



*To promote and establish good relationships among professional zoo keepers.*

*To promote and establish a means to stimulate incentive and greater interest in the zoo keeping profession.*

*To support deserving conservation projects that include educating the general public about the need for preserving our natural resources and animal life through these worthwhile efforts.*

*To establish materials beneficial to zoo keeper education.*

***AAZK San Diego Board Members***

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President, Event Coordinator*

*Grace Yambrach – SeaWorld  
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Conservation Partner Officer*

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| <b>Content:</b>            | <b>PG</b> |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| <b>President's Message</b> | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Beach Clean Up</b>      | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>AAZK conference</b>     | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Croctoberfest</b>       | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Marathon</b>            | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Penguin conference</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Penguin Talk</b>        | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>CCF flyer</b>           | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Member Mondays</b>      | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Membership update</b>   | <b>11</b> |
| <b>AAZK Membership</b>     | <b>13</b> |
| <b>2019 Calendar</b>       | <b>14</b> |

# The Keeper

## American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter –Fall 2019

### President's Message

By Kristen Craig, AAZK San Diego President

It's November, and like many of you, I've been classically conditioned to think about what I am thankful for. And of course, you should be thankful throughout the year, but this is the time for me that the idea of thankfulness is a common thread throughout each day. The trouble I have is that out of habit I think or say things like, "I am thankful to have a job." Which is true, but our jobs are stressful, and they bring along physical and emotional fatigue. Sometimes we want to stay in bed instead of getting up at the crack of dawn. So being thankful that I have a job feels more like something I am supposed to say, but it doesn't quite accomplish the goal of thankfulness.

Thankfulness should spark a change. It should put things in perspective, maybe plant a seed of hope or joy. It should make you aware of others' contributions to your life as well as your own contributions. Although there was a short period in my career when I was out of a job, it wasn't a significant enough time to make that reoccurring thought in my head, "I'm thankful I have a job," feel genuine.

So I am challenging myself this year. I am breaking that "I am thankful to have a job" down into tiny components. I am trying to ask myself many times throughout the day, "What was I thankful for in the last hour?", or "What made me thankful while I was walking from one place to another around the zoo?" My answers have sometimes surprised me! On a trek across the zoo, I was thankful for the beautiful call of the gibbons, which reminded me of when I worked with them and how much fun they were. I was thankful for a conversation with a coworker that made me change the way I was thinking about perching an exhibit. It flipped my perspective completely.

These little moments of thankfulness have been adding up. After just two weeks of doing this, I've started to wonder how I could get on someone else's "thankful list"! What could I do for a coworker, or how could I address a situation to spark change or spread even just a little joy. Offering for coworkers to pet an animal I have out for a walk instead of just walking by, or giving some advice instead of getting frustrated when I see a coworker struggling with something I think they should know how to do.

As we transition out of November and the Fall season, I challenge you now. Can you try this for a week? Then extend that for a few more. Can you get on someone else's "thankful list"? Can you choose to find tiny moments of thankfulness throughout the remainder of Fall? For many of us, the holiday season is the hardest time of year. It can be an emotional time, even a lonely time. Can you fight through that by choosing to see the things you are thankful for instead of only the negative? I think you can! I would love to hear back from anyone who wants to share their Thankful List!

I wish you a happy holiday season into the New Year, and lots and lots of thankful moments!

# AAZK San Diego Adopts South Mission Beach!

By Bobby Brett, AAZK SD Social Media Officer

Nothing can ruin a trip to the beach like seeing trash covering the communal area for human and wildlife residents. Doritos bags, water bottle caps, cigarette butts, and much much more seem to have a way to infest a beach like fleas. If the infestation continues unchecked, it can start to degrade the appreciation for the beach and a nasty spiral begins. The only way to keep back the little nasties are to increase the appreciation for the beach in its pristine form. The best way to do that is to clean it up to show everyone just how wonderful it can be when it is in that condition. That is where we at AAZK San Diego began this journey!



The mission of American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego is dedicated to animal care and conservation, as well as preserving our natural resources. This is exactly why this non-profit jumped at a chance to help out its local community and collaborate with an organization called I Love A Clean San Diego to adopt a beach! We as an organization wanted to choose a local beach whose residents, wildlife and human, could benefit from multiple clean ups a year. With this in mind, it was decided that the southern-most region of Mission Beach could use our help! This heavily used area is a favorite for many of the local community and is very close to the mouth of the San Diego River which is a great habitat for many local species of wildlife.

So far this year, we have hosted two clean ups at our new beach-kid and, with the help of I Love A Clean San Diego, we have been able to collect innumerable amounts of cigarette butts, bottle caps, other various garbage items. Even car parts! Luckily, we can have as many clean ups as we want to! Since we are beginning this endeavor, we are going to start out with quarterly clean ups and see how it goes. So keep your calendars open for Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup> for our next event. Join us on our Facebook Page to get updates and reminders for future clean ups, conservation support events, and social opportunities with the rest of our membership. Hope to see you soon to help us make Mission Beach a better place for wildlife!



## 2019 AAZK National Conference

By Kym Janke, AAZK SD Secretary

The 2019 National AAZK conference took place August 18-22 in Indianapolis Indiana. While conference is always an invigorating and inspiring week, it is also exhausting! The conference kicked off with wine, I mean a bang, at The Rathskeller – a Bavarian bar and restaurant located in a beautiful historic building downtown. It was great to catch up with many old friends and coworkers from the USA, Canada, and Mexico! While it felt like the night was young, the next morning reminded me that I am not. Luckily keynote speaker Dr. Ian Singleton made the early wake up call worth it. It is always so inspiring to hear about in-situ conservation efforts and if you haven't had the chance to hear Dr. Singleton speak you should definitely try to find the opportunity.

The first day of full conference proceedings was busy for me to say the least. Following the keynote AAZK's Bowling for Rhinos conservation partners all took the stage to give our membership updates on the incredible work they are doing and how each of AAZK's members supports this work. Despite some A/V challenges they inspired me to continue the work I do with BFR and drove home the impact that our organization has had on conservation efforts throughout the world. It is always so tough to follow these talks but I did my best to maintain the audience's attention as I presented on the changes to the BFR program for 2020 and updated our membership on the BFR Conservation Resource Grant recipient Peregrine Fund. The afternoon's speakers continued to highlight all the ways that animal care professionals are contributing to conservation through the work we do daily both at our home institutions and through involvement with conservation groups, AZA, and volunteer initiatives.



A short break for dinner and we were back at it with the Town Hall meeting, where AAZK business is discussed. The major announcement this year was that AAZK has filled a new position of a conference manager. If any of you remember when AAZK San Diego hosted the National Conference back in 2011 you know it is a huge undertaking! Hopefully former AAZK President Bethany Bigham will be able to ease some of the burden hosting chapters face and make negotiating the process easier and less stressful for all.

The night concluded with some fun trivia at the Conservation Rally and a great discussion of the BFR Program at the Bowling for Rhinos Summit. Some exciting changes for 2020 is that 2 of the trips will be awarded by lottery with each participating chapter able to earn additional entries with every \$1000 raised. The other two trips will still be awarded to the top two chapters.

After this initial long day the rest of the conference is a blur! There were presentations focused on all aspects of animal care, workshops focused on Diversity and Inclusion, leadership, and emergency procedures, and certificate courses in elephant and marine mammal husbandry, as well as safety.

The Indianapolis Zoo graciously hosted the AAZK conference delegates for a remarkable zoo day featuring behind the scenes opportunities and training demonstrations. It is always so wonderful to tour other facilities and see the work they are doing to advance animal care. The only sad thing about zoo day is that there is never enough time to see everything that you want to.

As usual the conference ended with a bang, as zookeepers kicked up their heels at the closing banquet and danced the night away. AAZK banquets always remind me of high school dances but with wine! However you look at it though, it was a good time for all as we celebrated both new and old friendships and unwound after a long week filled with so much great information!



I hope that each of you reading this will have the chance to attend a national conference. Next year's conference will be hosted by our neighbours the L.A. Zoo, August 30 to September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020. Hope to see you there!



## Croctoberfest 2019

By Robert Cattell, Reptile Keeper San Diego Zoo

Reptile keepers from San Diego Zoo and the American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter (AAZK SD) once again worked together to host the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Croctoberfest. This year's event was held on October 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 at Bay City Brewing Company in San Diego, California. Our theme this year was day of the dead, encouraging guests to get their faces painted, eat, drink, and participate in a raffle and silent auctions! Our goal this year was to raise money and awareness to support the American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*). This year we were able to raise over \$3000!

The Keeper –Fall 2019



This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our local San Diego small businesses, local reptile team, AAZK SD, and of course you! We would like to specially recognize the tremendous and generous support of local and national businesses who supported us this year!

Major sponsors:

Zilla, Bay City Brewing, AAZK SD

Contributors:

Lisa Buford, Glacier Rock Soaps, Honest Thrift Studio San Diego, Krystyn Pozarowski, Peter Barbaros, Ophidian Brewing, Lorena Designs, Brett Baldwin, Meiko Temple, Don and Susan Milow, Don Veale, Vom Fass, Hair by Jesse, Katie Kerr

The cros thank you!



Proceeds from this event are going to the Crocodile Research Coalition (CRC), an organization based in Belize. CRC is working to understand the ecology of the American Crocodile throughout all of Belize. With your help, CRC will be able to conduct surveys and better understand the natural history of the American Crocodile. With a better understanding of their natural history, CRC will be able to develop a more effective management plan. CRC is also working to change the attitude of locals who live in close contact with the American Crocodiles. Unfortunately, American Crocodiles are commonly viewed as a dangerous species and are casualties in their homeland.

Thanks to your generous support, we are able to financially contribute to CRC and their tremendous conservation work! We look forward to seeing you in 2020 for the next Croctober Fest!



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](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



## Participate in a Marathon – Without all the Sweat!

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK SD Treasurer

For the last several years, AAZK San Diego has volunteered at the Tri-City Medical Center Marathon in Carlsbad. By assisting the marathon organizers during their event, they provide a donation to our organization so that we can continue supporting the amazing conservation projects our members are passionate about. On Sunday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020, we will be on the corner of Carlsbad Blvd. and Avenida Encinas not just cheering on the runners with great animal facts, but also providing support at the water station.

Volunteering at the Carlsbad Marathon is a lot of fun. Cheering on the runners and seeing how excited they get that someone is there to encourage them on, plus the fact that we have life-size rhino cutouts, really animates them. And you can say that you participated in a marathon .... Without having to run! That's my kind of race!

If you would like to join us this year, please register at <https://www.titanvolunteers.com/in/group/1398>.

We will be there from 6:00 am until about 10:00 am and would love to hang out with you this fun morning! For more information, send me an email at [sdaazk@gmail.com](mailto:sdaazk@gmail.com).

## International Penguin Conference

By Grace Yambrach, AAZK SD Vice-President



This past August I was able to attend the 10th International Penguin Conference with the help of AAZK San Diego's Shirley Bush Grant. This conference is held every three years at different locations throughout the world, and this year the location was in beautiful Dunedin, New Zealand. This location made it possible for delegates to view three of the areas local penguin species colonies, Little Blue penguins, Fiorland penguins and Yellow-Eyed penguins.

There were more than 260 penguin specialists from throughout the world that attended the conference which was held at Otago University in Dunedin. Interestingly this was the same organization that hosted the very first conference 31 years ago! The focus was Fisheries interactions; Climate Change; The role of indigenous people (perspectives from different cultures) and Diseases.





More than half of the world's 18 penguin species are declining. Ten of the 18 recognized penguin species are threatened (IUCN 2018), making them the most threatened group of seabirds after albatrosses and petrels. Those with the most critical need of conservation action are the African penguin, Galapagos penguin and the Yellow-eyed penguin. It was determined that due to small or rapidly declining populations, these species require immediate scientific collaboration and policy intervention.

It is estimated that there are fewer than 600 breeding pairs of Galapagos penguins. They are restricted to Ecuador's Galapagos Islands, and its population undergoes extreme fluctuations so the true size is unknown due to low and variable resighting rates.

The global population of African penguins is approximately 21,000 pairs, down from over 1.5 million pairs in the early 1990's. Their primary threat and reason for the rapid decline is due to reduced prey availability attributed to climate change and fisheries.

The Yellow-eyed penguin has approximately 1700 breeding pairs. Their populations occur in 2 genetically distinct units; South Island of New Zealand and subantarctic Campbell and Auckland Islands. Unfortunately, for this species steep declines are constantly ongoing.

Many great ideas were exchanged during the conference. New research techniques have been developed and fresh new conservationists have come on board to examine the many facets of research. In addition to new diseases, climate change, and fishing pressures, a few of the areas that need more focus on are:

- 1) Non-breeding season mortality. It has been noted that non-breeding season is often marked by a higher mortality rate which then has a carry-over effect on the breeding season.
- 2) Juvenile life stages. There is little knowledge of the juvenile life stages.
- 3) Increased study on penguins living in remote locations. There are penguins that live in remote regions of Antarctica and the subantarctic or in the sea caves or coastal forests of New Zealand that are all challenging to study year-round for all life stages.

Dee Borersma, University of Washington, stated it best; "Humans are now pushing penguins to the edge of their ability to adapt by removing and introducing competitors for their food, polluting the ocean, catching them in nets, and providing inadequate Marine Protected Areas. By fragmenting ecosystems, growing our population, continuing over consumption and increasing human longevity, humans inadvertently drive population declines in penguins."

Without getting too overbearing, we all work hard to be a voice for the various species we champion. Sometimes it's hard not to get discouraged, keep doing the work and being a voice for those that do not have one. Stick together and support each other, for we are all basically fighting the same battle. In the words of the Maori "He waka eke noa" "We are all in this together"



# Penguin Conservation Talk

## AAZK San Diego



Wednesday  
December 4  
4:00-5:30 pm

Dickinson Family  
Center Auditorium  
at  
San Diego Zoo

Join AAZK San Diego as we invite Grace Yambrach, senior penguin keeper at SeaWorld San Diego, as she discusses the current state of penguin conservation and rehabilitation efforts in New Zealand.

Grace recently attended the 10th International Penguin Conference in New Zealand where scientists and penguin experts gathered to discuss fisheries interactions, climate change, the role of indigenous people, and diseases as they affect penguin populations across the globe.

She will highlight her experience and discuss conservation efforts for the Yellow-Eyed Penguin.

Admission is FREE!

Join us afterwards at California Pizza Kitchen, Mission Valley for a social and fundraiser for Cheetah Conservation Fund.



# Pizza with a purpose

Bring in this flyer, present it to your server  
and we'll donate 20% of your check to the organization listed  
below. Purchases include dine-in, takeout, catering and  
all beverages.

Fundraiser in support of:

## Cheetah Conservation Fund

Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2019

All Day Event Dine in & Take out - We prefer a digital presentation of this flyer

Valid at the following locations:

### California Pizza Kitchen

**Otay Ranch Town Center**  
2015 Birch Road Suite 725  
Chula Vista, CA 91915  
619.591.4630

**La Jolla Village Square**  
3363 Nobel Drive  
La Jolla, CA 92037  
858.457.4222

**Laguna Hills**  
24155 Laguna Hills Mall  
#1000, Laguna Hills, CA 92653  
949.458.9600

**Fashion Valley**  
7007 Friars Road Suite 354  
San Diego, CA 92108  
619.298.4078

**Solana Beach**  
437 S. Hwy 101  
Solana Beach, CA 92075  
858.793.0999

**Mission Viejo**  
25513 Marguerite Parkway  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692  
949.951.5026



Join the **CPK Rewards™** program and receive a **free Small Plate** on your next visit after registering. Register today at [cpk.com](http://cpk.com) or download our new app today!



**california**  
**PIZZA KITCHEN**

Fundraiser offer valid only on the date(s) and at the CPK location identified on the flyer. Only 501c organizations and non-profit schools are eligible to participate in CPK's fundraiser program. CPK will donate 20% (twenty percent) of all food and beverage sales to the organization. Tax, gratuity, gift card and retail sales are excluded from the donation. Offer valid for dine-in, takeout, online, catering, curbside or delivery orders placed directly with CPK. Not valid for third-party delivery. Offer void if flyer is distributed in or near restaurant. For more information about the 501c organization participating in the fundraiser, please contact the organization directly.

# 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](mailto:robert.brett@rocketmail.com) to get involved!



Welcome to Member Monday for August! Here is our Member of the Month! Hi, everyone!  
Anita here, your local chapter's Membership Coordinator! I proudly serve on the board of AAZK and am excited to learn more about all of you through our Member Monday spotlights! I have been loving everyone's posts, and I guess now it's my turn. I am a keeper in the Children's Zoo Department at San Diego Zoo, one of the zoo's animal connections teams. Before I managed to get a job with this amazing crew, I worked at the beautiful Gladys Porter Zoo in Texas as their Hospital Keeper and Veterinary Assistant. I have an Associate in Science from the Exotic Animal Training and Management program at Moorpark College, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Maine College of Art. I have had a rather unconventional path to this career and feel so lucky to have found my calling!

Thanks Anita! Join us next week for another post!



Welcome back to Member Monday AAZK'ers! Here is more fun facts about Bobby Brett! Bobby absolutely loves to travel and see new areas, especially when there are new amazing wildlife species to see! Wildlife photography has become one of his greatest pleasures and a great way for him to relax and "Zen out with nature". His camera is one of his most prized possessions and has traveled with him all over the country to see places such as Palo Duro Canyon State Park in Texas, Everglades National Park in Florida, Joshua Tree National Park in California, and Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming (which has become one of his all-time favorite places). If anyone has any recommendations for his next photography adventure, he would love to hear them! Tune in next week for the next Member Monday!

If you would like to be featured as an AAZK Member Monday posting, please send us a couple pictures and a small paragraph about yourself to [aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com](mailto:aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com) and we will feature you!

Added 4 media to this post.



Here we are! The final Member Monday post for October with the wonderful **Dana Farrell**. Tell us what inspires you Dana!

I'm excited to get more involved with AAZK and local events that will help us engage with the community! I love sharing my passion for animals with anyone who will listen (ask literally any of my friends) but it's even better that I get to do it as a career! My goal is always to help someone love (or at least appreciate) an animal they either didn't know about or didn't like before the end of one of my tours in hopes they will spread the word of how important every animal is on this planet! See you next week for the beginning of our Member Monday November Journey! If you would be interested in being featured in a Member Monday post stream, just email us at [aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com](mailto:aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com) to get more information! Check back next week for the last Member Monday post with Dana!



# 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](mailto:aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com) or visit our website at [sdaazk.com](http://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:

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

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

Tel: (619) 231-1515 ext. 4672

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

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

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

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**CALENDAR 2019** visit [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org) for updates

**Thursday December 12:** You are invited to participate and join us at the next AAZK Board meeting at 5:30 pm. Be sure to keep an eye on our Facebook page for location information. 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](mailto:kristenreneeecraig@gmail.com)

**November 30, 2019: Deadline for Shirley Busch Professional Development Grant applications.** Apply for up to \$1000 by visiting <http://sdaazk.com/about-san-diego-aazk/education-scholarships/>

**December 4, 2019: Penguin Conservation Talk.** Join us in the San Diego Zoo's Dickinson Family Center auditorium 4-5:30pm to learn about penguin conservation in New Zealand. Then join fellow AAZK San Diego members as we support Cheetah Conservation Fund at California Pizza Kitchen! Check out the flyer in this edition of *The Keeper* and keep an eye on our website at [www.sdaazk.org](http://www.sdaazk.org) for all the details.

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