



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

American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter – Winter 2017/2018

President's Message

By Ann Knutson, AAZK San Diego President

Leading up to the Super Bowl there are always some sneak-peaks of commercials that will be played during the game and programs that will be aired directly after; all hoping to catch the attention of some of the 160 million viewers. These spots are usually taken by big corporations who are spending a lot of money with the hope to make a lot more money. This year one of the commercial spots will be filled by one of the biggest celebrities of all time, Fiona!

Being born six weeks premature was a set-back for such a little hippo. Fiona had exceptional round-the-clock care and Zoo Keepers dedicating their life to her health and survival. This was all chronicled through the Cincinnati Zoo's Facebook page, and in doing so they created the mega-star we all know: Fiona. Most of the work Keeper's do for their animals goes on behind the scenes and is never seen. But in this instance the work those Keepers were doing was seen and cheered on by millions.

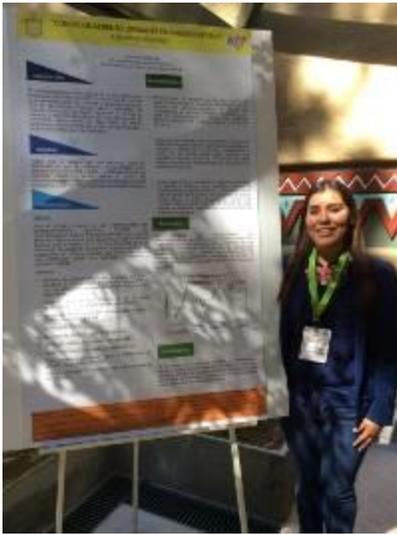
Although Fiona is in the spotlight and the star, she epitomizes what a Zoo Keeper's life is about. Helping to ensure the animals in their care are happy and healthy so they can inspire the guests to care and want to make a difference in the world.

The fact that Fiona has reached the Super Bowl is an amazing tribute to her Keepers and all those who have dedicated their lives to the animals they care for.

An Opportunity to Share – Building Relationships and Professionalism with Keepers in Mexico

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK San Diego Treasurer and Liaison. AAZK, Inc. International Outreach Committee Chair

From November 15-18, 2017, members of AAZKs International Outreach Committee (IOC) provided presentations, workshops, and a platform for keepers throughout Mexico to come together and participate in the first IOC Teaching Program and the 1st Mexico Zoo Keepers Conference at the Zoologico Guadalajara in Mexico. Over 80 Mexican keepers from 26 facilities shared their experiences and were given an opportunity to grow and learn skills that they could utilize to improve the care of the animals in their facilities and enhance their professional development.



The goal of this program is to give Mexican keepers access to information and resources they could utilize to improve animal care and to provide a platform where they could share their knowledge. A call for papers was made and Mexican keepers were encouraged to participate by sharing a 15 minute oral presentation or a poster describing some of their work. Seven Mexican keepers gave presentations, 4 for the first time ever, and 5 keepers presented posters, 4 also for the first time ever. All keepers who submitted a paper were accepted (as long as they were registered for the program) and depending on the topic and/or comfort of the keeper, they presented either an oral or poster presentation. This was to encourage keepers to share their knowledge with their colleagues and to give them experience in presenting their work.

Several non-IOC members also joined as presenters and workshop leaders. Mexican and American keepers alike shared their experiences and were able to assist one another with ideas and techniques in animal care. So while the days were filled with presentations and educational workshops, the evenings provided the perfect time to meet and commemorate with colleagues. The Teaching Program was a true success, with great feedback and 10 requests for future programs, including a request from AZCARM, Mexico's AZA. The IOC and AZCARM are to work together to develop a teaching program for keepers during each yearly conference, with the next AZCARM Conference taking place in Durango, Mexico, in November of 2018. Even though we cannot fulfill all 10 requests in Mexico (plus 3 in Latin America) next year, we feel maybe 3 would be a doable number.

Another of the IOCs projects is to assist Latin American keepers form their own keeper associations. Since last year, I began working with the Red de Cuidadores in Mexico, helping them develop their association. We had put together a mission, vision, goals, a logo and formed the Board of Directors. Our goal during this program was to introduce the newly formed association, involve more keepers, ask keepers for their goals for the association, and continue developing their Bylaws.

The Red de Cuidadores introduced themselves, shared their information, then led a round table workshop involving all keepers present. They were able to share their goals and projects, receive feedback and suggestions from those present, and invite keepers to participate as ambassadors for their institutions. The Red's goal is to work with the IOC during the organization of yearly AZCARM Conferences to include the Red de Cuidadores participation. AZCARM and the Red are set to work together in the future. The IOC will continue to assist the Red in its development and to support them as needed.

Teaching opportunities are extremely rare for keepers throughout Mexico. This was quickly demonstrated when registration was filled within the first week of advertising. Due to space limitations, registration was limited to 80 keepers. Approximately 60% of the keepers had never attended a conference or a teaching program and were very pleased with the experience. They felt the courses were relevant to their jobs and inspired them to want to participate more at their facilities. All expressed interest in attending future programs.



AAZK's IOC Teaching Program was well received because of the lack of training opportunities. Mexico Zoo Directors and keepers recognize the need for such training, especially now that Mexico and Latin American animal facilities are under attack by animal rights and political organizations. The directors and keepers recognize that for them to succeed they need to have and provide the people who work with the animals, the best tools to accomplish their goals of animal well-being, conservation, and public education.

The IOC is committed to its goals of providing training and educational opportunities for international care professionals. We believe that there is a large need for this service and that AAZK's mission to advance excellence in the animal keeping profession is an important component of this committee.

I'd like to thank the U.S. keepers who joined me on this trip and made it an amazing experience for the Mexican keepers: Heidi Pankratz from The CA Wolf Center in Julian, Jessica Theule from the San Diego Zoo's Avian Propagation Center, Kim Weibel and Mary Dural from the San Diego Zoo's Neonatal Care Unit Division, Juian Castellanos from the San Diego Zoo's primate department, and Marco Wendt from The San Diego Zoo's Safari Park. And to the IOC members who were invaluable to the planning of the program: Noah Shields, from Columbian Park Zoo in Indiana, Jennifer Bridges from the National Center for Chimpanzee Care in Texas, and Luis Soto from Zoologico Guadalajara.

This program is truly a great experience and I would like to invite anyone who would like to participate on a future trip to join me to meet some great colleagues and share your experiences!



2018 Tri-City Medical Carlsbad Marathon and Half Marathon Official Charity

By Ann Knutson, AAZK San Diego President

As an official charity of the Tri-City Medical Centers Carlsbad Marathon and Half-marathon we have an opportunity to reach thousands of new people. For the last 5 years, our volunteer position was located on mile 13 of the Marathon. This year we were placed in a new area covering the first mile of the race. This meant that we were able to cheer for the Marathon, Half-marathon, and 5k. Another change for this year's volunteering, is that we decided to have a rhino theme.

Everyone had a rhino hat, we had rhino themed signs for cheering, and we debuted our new and amazingly beautiful rhino sign donated by iZone. The number of runners who stopped and asked what the rhinos were about or who stopped to take a photo with the sign was amazing. We of course were not able to go into a lot of detail about the whole plight facing rhinos and what people can do to help, but it definitely piqued peoples interest. Even if just one of those runners goes home and does a little research into rhinos, I think our goal was accomplished.

In our new location, it was definitely a longer day than in years past, but it felt like it went by just as quickly. There was only about 20 minutes where we had a break in the activity. Only one of our positions was off the race course, and that position was helping to direct vehicle traffic. Kristen Craig was the chief traffic controller, and she did an amazing job, sometimes throwing herself in front of a moving vehicle to keep all the runners safe.

At the end of the day, everyone was tired, but as tradition dictates we had a delicious meal at Miguel's and a margarita to reward us for a long morning of cheering and traffic control!

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and to iZone for the amazing rhino sign!!!



Fishing Cat Conservancy

By Lauren Ayres, AAZK San Diego Professional Development Officer

Our professional development team's "Conservation in Action" lecture series is already off to a great start for 2018. We welcomed members of Fishing Cat Conservancy (FCC) to speak at the Dickenson Family Center's Auditorium on January 17th. Ashwin Naidu, co-founder and director, and Amber Wong, executive assistant, introduced the audience to the projects that FCC is doing to help the fishing cat in the coastal mangrove forests of southern India.



By gathering data on fishing cats through camera traps, track identification, and scat collection; they have been able to collect valuable information such as population densities, social structure, and environmental pressures regarding the fishing cat. Unfortunately, fishing cats are experiencing a myriad of threats including habitat loss, poaching, and human conflict.

Almost surprisingly, fishing cats are losing their food sources and habitat due to destructive aquaculture: areas where mangrove forests are cleared to farm fish and shrimp. Anywhere from 50-80% of the original coastal mangrove forests in the area are gone due to the high demand of exporting seafood and minimal land protection in the area. However, there is hope! Mangrove restoration projects have proven extremely successful and habitats for fishing cats have begun to be restored in small areas.

There is still a lot of work to do in educating the public about the fishing cat. Many locals fear the fishing cat and worry they are killing their livestock, so they are often hunted. They suffer pressures from poaching for their pelts as well as the illegal pet trade. By working with local communities and developing education programs, protection for the fishing cat is now transitioning into community-managed conservation. Currently, FCC is constructing their first Conservation Education Center near fishing cat habitats of southern India. This center will provide a location for even more education, outreach, and action to help the fishing cat.

If you are interested in donating to Fishing Cat Conservancy or want to become more involved, please visit their website at: <https://www.fishingcatconservancy.org/support>.

The "Conservation in Action" lectures will continue throughout 2018 where we will welcome representatives from Red Panda Network, SPECIES, and Snow Leopard Conservancy! Follow AAZK on Facebook to get up-to-date information on our next events, fundraisers, and socials.



{Photo: Fred Hood}

Fishing cats are native to wetlands, rivers, and mangrove forests in South and Southeast Asia. They prey primarily on fish and crustaceans. Like many other rare species, not much is known about fishing cats in the wild. They are threatened by habitat destruction, poaching, and a lack of awareness throughout much of their range. Mangroves, which are prime habitat for fishing cats, provide local people with nurseries for fish and protect entire communities from storm surges. However, many mangroves where fishing cats live are quickly being lost to deforestation and aquaculture.

Reference: Fishing Cats. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.fishingcatconservancy.org>

Sip and Stretch for Hornbills

By Kim Nelson, AAZK San Diego Member



On February 12th, AAZK San Diego sponsored an event benefiting the Hornbill Research Foundation (HRF). The HRF is an exceptional community-based non-profit organization based in Thailand that focuses on the biology, ecology, and conservation of hornbills in the wild. Hornbills are fundamental to tropical rainforest ecosystems, but unfortunately, many hornbill populations are in decline due to habitat loss, poaching, and illegal logging.

The event took place at Thorn St Brewing in North Park and featured two yoga sessions taught by SDZ Keepers Jackie Jella and Lori Speis. The fundraiser also included a silent auction, a raffle, merchandise sales, and food provided by Haad Sai Thai food truck.

With a huge thanks to the incredible assistance of friends, coworkers, AAZK SD Board Members, as well as the many people who attended the event, we were able to raise a significant amount of funds for the Hornbill Research Foundation! The funds will now go towards the HRF's efforts to further protect hornbills through their nest adoption program and educational outreach center.



What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been...

By Dustin Black, AAZK San Diego member



Five years ago, the San Diego Zoo embarked on a journey that would result in the acquisition of a large troop of hamadryas baboons for their newest endeavor, Africa Rocks. Dean Gibson, Curator of Primates, was the driving force behind this accomplishment.

The lucky group selected to come to San Diego had been living at the Frankfurt Zoo in Germany. This group was originally established in 1965. They spent their days in a cement and rock enclosure and their nights in a tile bedroom, never having received any formal training. The group selected was comprised of the leader, Elvis (aka The King), 7 younger males and 11 females. (*For more on the social structure of a Hamadryas Baboon troop see Parham, D. (2017, September), Graphically Speaking, Zoonooz, Vol. XC-No. 05, Page 8*) Moving a troop this large to America presented many challenges which were overcome thanks to the hard work and determination of Dean and her team.

To come to the United States, the group was required to be quarantined for 3 rounds of tuberculosis testing, each one week apart. No facility in the U.S. was able to take 8.11 monkeys all at once. The 6 oldest males went to the Safari Park. While there, the underdog, Walter, was injured and required anti-biotics. He quickly showed me that he would separate for a personal treat, a slice of banana (with his meds in it). Since this had worked so well, I decided to see how the other boys reacted to this opportunity. The next day, I had 6 pieces of banana ready. Low and behold! Each of the boys was more than willing to separate for their own personal reward. There is no evidence available to support whether any of them had been personally handed a reward prior to this.

The remaining monkeys which were Elvis, his entourage of 11 girls and Jack, the youngest male, were sent to a private facility in Pennsylvania for quarantine. Once completed, they were trucked across the United States. Elvis, The Girls and Jack arrived at the off-exhibit holding facility at the San Diego Zoo in early December of 2016.

Upon arrival, we found that 8 of the girls had not been given names. We named everyone and began addressing them individually, using their new names. They seemed to appreciate this. The oldest female at 22 years old, who came to be known as Brittnay, seemed to show her appreciation one day by grunting to me after I greeted her by her new name. She used a greeting that they use with each other numerous times each day – sort of an “I’m ok, You’re ok” type of greeting. We hope this means she likes her name.

The 6 boys were brought from the Safari Park to the Zoo in mid-December but had to be housed across the hallway from Elvis and the girls. During this time, the separation training continued with the boys. Elvis and the Girls watched from across the hall and quickly let me know they were interested in getting their own rewards too! (Shocker)

After several weeks of watching each other from across the hallway, the time came to re-introduce the boys back into the troop. We decided on doing one at a time, from the least to most dominant, over a period of a couple of weeks. This allowed Elvis the opportunity to re-assert his dominance with each full-grown male, which he quickly did, and then would return to normal routine.

Once everyone was back together, Separation Training began for the entire group. The chute system in the holding area allowed us to stop 5 animals at a time into 5 boxes in-line. Each of the 5 would receive their reward once each had gone into their own box and allowed themselves to be closed in without interfering with the door. That group of 5 would then move into a room set up with diet and the process would be repeated for the next group until everyone had been run through the exercise.

Due to construction delays, the troop was in the off-exhibit holding area for 5 months longer than initially anticipated. During this time, we were able to work with the group to make this so rewarding that an animal would watch his/her predecessor get a shot, be released and they would willingly jump into that same box for their own shot. Additionally, we greeted a 20th baboon to the group on 09/15/2017. Little Christina was born to Kurzbein (first time Mom) and was named for one of the Vet-Techs in Frankfurt. Christina is now 4 and a half months old. Her mother has allowed her more freedom and she is now able to interact with other members of the troop. One of her favorite caretakers/ play-mates is Sadie, our 2-year old and prior “Little Princess”, as she was the youngest when they arrived. Sadie and Christina are now the clowns of the group. We dare you to watch them play together and not laugh! As a side note, none of the males have ever been seen holding Christina, even Dad. If one of the males tries to pick her up, Mom will quickly intervene.



In Mid-November 2017, the troop of now 20 baboons got the green light to move to their new building. Team Baboon, as we are lovingly called, moved 20 baboons in 3 days with 10 of them going to the hospital for exams. Eight females were administered birth control. One of these, Daphne was given a Depo-Provera shot, which was temporary and has since worn off. I am predicting a July 4th baby, based on a 6-month gestation.

Elvis and his troop touched grass and dirt for the first time ever when their beautifully landscaped exhibit officially opened on November 27th of 2017. This was a special day for all of

us. Now, at 10 weeks into having them on exhibit, there are no potted plants left in the ground, most of the trees have been destroyed and they have most recently turned their sites on the palm trees and the roots of the remaining trees. We had to electrify a large olive tree before they started stripping the bark from it. This was done after attempting to paint the base of the trees with a chili-based deterrent which they found delectable.



Enrichment is the new name of the game. To keep these guys entertained, we scatter favorite treats throughout their area, hide peanuts in the cracks of the rock work, bury seeds in their 2 sand pits and give them branches to tear bark from. Additionally, to get the exhibit green again, we have been throwing out grass seed. Turns out they find it enriching to pick up this seed and eat it. They love gourds with treats in them. Once they have gotten the treats out, they destroy the gourd to make sure there is no more food.

On a personal note, the time I have spent with these animals has been some of the most rewarding of my career. They have shown themselves to be wonderfully complex animals. Day to day life for them is a soap opera like no other. Their social structure epitomizes family at its best and worst. I have seen one of the females, Carrie, come running to back-up her grown son, Arnold, because he signaled that he was in trouble. I've seen two full grown boys taking a mid-day nap together. They hug each other to offer reassurance and support. As a group, they are unstoppable and will, without hesitation, charge into an unknown area or room. However, as individuals, they will not touch a rake and small metal bowl accidentally left on exhibit for an entire day. They will not step into a foot of water even with food sitting at the bottom of the pool. They can be so caring and gentle one minute and so explosive the next. They are loud, unpredictable and amazing. It has been a long strange trip so far and it's just beginning.



Celebrate Membership in AAZK San Diego

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK San Diego Treasurer and Liaison Officer

I have been involved with the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) since I began working at the San Diego Zoo 25 years ago. There were several reasons why I joined at the time: it was a good way to meet people, I knew some of the people on the San Diego Chapter board, and it seemed like something I should do now that I was working as a keeper.

Twenty-five years later, I'm still involved with AAZK, locally and nationally, and I believe all the reasons why I first joined still apply. But now, having been involved on the local AAZK San Diego Board for many years, there is yet another reason why I joined AAZK. It's AAZK's involvement in conservation, locally and internationally.

As the AAZK San Diego Chapter Treasurer, I am proud and amazed at what our organization does. In 2017, the AAZK San Diego Board, AAZK San Diego members, and all those who support us, raised and donated over \$41,000 to various conservation organizations and projects. Honestly, that is a very good chunk of money that will assist many species and projects throughout the world.

During 2017, funds were raised for the Avian and Crocodylian Scientific Advisory Groups, vaquitas, lemurs and the International Rhino Foundation's Bukit Barisan Selatan. We also provided grants through Turtle Alliance Survival and our Shirley Busch Professional Development Grant. So not only did we contribute directly to conservation organizations, but we also supported people involved in conservation and who are increasing their skills to improve animal care.

Of course, our largest donation was through the annual Bowling for Rhinos fundraiser (the 2018 event will take place on May 19th). Over \$25,000 was donated to the BFR Fund which supports the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, the International Rhino Foundation, and Action for Cheetahs in Kenya. What's even more exciting, part of our contribution helped AAZK reach a new annual record for BFR: \$607,580! That brings a total of BFR funds raised since 1990 to \$7,208,763.97! And we don't just raise money, we participate in the community and abroad, bring people together for social events, provide professional development opportunities, and invite guest speakers to share their work and experiences.

Through AAZK San Diego Conservation Projects, we participated in the CA Coastal Clean-Up. Mary Wykstra from Action for Cheetahs in Kenya and Dr. Rasmussen from Painted Dog Conservation shared their latest projects and developments. We hung out during National Zoo Keeper Week's beach bonfire and keeper lunch, and cheered runners at the Carlsbad Marathon. At Cocktails for Conservation, Beers for a Porpoise, Lemur Love, and CroctoberFest, we supported conservation while having a little fun. And we learned how we could photograph our favorite animals during the Photography Workshop.

And some of my favorite moments involved traveling to Mexico to work with our colleagues at the Tijuana Zoo and Valle de Guadalupe's Parque del Niño Zoo. AAZK SD members, friends, keepers, and colleagues have traveled to Mexico to share their knowledge and experiences. Through hands on projects, demonstrations, workshops, and presentations, we were able to share information regarding animal welfare and husbandry.

So, if you are wondering what AAZK does or if you should join AAZK, here's your answer. AAZK makes a difference in the conservation world and the animal care profession world. It's a great organization that provides each and every one of us an opportunity to be a part of something big and the opportunity to share our time and experience with friends and colleagues everywhere. AAZK can only do what we do because of you. For that, we would like to thank all of our members and supporters for helping us make a difference. Every year we are able to contribute just a little bit more. Our goal for 2018 is continue that trend....



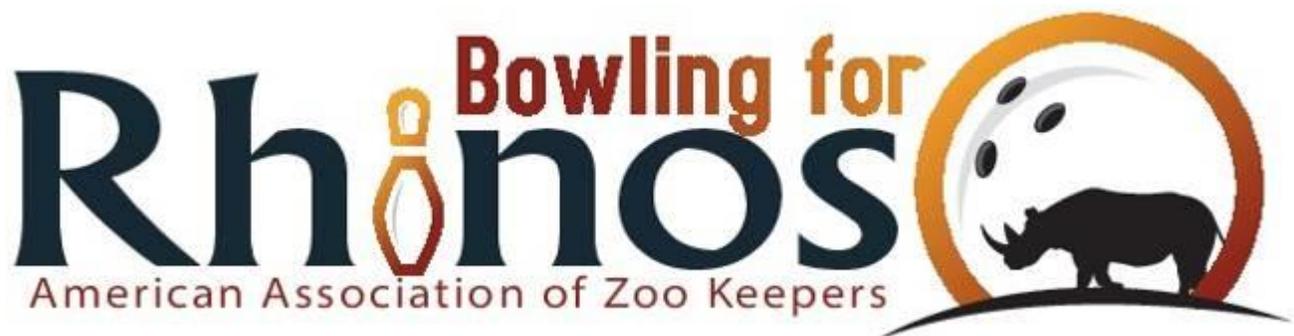
Bowling for Rhinos 2018!

The date is set for 2018! Mark your calendars and be ready to show your support for the conservation of rhinos, cheetahs and their habitats at AAZK San Diego's 2018 Bowling for Rhinos event happening May 19th at Kearny Mesa Bowl!

Feel like you want to contribute more to BFR than just the night of fun and excitement? Do you have an idea for an addition or change to the event that you think would increase our reach and impact? We would love to hear from you!

Any level of support or input is appreciated! With the successful 2017 BFR on the books it is time to start planning for 2018. Each year we form a special committee who plan and organize BFR. You do not need to be a board member or even attend any of our general business meetings. The BFR committee will meet monthly to coordinate activities and ideas to make this year's event the biggest and best yet!

If you are interested in getting involved in this amazing, conservation centered, event please email Kym at kymjanke@hotmail.com.



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

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
- Ability to participate in local board member elections
- All National AAZK membership benefits

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

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- Support of local and international conservation projects

Please fill out form and send to:

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CALENDAR 2018 visit www.sdaazk.org for updates

March 8, 2018: AAZK Meeting.

You are invited to participate and join us at the next AAZK Board meeting at 5:00 pm, in the zoo's Warner building. 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

March 26, 2018: AAZK San Diego Presents: Wildlife Conservation Biologist and founder/director of the Painted Dog Conservation Project, Greg Rasmussen. More information to come.

May 19, 2018: Bowling for Rhinos! Mark your calendars now! It is not too early to start fundraising. More details will be posted on the website soon!

Details about these and all our events available on our website at www.sdaazk.org!

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sdaazk