research and Miami University in Ohio. One of the options for credit within this two and a half year hybrid program is a field study course with the opportunity to travel to a country with a conservation focus. These courses are called Earth Expeditions (EE) and are offered in Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas with the hope for students to build first-hand knowledge of inquiry-driven, community-based learning for the benefit of ecological communities, student achievement, and global understanding. When it was time to apply with my top five choices of field locations, I included Borneo twice. When I received the email declaring my participation in the Borneo II Earth Expedition I was ecstatic but then immediately was overcome with anxiety of traveling so very far away. I then thought about seeing those amazing red heads hanging from the forest canopy and I just smiled and planned away.

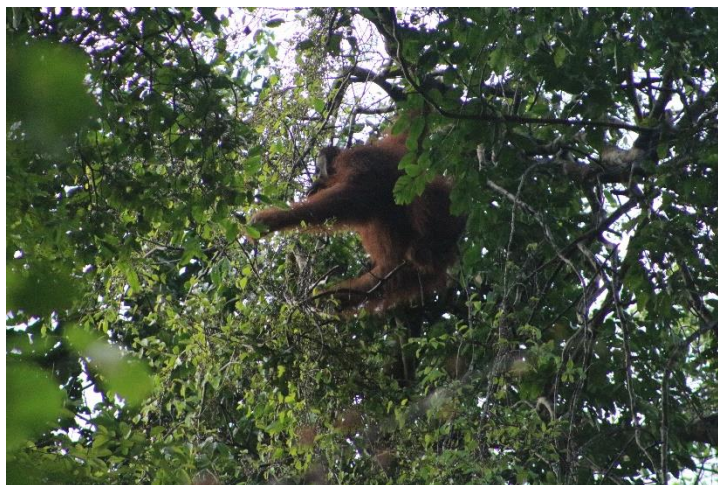


While I was preparing for my travels to Borneo in July 2016, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Red List declared the Bornean orangutan as “Critically Endangered.” My heart sank realizing that not only would I be visiting my favorite animal but I would be visiting an animal suffering from this 6th extinction in the Anthropocene age we are creating. The Bornean orangutan population experienced more than a 60% decline between 1950 and 2010, and another 22% population decline is projected to occur between 2010 and 2025. This decline is largely due to the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of their habitats from the unsustainable palm oil industry. When I first learned about the palm oil industry, and what they were doing to the Bornean rainforest I became angry and I boycott purchasing any items that contained palm oil. Little did I know at the time that I was doing more harm than good. The palm oil industry has been making great strides in growing and producing palm oil in sustainable ways that do not further harm orangutan habitat. It is the consumer's responsibility now to reward those good actions by purchasing items from those certified companies who are part of the Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil.

While in Borneo I had the privilege to observe a total of three mother orangutans with their young and one adult male. I was able to witness the strength orangutan have by watching them support their whole body weight on just one arm or leg as they foraged high up in the canopy. I was able to witness a mom and baby cuddle, see their playful nature, and then retreat back to their lavish day nest. I was able to hear a male's long-call and later see that male with his stunning cheek pads. I took as many pictures as I could but none of the pictures captured the emotions I felt with every snapshot.



Once home I began to plan my Action Inquiry Project (AIP) which is the main academic portion of the Earth Expedition courses. My AIP would encompass analyzing consumers' attitudes, knowledge, and behavior on orangutans and palm oil along with identifying sources for purchasing orangutan friendly products. With the Halloween season came the purchase of many goods that contain palm oil, so part of my project was to construct example candy bags with educational information along with a personal story and picture from my EE. My hope with this project is to facilitate the dissemination of information needed for consumers to make responsible choices while making their holiday purchases. The fact that it is estimated we will lose another 37% of suitable orangutan habitat to palm oil conversion in the next 15 years, in addition to the 39% we have already lost in the last 30 years, is beyond alarming. The only way to reduce those projections and save the wild Bornean orangutan population is by supporting sustainable companies. Please use the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo Sustainable Palm Oil Shopping Guide App, free to download, to ensure that you are making environmentally conscious purchases and share this app and the story of the Bornean orangutan with family and friends!



AAZK San Diego Membership Form

- Check here if you are renewing
- Professional (must already be an AAZK National; adding local San Diego membership w/access to workshops) \$25.00
- Full (must already be an AAZK National; adding local San Diego membership) \$15.00
- Supporter (local AAZK San Diego Membership Only) \$15.00
- Institutional (organizations/institutions; requires board approval) \$50.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/ Zip _____

Email _____

Zoo Affiliation _____ Job Title _____

Work area _____ Species you work with _____

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 AAZK SD 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 AAZK SD 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:

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CALENDAR 2016/2017 visit www.sdaazk.org for updates

Dec 8, 2016: AAZK Meeting.

You are invited to participate and join us at the next AAZK Board meeting at 5:00 pm, please contact us for the location. Our meetings are open to all and we welcome everyone's input and participation. For more information, email AAZK San Diego president at annkntsn@yahoo.com

January 1, 2017: Shirley Busch Professional Development Grant is open for applications. Funding of up to \$1000 is available to support your participation in a professional development opportunity of your choosing. Apply through February 8th for participation in projects occurring between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017. A reminder that all applicants must be both a local and national AAZK member.

January 15, 2016: Tri-City Medical Center Carlsbad Marathon and Half. AAZK San Diego will be volunteering on the course again this year to cheer on runners. We are looking for volunteers and also charity runners! If you are interested in volunteering or registering for the race and raising money for the AAZK San Diego chapter, please let us know by emailing to aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com.

May 20, 2017: Bowling for Rhinos. BFR may be months away, but we're working on getting online fundraising set up for you early! Get a jump on earning one of the top fundraiser spots and consider the gift of charitable giving to BFR 2017 this holiday season! Stay tuned for more details after the December meeting.

Details about these and all our events available on our website at www.sdaazk.org!
Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sdaazk