



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 –Summer 2019

President's Message

By Kristen Craig, AAZK San Diego President

We are nearing the end of summer, and I am noticing the telltale signs in me and many of my coworkers of a long, busy season at the zoo. We are cranky, tired, and at times short with each other for no real reason. Don't get me wrong, we love what we do and we do it because we are passionate about animals and saving the natural world for generations to come. But long hot summer days are draining for everyone! I think most of us grew up longing for those hot summer days, no bedtimes, no reason to get up early, all day long to play, swim, and make memories with friends. No one tells you when you get into animal care that all those things fall by the wayside. Summers are our busiest times! Tons of extra presentations for summer camp kids, hordes of tourists needing directions, and long hours - which means the *dreaded late shift*.

Summers always seem like a much bigger struggle as a zoo keeper, especially if you're just starting out! Weeklong vacations are rarely possible. It might even be out of your reach just to get a weekend day! So how do we push through the late summer slump? How do we remember why we got in to this field when we are sweating through our clothes, we're surrounded by guests moving at a glacial pace when we need to get to that meeting, and all our friends who have "normal" jobs are headed to that cool vacation rental house for the week?

I have two go-tos that always give me that extra oomph to make it to the cool temps and less crowded paths of fall. The first is making some time to sit with and enjoy one of the animals I work with. Whether that means putting off a deep clean for the next day, or not volunteering for that extra presentation, I set aside at least ten minutes to connect with the reason I am where I am: the animals. Sitting with the tamandua snuggled in my lap or taking time to watch the binturong wrestle with his favorite stuffed toy always loosens what has me wound up, especially if I can time it so no one else is around; it's just me and my animal buddy.

HINT**HINT (Those *dreaded late shifts* are the perfect time to do this!!)

Secondly, I make sure to do something that has nothing to do with work or even animals in particular. Bonus points if it gets me outside! Today my wife and I grabbed a few friends and trolled the day away in our blow-up boat on the bay. We made no specific plans other than where to meet and at what time. We had no expectations. It was wonderful! And since we hadn't planned our trip specifically to try and see animals, it felt like a special treat every time a crazy fish came flying out of the water!

So my advice is take some time, set it aside, and then just live in it. Give your favorite animal a few extra minutes alone to dote on them, take a walk along the beach, or drive to a forest and camp for one night spontaneously. Remind yourself why you are sweating it out in the crowds all summer, and then, forget it all and remind yourself you have a life outside of work that is important too. Hopefully before you know it, the crowds have lessened, the temps have dropped, and you have made it through another summer as a working adult!

Bowling for Rhinos 2019

By Lauren Ayres, AAZK SD Professional Development Chair and BFR Coordinator

I have been involved with Bowling for Rhinos in varying capacities since 2013 and have seen so many amazing supporters come out and help wildlife through donations at our events' auctions, raffles, bake sales, and bowling tournaments. I want to take this time to say THANK YOU to each and every one of you has come to BFR over the years to celebrate rhinos with us - we couldn't do it without you!!



This year on May 20, over 150 people joined us for Bowling for Rhinos at Kearny Mesa Bowl. This annual event raises funds for AAZK's Bowling for Rhinos National fund, of which 100% of funds raised go to wildlife conservation in Kenya & Indonesia through our partners at Lewa Wildlife Sanctuary, Action for Cheetahs Kenya (ACK), & International Rhino Foundation (IRF), additionally funds are awarded annually to a new partner through the BFR Conservation Resource Grant. AAZK San Diego is regularly one of the top fundraising chapters each year and this year we raised over \$16,000!

While final results for which chapters raise the most internationally are not out until the fall, we hope to be in the running for one of the top prizes nationwide. Each year AAZK National has rewarded the top 4 fundraising chapters with a trip to either Indonesia or Kenya, to see the how Bowling for Rhinos money helps conservation efforts first-hand. AAZK San Diego chooses our nominee for the trip based off of highest funds raised by an individual member, this year it was me! While I am excited at the chance to possibly travel to one of these amazing locations, what is even more exciting is the difference we ALL made for rhinos and other wildlife.



All 5 species of rhino are endangered and are threatened with imminent extinction if action isn't taken immediately. Our conservation partners at Lewa, ACK, and IRF are some of the leaders in their respective areas helping end extinction one animal at a time - take some time to check out their work online or get the chance to see for yourself next year by participating in Bowling for Rhinos and becoming a top fundraiser!



Partnerships Across the World

By Kelly Murphy, AAZK San Diego Member

It all started a little over two years ago when we formed a committee to assess our management with our leopard collection at the San Diego Zoo. There were eight of us total from the keeper level on up to curator. We met every two weeks and discussed what our current practices were and what we wanted our future goals to be. We called it our Replace the Pace meeting. What we came up with was a management strategy that provided daily behavior-based experiences similar to those that the cats would experience in the wild. We have had some great success with this program and still meet biweekly to ensure that we are not getting stagnant in our practices and continue to strive to enhance the welfare of our animals.

Meanwhile, across the globe in Africa, San Diego Zoo Global has had a casual working relationship with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) over the last 20 years. KWS is the sole entity in the country that is responsible for all wildlife, regardless of where it is. They also happen to have two animal management facilities right on the edge of Nairobi National Park, The Nairobi Animal Orphanage and Nairobi Safari Walk. These two places were developed for the purpose of rehabilitating rescued wildlife with the hopes of returning them back to the wild. Unfortunately, as we all know, that's not always a reality and can be particularly challenging with carnivores, which the Animal Orphanage has several of. In an effort to continue to strengthen the collaboration between our institution and KWS, came a desire to create a comprehensive staff exchange program to increase capacity at both places. In November we hosted 4 individuals from KWS, visiting both the San Diego Zoo and the Safari Park, for a two-week work program. February is when I got the opportunity of a lifetime. I got to travel to Kenya and work with a group of fantastic individuals, sharing our management strategies that resulted from our Replace the Pace meetings.

There were four of us total: Gaylene Thomas, Todd Speis, Megan Carney and myself. Fortunately, we all like each other (most of the time) and had an established history of collaborative work. This made our two-week adventure fun, rewarding and most importantly, allowed us to build relationships based on mutual respect with the staff at the two facilities. It was important that we all worked together and that it wasn't just the San Diego crew coming to "show them some things."

The first part was the "what," so we introduced them to our guiding principles: 1. Opportunity for a well-balanced diet. 2. Opportunity to self-maintain. 3. Opportunity for optimal health. 4. Opportunity to express species-specific behavior. 5. Opportunity for choice and control. The second part was the "how" and that's when we shared some of our experiences we had implemented with our leopards. Now it was time to apply this management strategy to the animals at the Orphanage and at the Safari Walk.

Every day we would choose an enclosure or two, brainstorm with the keepers about what experiences we wanted to provide, and then implement the changes. The results were incredible, and the staff was engaged at watching their animals interact with the changes to their environment. At the end of the first week, we gave them homework assignments to complete over our weekend: 1. Something food related and 2. Add something new to the enclosure. When we returned on Monday, everyone was anxious to share what they had done and had taken video with their phones to show us. It was evident that the Keepers were enjoying these experiences as much as the animals were. We focused on the lions mostly but also included some primates, wild dog, hyena, serval, and a mongoose. By the end of the program, we had walked thru every single animal exhibit keeping the five opportunities to thrive in mind and made a list of ideas to implement. This is the part of the job I love: Getting creative and sharing ideas with colleagues.

While working at the Orphanage and Safari Walk was amazing, that's not to say we didn't have some challenges. Having worked for a big zoo for so long it's easy to take some things for granted, like easy access to a variety of tools. Trying to dig a two-foot hole in the ground with no shovel, wanting to put eyebolts in a log without a drill to start a hole, not having access to a hammer or nails were all challenges we faced. No matter what the issue was, we would just work with our Kenyan colleagues to problem solve and find another way. We also had to be mindful of the natural wildlife from Nairobi National Park that would also make its way into these two facilities. Everyday there were troops of monkeys, wild warthogs and even a known leopard that liked to visit after dark. I think the wildest thing I've had to worry about at the San Diego Zoo is the resident squirrel in Asian Passage who likes to come out and tease our two Amur leopard cubs.

The two weeks flew by and I feel like we barely scratched the surface implementing all the great ideas we had. But remember I said it was about capacity building and I do feel we accomplished that. Zoo keepers know how challenging the job can be and how rewarding it is when you feel like you've made a positive impact on an animal's life. That's why partnerships like these are so important. We're not just making an impact on the animals we care for every day but we're also changing the lives of animals that live almost 10,000 miles away.



AAZK and the Escondido Humane Society

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK San Diego Treasurer

As animal care professionals, we strive to make sure that the animals that are in our care are provided with the best husbandry and welfare opportunities. This is true no matter where you work or what your title is. We all want what's best for the animals. So you can only guess my excitement when former colleague and friend Andy Blue asked me to speak to his staff at the Escondido Humane Society where he is now Campus Director. Andy and I had travelled to Cuba several years ago and were able to share some of our husbandry and animal care knowledge with keepers from around the country. This would be another opportunity to connect with other animal care professionals and for AAZK San Diego to become involved with new partners in the community.



On July 9th, I met with Rhonda Maschka, a former Safari Park Educator and current Humane Society Director, and the rest of the Escondido Humane Society staff. They were a great group of people with an amazing span of knowledge. The Humane Society has been in San Diego for over 85 years and have helped save the lives of thousands of domestic animals and local wildlife. They provide animal services for over 12 cities throughout San Diego and share information about their innovative programs to shelters nationwide. So for me it was a privilege to be able to share some of the information I have gained throughout my years of working with animals while learning from their experiences.

The topic I decided to share dealt with Enrichment in Animal Care and we spoke of the opportunities it presents for animals and people alike. After covering the 5 Domains Model and viewing various welfare needs, we concentrated on how we could enhance husbandry and animal welfare through various experiences. It was fun to be able to look at the needs for wild and domestic animals and figure out how to develop plans and ways to evaluate the various designs and challenges that were discussed. Due to the active participation of the entire group, we ran out of time to finish our brainstorming session and left on the note of getting together again. Because of the positive response from the staff, it was agreed that not only would we return to Escondido, but we would also connect with the other Humane Society campuses.

AAZK San Diego has worked with the Humane Society off and on throughout the years and we are always excited to be able to connect. Our goal is to establish a permanent relationship where we can work together, using each other as resources and assisting with the various programs. We are very proud of all the accomplishments San Diego's Humane Society has had and excited that fellow colleagues are part of that amazing organization. Be sure to look for future collaborations between our organizations!



AAZK IN THE COMMUNITY

Date: Sun., January 19, 2020



Carlsbad Marathon Support

Help AAZK San Diego encourage the Tri-City Medical Center Marathon participants by sharing fun animal facts to keep their spirits and energy going!

As part of our involvement in the community, AAZK San Diego is working with the Tri-City Carlsbad Medical Center Marathon by supplying water to the full marathon runners while encouraging them to reach their goal with some inspirational animal facts.

Included is a great Carlsbad marathon t-shirt, snacks supplied by AAZK SD, and an incredible experience! PLUS you can boast about having been in a marathon (minor details regarding the running part).

Sign up at:

https://www.titanvolunteers.com/volunteers/sign_up_group_member/1398-AAZKSD

January 19, 2020, 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

**Carlsbad Blvd. & Avenida Encinas
Carlsbad, CA 92011**

AAZK San Diego

For more information:

Yvette Kemp
AAZK SD Treasurer
sdaazk@gmail.com



Croctoberfest 2019

By Robert Cattell, SD Zoo Reptile keeper

Starting back in October of 2013, the San Diego Zoo Reptile Department and the AAZK San Diego chapter held the first Croctober Fest, and it has remained an annual tradition!

This will be the 7th year we are celebrating Croctober Fest, and this year we will be supporting the American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*). The American Crocodile is currently listed as vulnerable on the IUCN red list. Money raised this year will be going to the Crocodilian Research Coalition (CRC), an organization that is based in Belize. CRC is working to better understand the ecology of American Crocodiles throughout all of Belize. To accomplish this goal, CRC is conducting surveys and placing satellite trackers on crocs. The data collected will help develop a management plan for the species, allowing them to thrive long-term. Of equal importance, CRC is working to improve croc and human interactions. American Crocodiles in the region have long been feared, viewed as a dangerous species, and consequently killed. CRC is working with locals to help change this perception. With your help, we can support CRC and help save the American Crocodiles!

This year's Croctober Fest event will be on October 17th from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm at Bay City Brewing Co (3760 Hancock St, San Diego 92110). Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased before the event at www.sdaazk.org or at the door!

Shout out to Bay City Brew for hosting us at their awesome venue once again. Not only will they be serving awesome brews, but a food truck will also be on site -- so come hungry!

We will have our annual silent auction and raffle items, so come on down, place a bid and win! And remember your donation will be helping these awesome crocs!

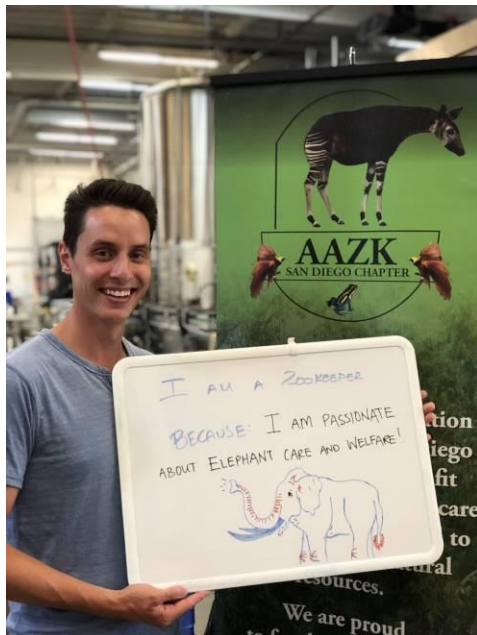
Hope to see you all at Croctober Fest! Come on down, have a drink and help out the crocs!

National Zoo Keeper Week

By Kristen Craig, AAZK San Diego President

Here at AAZK San Diego, summertime means National Zookeeper Week, where we get to celebrate some of the most dedicated, hard-working zookeepers in the nation! This year was no exception! We started out the week with a mellow gathering at one of our favorite watering holes, Coronado Brewing Company.





Keepers and friends alike joined us for a beer and some laughs. We had keepers share some of the reasons they went into the zookeeping field and commemorated their answers via Instagram and Facebook.

To inspire a new generation of keepers, we held two workshops, one at the San Diego Zoo and the other at the Safari Park, focusing on learning how to find zookeeping jobs, tune up your resume, and refine interviewing skills. We did this with the help of SDZG's Animal Care & Management team. It was a great way not only for people who are trying to get in to the field to better their chances of getting their dream job, but also for some key players in hiring at SDZG to become familiar with the faces of people whose resumes they might be seeing in the near future! It's always great to walk into an interview having already met the boss, right?!

Things got a little rowdy on Wednesday night when we headed over to Thorn St. Brewing for a fun night of trivia hosted by one of SDZ's bird keepers, Mike Houlihan! While it was a normal night of trivia for the regulars at the bar, Mike made sure to throw in some animals directed questions to please the NZKW crowd. And maybe thanks to those questions, the winning team was one of our very own! Congrats team Puma Pants!

We would like to extend a huge thank you to SDZG's HR department for supporting us this year and hosting a Panera lunch at both the Zoo and Safari Park. We all know the way to a zookeeper's heart (other than a cute boopable snoot thread on Facebook) is food!

We rounded out the week with the annual National Zookeeper Week bonfire. It's always nice to dip your toes in the sand, sit around a fire, and enjoy the sunset with a s'more in hand! It was a beautiful night and the perfect way to send off a fun-filled week.

Thank you to all who attended our NZKW events. We hope you felt as appreciated as you truly are. We are always inspired by the amazing amount of care, time, and effort you all put into making sure your animal charges have the most fulfilled lives possible. Zookeepers are the on the frontline of conservation and you all stand proudly between the incredible animals in the world and the extinction they are fighting. Cheers to you and may you always remember how important you are for this planet!



Member Mondays

By Kym Janke, AAZK San Diego secretary

In case you missed it AAZK San Diego's Facebook Page has been featuring a different member each month with interesting facts and photos every Monday!

Want to be featured as the member of the month or know someone who should be? Tell us what exciting projects you are involved in and we might just share them on social media! Email AAZK San Diego's social media officer Bobby Brett at robert.brett@rocketmail.com to get involved!



Welcome back to AAZK San Diego Member Monday with Kym Janke! Besides being the Secretary for our own local Chapter, what else do you work for in conservation?

I am the national AAZK Bowling for Rhinos Program Manager and work to improve, develop, and increase participation in BFR for chapters throughout North America. BFR helps to not only conserve rhinos through Lewa and IRF but also supports Action for Cheetahs Kenya and all animals sharing the rhino's habitat. Having the opportunity to travel to Lewa as a recipient of the Anna Merz Rhino Champion Award was an amazing experience where our fundraising contributions had visible impact.

Thanks Kym! Tune in next week for more AAZK San Diego Member Monday!



Member Monday for June carries on with Lauren Ayres Martinez! Lauren is a Senior Keeper/Animal Trainer in the Children's Zoo at the San Diego Zoo. Her favorite animals are pangolins, lemurs, armadillos and manatees. She has worked with over 150 different species since her first exotic animal job in 2007. Lauren has worked at the San Diego Zoo, SDZ Safari Park, SeaWorld San Diego, Indianapolis Zoo, and the Exotic Feline Rescue Center - starting her zookeeping career at 19 years old and never looking back!



Member Monday for July opens up with Codey Kraft! Codey - How did you get your start in the animal field?

I got my start when we moved out here to San Diego from Minnesota in 2016 where I was looking for open positions in San Diego Zoo Global without any luck, but found the Volunteer application; I filled it out and less than 24 hours later I had my interview and training sessions planned to start. Currently I am a Volunteer with the San Diego Zoo after working in other seasonal positions with the Society as well as working 2 other jobs as a Server and Barista. It's such a great organization to work for and am making a difference and working towards my goals of becoming a keeper and/or animal handler.



Membership Update

By Anita Brooks, AAZK San Diego Membership and Volunteer Coordinator

Thank you for your continued membership and support!

We have recently updated our local membership benefits and are excited to announce that as a professional member, you now get a \$5 savings on combo (national and local) membership, discounts on merchandise at AAZK events, free and discounted day trips to local animal facilities (stay tuned for dates), and have the ability to influence the direction of funds raised for certain fundraising events. As always, you can expect a variety of member appreciation events and free entrance to our AAZK sponsored workshops!

If you have any questions about upcoming events or your membership with our organization, please feel free to contact us at aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com or visit our website at www.sdaazk.com.

AAZK San Diego Membership Form

- Check here if you are renewing
- National and Professional Combo \$65.00
- Professional (must already be an AAZK National; adding local San Diego membership w/access to workshops) \$25.00
- 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 _____

National and San Diego Professional Combo membership:

This membership includes BOTH National Professional AAZK membership and the local San Diego Chapter Professional membership at a discount price. The National Professional (U.S.) membership, normally \$45, and the San Diego Professional membership, normally \$25, includes:

- Animal Keeper Forum magazine and San Diego newsletter Subscription
- Vote in Board Elections – national and local
- Vote for Conference Host
- Committee Opportunities – nationally and locally
- Hold Office at the Board of Directors level
- Hold Office at Chapter level
- Member Rates/Conferences
- Member Rates/Publications/Products
- Gratis Membership to AAZK Online
- Free admittance to all San Diego Chapter workshops and events

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
- 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 2019 visit www.sdaazk.org for updates

Wednesday Sept 18: You are invited to participate and join us at the next AAZK Board meeting at 5:00 pm. The meeting will take place at Panama 66, located in Balboa Park. The first hour of the meeting will be business and then we will hang out for some social time! Our meetings are open to all and we welcome everyone's input and participation. For more information, email AAZK San Diego president at kristenreneeecraig@gmail.com

October 17, 2019: Croctoberfest: More details to come! Check out the article in this edition of *The Keeper* and keep an eye on our website at www.sdaazk.org for all the details on how to get your tickets once they are available.

January 19, 2019: Carlsbad Marathon: Help AAZK San Diego provide race support to marathon runners by manning a water station during the race. Check out the flyer in this edition of *The Keeper* to sign up today!

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