



*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 – Fall 2018

### President's Message

By Ann Knutson, AAZK San Diego President

At work today, a coworker and I were daydreaming about the things we would do with the \$1.6 billion Powerball jackpot. The things I found the most entertaining, was that we both were talking about where we would donate money. Neither of us discussed spending money on cars or clothes, but instead discussed donating to the conservation programs we care about.

That conversation got me thinking about our last meeting, where we spent the majority of the meeting discussing the budget for 2019. I think like most of our members, we have never focused on money and tend to follow our passion. So, the meeting where we discuss the plans for next year is a hard one to get through.

We end up going line by line and try to guess how much money we will raise, and even less exciting the money we have to spend. I think that most people would be surprised how much money it costs to run a non-profit, especially one without paid employees. We do a good job of keeping costs down, especially for events, but there are items we cannot get waived. Those items are things like, insurance, storage costs, and re-charter fees.

Good news is that we survived, and made it through the evening, and are very excited about our plans for next year! We hope you will all join us for the socials, events, workshops, and fundraisers this coming year!

# Wildlife Conservation Network

By Grace Yambrach, Conservation Partner Officer

This year's Fall Expo was held the weekend of October 13<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco. The WCN Expo offers an unforgettable day of storytelling and inspiration, the opportunity to connect with other wildlife enthusiasts, and the chance to support protection for endangered animals big and small, from lions and elephants to cotton-top tamarins and penguins. Over 1,200 people from all over the U.S., and some from outside the country, came to Expo and over 60 conservation organizations, large and small, exhibited their work to curious attendees. This year there were 15 speakers supporting their various conservation projects. There were also 2 different panel discussions.

The 1<sup>st</sup> was a topic covering “From Crisis to Recovery.” . Andrea Heydlauff of African Parks gave a moving talk about the success of their recent initiative to reintroduce lions, elephants, and cheetahs into the Liwonde National Park in Malawi; the park had been empty of cheetahs for 20 years and lions for 10 years prior to their restoration efforts. Thandiwe Mweetwa of the Zambia Carnivore Program, also a WCN scholar and National Geographic Explorer, enumerated the resilience of the carnivores she strives to save through an incredible story of her team’s quick intervention to save a distressed and injured lion from a wire snare. The snare was wrapped around the lion’s neck, tightening each time the lion struggled to remove it. Thandi and her team were able to respond quickly to remove the snare and treat his injuries, within a week the lion had recovered. The lion’s resilience and Thandi’s team’s quick action was a hopeful message.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> panel was “Empowering Conservation Hero’s”, our Conservation Partners—Dr. Claudio Sillero of [Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program](#), Dr. Rachel Graham of [MarAlliance](#), Rebecca Klein of [Cheetah Conservation Botswana](#)—and WCN scholar Artistide Kamla of the [African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization](#) shared how being part of the WCN Network has helped them strengthen critical skills such as grant writing and project management, enabling them to better protect wildlife.

Watch some of the live talks on this link if you missed the Expo:  
[https://www.facebook.com/pg/wildnet/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/wildnet/videos/?ref=page_internal)



# The 6<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Zoo Keeping

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK San Diego Treasurer and IOC Chair.

October 14<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> the International Congress on Zoo Keeping (ICZ) celebrated its 6<sup>th</sup> international conference by making it their first conference in South America as well as their first bilingual English/ Spanish conference ever. The host zoo, Fundación Temaikén outside of Buenos Aires in Argentina, welcomed close to 200 delegates from 29 countries.

To say it was an amazing conference is an understatement! It was great to hear all the work keepers from around the world are doing. Some things that are being done left many of the delegates in awe. We heard from 3 Latin American keynote speakers who shared news of wildlife environmental emergencies and conservation needs in Latin America. There were also 28 presentations, 8 workshops, and a zoo day with behind the scenes visits.



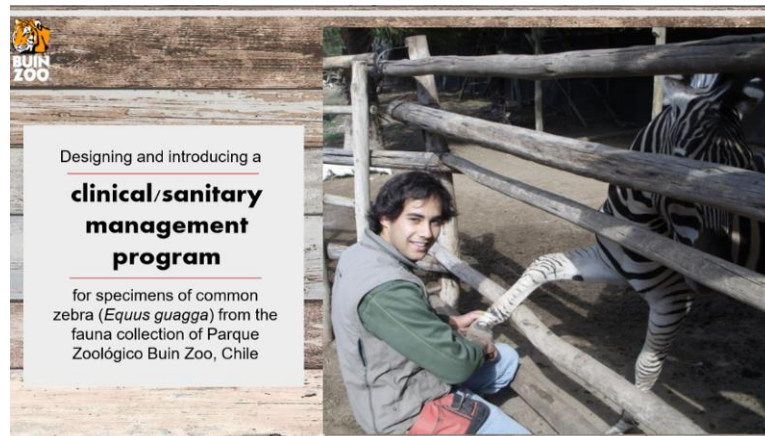
## PROGRAM



So, what were my favorite presentations? There were several but maybe my top two were “Design and Implementation of an Operant Conditioning Husbandry Program for Common Zebra” presented by the Buin Zoo, from Chile, and “Environmental Enrichment for Various Nocturnal Animals” by Sergey Khlyupin from the Moscow Zoo. The reason these two presentations stood out for me were because of the accomplishments those keepers made at their facilities. The zebra training at the Buin Zoo was jaw-dropping amazing. Their zebras voluntarily participate in hoof trims, mouth and teeth checks, blood draws and more, unrestrained and in any area of their exhibit (all protected contact). Watching the videos and hearing how they arrived at those points made everyone remember that we put our own limits as to what can be done.

HOUSED BY:  
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Temaikén

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ZOOKEEPERS



The enrichment accomplished at the nocturnal house at the Moscow Zoo was simple yet so effective! Sergey spoke of the natural needs the animals have and how they incorporated that into the old model design of their nocturnal house. The area houses several species of lorises, galagos, paca, armadillo, and mouse deer and how they met each of their needs was great. Watching the videos of these species utilizing their living space reminded me that simple is good and many times the best way to meet your goals.

There were great details in this presentation but one of the funniest had to be the paca house. Sergey commented on how the paca always made a second entrance to the house they gave him, so they made a new house with two entrances. Then they added lots of leaves and twigs in the exhibit and watched how every day the paca would gather them and make improvements to his house. The end result... “house improved by paca!” Simple solutions!



There were other great presentations and discussions, including “The Danish Way: A Reflective Look at Breeding and Euthanasia.” Yep, this was the zoo that euthanized and performed the autopsy of a giraffe in front of a group of school children and was highly criticized for its practices. Turns out, they have been doing this for close to 20 years. The keeper spoke of their breeding programs and how, let’s admit it, there are many surplus animals in zoo collections, many being males. How they have dealt with that, after trying to find homes unsuccessfully and yes, even when using birth control, which we know does not always work, is by leading an “autopsy class” where guests, vets, and medical students can attend and learn about animal anatomy. Veterinarians explain the animal’s physiology and how it relates to the human body, then encourage the guests to watch the animals at the zoo and relate this new knowledge to what they are seeing. It really was interesting and well done. Oh, and by the way, a boa constrictor and wild pig were also being worked on that fateful day, but no one said anything about those animals.

If you ever visit Argentina, be sure to go to the Temaikén Zoo, it is beautiful. The exhibits are large, green and nicely laid out. Plus, the training programs they have are something to see. My favorite, bat training! They have over 200 flying foxes and vampire bats and have over 20 trained to land on a special glove they have designed when called. Very fun to watch.

I had not attended an ICZ conference in many years and I am really glad I was able to attend this one. And not only did I attend, I was excited to be part of the translating committee and assisting the ICZ with the presentations and program. Attending the conference reminded me

how we all are working together towards the same goals, no matter where you are from and what else is happening in the world. Plus, it was nice to catch up with old friends and make new friends from facilities from around the world.

ICZ International Congress of Zookeepers expresses its appreciation and gratitude to all those people and institutions for their collaboration to promote the professionalization and best practices in animal care around the world.

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I was proud that our AAZK San Diego Chapter not only supported the ICZ Conference by making a \$500.00 donation but also supported my interest in attending the conference by awarding me the AAZK San Diego Shirley Busch Education Grant. The ICZ works with keepers and facilities around the world building a global network of animal care professionals and aiding keepers through training, resource sharing, and support. The ICZ utilizes funding from donations to sponsor keepers to attend each of their conferences and this time they sponsored 10 keepers from various Latin American countries. Sponsored keepers came from Mexico, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia, Uruguay, and even Cuba. Their excitement at being able to attend the conference and connect with keepers from around the world was very evident.

So, wondering where the next ICZ conference will be? Pack your bags and get ready for New Zealand in 2021! The Wellington Zoo will be hosting the 2021 ICZ conference and they have many great outings planned. I hope to see you there!

## AAZK National Conference 2018

By Kym Janke, AAZK San Diego Secretary



This year's AAZK National Conference was hosted by the Denver's Zoo AAZK Chapter and they did an absolutely fantastic job! I arrived to a brisk 45 degrees on October 3 with just enough time to grab something to eat and head to bed in order to be ready for the 8am bus for the pre-conference trip to Cheyenne Mountain Zoo. Cheyenne Mountain is about 2 hours outside Denver and it was well worth the trip. I had a great time exploring the Mountain Zoo and believe me if you have never been there it is built into the side of a mountain, leading to some interesting habitats and a great workout for the day...at elevation I might add. No need for a gym membership if I worked there! The keepers had put together a great collection of behind the scenes opportunities and keeper talks for us to enjoy and it was great to spend the whole day

exploring. The zoo however was not the only thing on the agenda that day, as the official start to the conference was that evening with an icebreaker event at the Denver Aquarium.



When I think of an aquarium I think of aquatic habitats and endless tanks displaying animals and plants that are quite foreign to my terrestrial brain. The Denver Aquarium though is much more than this and they have a large collection of terrestrial ambassadors and even have a tiger habitat in the middle of the facility! It was quite a surprise that trainers brought out a binturong and a sloth as part of the program. The aquarium is beautiful and I learned a lot about the life beyond the beach. While we were at the aquarium we were all tasked to meet new people by playing the infamous “who am I” game – or in this case what animal am I. It was great fun meeting new people and trying to guess I was a “Ringtail” when half the people questioned answered my queries in reference to a ringtail lemur and the other half provided details of a ringtail cat...taxonomy, it’s important!



The conference itself began on Friday with a keynote address from Dr. Temple Grandin. She spoke on her experiences and how an understanding of the way animals see their environments have led to the great advances in livestock management she has pioneered over the years. She also left us with a very strong message that we needed to “get kids out of the basement playing video games” and instead get them more involved in trades! Hearing her speak was indeed a great treat.



Conference was then in full swing with some amazing presentations from the Bowling for Rhinos conservation partners: Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, International Rhino Foundation, and Action for Cheetahs Kenya. They shared some of their wonderful conservation successes and program updates that are all made possible in part to the amazing efforts you all put in to making BFR such a great event!



Papers were presented on a variety of topics centered around Denver’s theme of “Adjust your Altitude”. There were also several workshops and three different professional courses that attendees could register for. I attended a leadership course presented by senior animal care staff and the process improvement team from the Denver Zoo. There were some great take aways and I was not disappointed in the learning outcomes!

No AAZK conference is complete without Zoo Day and Denver zoo arranged a fabulous day. While my San Diego blood was thin and cold in the elevation and 40 degree temperatures there

was a good balance of indoor activities and outdoor behind the scenes opportunities. Denver Zoo has some incredible rotating carnivore yards in Predator Ridge and a fantastic Elephant barn and yard to name just a few. The keepers and staff were incredibly welcoming and I was able to spend quite a bit of time learning about their conservation involvement and ambassador program. If I weren't content in San Diego Denver would be high on my list for facilities to work at.



The Denver AAZK Chapter arranged some really fun nights including an 80's themed awards ceremony. It was so fun to dress up and relive the 80's; it is so crazy that the era still creates so much excitement. Whether the attendees were wearing their actual prom dresses or were sporting thrift store finds (especially for those who are too young to have lived in the 80's!) almost everyone got into the fun.



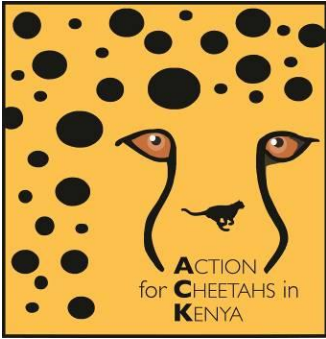
The conference ended with a sport's themed banquet. We know that Denver loves it's sports and AAZK made sure that everyone got to know Denver's teams as the mascots for both the Broncos and the Rockies were special guests of the night. They partied on the dance floor and showed some mad skills at giant Jenga!



The best part about conference though is all the people that you meet. Reconnecting with old friends and making new ones, sharing stories of your favourite animals, networking, and learning new techniques or getting new ideas to bring home are all such integral parts of the conference experience. If you haven't had the chance to attend an AAZK National Conference I highly recommend that you do! Next year's conference will be hosted by Indianapolis August 18-22, I hope to see you there!

## Conservation Series: Action for Cheetahs in Kenya

By Jessica Watters, AAZK member and volunteer with Action for Cheetahs Kenya



Action for Cheetahs in Kenya is a long-term project that was initiated in 2001 through support from the Cheetah Conservation Fund in affiliation with the Kenya Wildlife Service. They are one of Bowling for Rhinos' conservation partners with 8% of the funds raised nationally going to support their conservation efforts, that's why we say "Bowling for Rhinos...and Cheetahs Too!"

Back in September, AAZK San Diego hosted returning guest, Mary Wyktra at the zoo's Dickensen Family Center as part of our Conservation Lecture Series. She spoke about the status of cheetahs in Kenya and had some amazing items for sale. Mary is the Director of Action for Cheetahs in Kenya and has been working for ACK since helping form it in 2001. This year she spoke about the use of detection dogs and genetic mapping of cheetahs in the national cheetah survey. Basically, a lot of talk about scat!



I have followed the work of Mary and Action for Cheetahs in Kenya since meeting her at the Wildlife Conservation Network's Expo in San Francisco back in 2012. Since visiting the WCN Expo and seeing conservationists speak from all over the world, I knew I wanted to become more involved with conservation organizations outside the zoo in addition to my support as a Zookeeper.

Knowing I wanted to become more involved in conservation efforts, I approached Mary at the WCN Expo last year and asked her if there were any opportunities for me to become involved in the work that she does. In the spring of this year I started assisting her on the planning of her Fall 2018 speaking tour and was able to assist on some of her tour stops. It's been a learning experience and well worth it. I urge anyone wanting to become more involved to put yourself out there and create opportunities for yourself! We are all a part of this fight against extinction!! If you would like to know more about ACK or how to become involved, visit:

<http://www.actionforcheetahs.org/>





# Scavenge for Scavengers

By Ann Knutson, AAZK San Diego President

On Monday September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2018, AAZK San Diego held a fundraiser to benefit the AZA Vulture SAFE program. We have held many fundraisers, but this one was not like any we had done before. We did a Scavenger Hunt! Starting out we were so excited to do something new and then when we realized how much work went into planning a scavenger hunt, and so many things we had never done before.



Lucky for us, we had many passionate people who wanted to help put the event together! We had bird keepers from both the Zoo and Safari Park who put a lot of time and energy into the event. Because of the time and passion that each of those people put into the event, it was a success.

We met our goal of having 10 teams signed up, and on top of that everyone who attended had a great time. The clues for the scavenger hunt were provided by Kim Nelson, and they were so creative and informative. I had many people come up to me days afterward and tell me about the surprising information they learned about vultures while completing the scavenger hunt.

Check out the photos below, so that you can see some of the fun the teams had at the event, unfortunately there were too many to include them all. We are hoping to hold an event like this next year so keep a look out for details to come!



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

- 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
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**CALENDAR 2018** visit [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org) for updates

**December 12, 2018:** You are invited to participate and join us at the next AAZK Board meeting at 5:30 pm, at The Rose Wine Bar in South Park. 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](mailto:annkntsn@yahoo.com)

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