



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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Content:	PG
President's Message	1
IOC Capacity building	2
Marathon	3
BFR Trips	5
Sponsored Keeper	7
CA Wolf Center	8
Membership update	9
Member Mondays	10
Meet the board	11
AAZK Membership	12
2019 Calendar	14

The Keeper

American Association of Zoo Keepers San Diego Chapter Quarterly Newsletter – Spring 2020

President's Message

By Kristen Craig, AAZK San Diego President

Anyone else ready for 2021 yet? Anyone? In all seriousness, it has been a really rough start to 2020. Uncertainty is the baseline for all our emotions right now. We are concerned for our families and friends, for the elderly people in or lives, and the loved ones who are compromised. On top of all that worry is the fact that a good portion of us are essential workers who are responsible for the welfare of animals and the running of animal facilities. Some of our facilities are unable to afford to pay staff, so our hours are cut or we've been furloughed. This is not how we thought 2020 was going to go. We all had hope for a better year than the last!

So how do we get through this? How do we stay positive? When will this end? All we have are questions and very few have answers as of yet. Well I don't know answers, but I can tell you that you are not alone in whatever it is you are feeling or going through. Which means that there are people all around you who can relate, who you can reach out to and share some of this burden with. So do that! Reach out! Make those calls you've been promising to make for months. Video chats are a thing! They are confusing and someone always has technical difficulty, but they are also fun and such a great way to connect in this stay-at-home world.

Another great way to lift your spirits is to follow those famous words the beloved Mr. Rogers had imparted to him by his mother: "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Everywhere we look, people are helping. Thousands of health care workers are risking their own health to save lives. Our grocery store employees are doing everything they can to keep us safe and provide everything we need. It's pretty remarkable to see all these humans doing what they can to make other people's lives better. We can all participate too. Making masks for people in your community or your loved ones if you can sew is a great way to help! Can't sew? Donate money to someone who can for the supplies. Donate money or time (safely) to local food banks. Money is tight right now and not all of us are able to donate to causes. But if you are healthy and able, offer to grocery shop for your elderly neighbor or walk their dog. Create a video chat to read a book to your friends' kids or do a fun science project with them! When you're tired of cooking, order out from your local restaurants so that you can help them while giving yourself a break.

These are just a few options, but there are a thousand other ways that you can find helpers and then be one of them when you are ready. And no matter what you choose, it will make you feel better. Helping always does.

We at AAZK San Diego are here for you in this time as well. If there is any way we can help you through this difficult time, just let us know. We want to stay connected to our community as much as possible, even if we cannot physically share the same space. We have some great events in the works you can participate in from the safety of your own home. Some are educational and some just for fun! Keep tabs on our Facebook page and website for more information as we finalized online events. And know that we truly appreciate everything you do for the animals and ecosystems of this planet, as well as for the people who share it with them. You inspire us with your dedication and passion for caring. We will weather this storm right alongside you.

Building Bridges!

By Joana Guerra, AAZK SD Social Media Officer

In late October 2019, the most recent International Outreach Committee (IOC) Capacity Building Program took place in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, Mexico. IOC members and other guest speakers headed down to join over 80 Latin American zoo professionals at Acuario Mazatlán (Mazatlán Aquarium), the host facility.

The Capacity Building Program coincided with Asociación de Zoológicos, Criaderos y Acuarios de Mexico (AZCARM) annual conference. AZCARM is the equivalent of Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) in Mexico.



The weeklong conference showcased presentations and workshops with varied themes of animal welfare, training, education and public speaking. In the middle of the week, IOC program participants attended the AZCARM conference, which was also opened to students and the public to learn more about the organization.



Throughout the week, IOC program participants had the opportunity to improve exhibits at the host facility, Acuario Mazatlán. Keepers broke into groups to create plans and install various items to encourage natural behaviors for different animals, including, turtles, macaws and snakes. At the end of the week, teams that worked on exhibit improvements had the opportunity to present to zoo and aquarium directors attending the AZCARM conference.

This was the fifth Capacity Program conducted by the IOC and it was a huge success! Every program encourages Mexican keepers to implement, share and learn from the other members and hopefully present on projects from their own facilities. Attendees desire more program such as the one that took place in Mazatlán.



2020 Carlsbad Marathon Water Station Recap

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK SD Treasurer

It was a cold and early San Diego morning and 20 amazing AAZK San Diego volunteers were setting up water cups, energy gel packets, Vaseline, and other necessities for those who would be running in the Tri-City Medical Center Carlsbad Full and Half Marathon & Surf Sun 5K Run on Sunday, January 19th.

It was the eighth year AAZK San Diego was participating as a charity during the Carlsbad Marathon. As an official charity, runners can select to run on behalf of our organization to help raise funding and awareness of the various projects and organizations we support. As you know, AAZK San Diego is passionate about wildlife and protecting wildlife habitats. The ability to invite others to help us by Running For A Reason makes a huge difference in supporting our goals as they achieve theirs. Through the marathon's Run for a Cause, each runner has the



ability to raise funds for a charity. This year, we were excited when Marianne Zeit, Vet Tech at the San Diego Zoo's hospital, stepped up to the plate and said she would run for AAZK.



As Marianne ran in the 5K, the AAZK San Diego volunteers cheered and encouraged marathon participants running in the race. We became expert water and gel distributors (you know there is a special knack for that) and became adept at reading the runner's body language to anticipate their needs. And don't even get me started on our Vaseline pro as she ran to the call of runners! In addition to distributing water and gel, there was a lot of cheering and yelling, encouraging the marathoners as they sped by our water station.

It was an early but short day and there is no way we could have accomplished our duties without the help of our group of volunteers. What was going to be a 4-hour shift, turned into a 2.5 hour shift due to the efficiency and energy of the team! The morning went so well, we celebrated by enjoying a great breakfast together, recounting stories from the morning.

And what of Marianne our AAZK San Diego runner? Please congratulate her when you see her as she came in second place in her age group in the 5K race! She ran an 8.18-minute mile, beating 66 other contestants in that category. She also came in 42nd place of all 813 females in the group. We are very proud of Marianne for her accomplishment!



The Carlsbad Marathon is a great example of how volunteering is great not just for helping a cause, but in creating an opportunity to get to know people in your community. Of the 20 volunteering that morning, many of us knew of each other but now we had all been through an experience together, giving us the opportunity to get to know one another better. Plus, we were able to meet new people who we hope to see at some of our future events.



There is a good probability that we will do this again next year, so mark your calendar. But if you can't wait until then, AAZK San Diego always has something going on! We have adopted a section of the beach in Mission Beach and will be cleaning it on a regular basis. Then there is always Bowling for Rhinos and other events where volunteers are always welcome. Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sdaazk and our website at www.sdaazk.org to see what is on the calendar. Volunteering is an amazing way to give back and become involved. And everyone can always use some cheering!

Bowling for Rhinos Trip Opportunities!

By Kym Janke, AAZK SD Member at Large



Everyone who participates in Bowling for Rhinos should be so proud that 100% of the funds raised go directly to benefitting rhinos, cheetahs, their habitats, and the communities they support. The wonderful thing about Bowling for Rhinos funds is that it is an unrestricted donation; meaning that our conservation partners can utilize these funds on the most deserving aspects of their programs. As a token of their appreciation both of these organizations sponsor trips to allow BFR contributors the

chance to see first-hand the impact that Bowling for Rhinos has in Kenya and Indonesia. These trips are meant to inspire, motivate, and encourage our members to continue with the amazing work we are doing and bring this determination back to their chapters where these trip participants can help grow their events. To say that the BFR trips are the Trip of a Lifetime is an understatement!

In San Diego we strive to raise as much money each year as possible to support this amazing cause; since our event fundraising focuses on our participants stepping up to the challenge, we thank the member that raises the most money each year by designating them as San Diego Chapter's nominee. We are lucky to have such incredibly dedicated members and supporters and consistently raise enough funds to allow one of our members to participate in a BFR trip.



New for 2020 the BFR Program is honouring two exceptional individuals by naming the funds based trips. From here forward the trips sponsored by Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to Kenya will be named the Ian Craig Rhino Champion Award, after Lewa's co-founder, and the African Rhino Champion Award; and the trips sponsored by the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) to Indonesia will be named the Susie Ellis Rhino Champion Award, after IRF's Executive Director, and the Asian Rhino Champion Award. Both of these destinations offer trips that are life changing experiences and provide opportunities to view an incredible array of wildlife, connect with communities and organizations committed to conservation, meet and learn from rhino protection teams, and explore the habitats that we work so hard to protect. The trip to Kenya is spent on Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and surrounding area, while the trip to Indonesia is spent travelling through the islands of Java and Sumatra to 3 National Parks: Ujung Kulon, Bukit Barisan Selatan, and Way Kambas.

We are thrilled to announce that in 2019 AAZK San Diego raised \$ 17,349.44; earning our nominee Lauren Ayres Martinez a trip to Indonesia to travel with members of the IRF team!



Since Bowling for Rhinos began in 1990 San Diego has raised an impressive \$318,163.91, and we are the fourth highest contributors to the program internationally. This is no small feat and one that we should all be proud of. Unfortunately due to travel concerns around the current Covid-19 pandemic, travel for the Indonesia trip has been postponed until next year when Lauren will be joined by the 2020 trip recipients.

There is a big change happening in 2020 though that everyone needs to be aware of. Up until this year the top four chapters were awarded a trip but this year only the top two are guaranteed a spot. The remaining two trips will be awarded to a chapter selected by a random drawing. Entries into the drawing will be based on funds raised so the more money we raise, the more entries we receive, and thus the better the odds are for our nominee of being selected.

We have all been financially, socially, and professionally impacted by Covid-19 and I understand that BFR may be the furthest thing on your mind right now. The thought of fundraising may seem distant and unrealistic but to me this year's BFR is more important than any other. The conservation partners have been severely impacted and there are threats to the work they are doing. Now more than ever conservation needs our help so I urge you to consider participating this year. AAZK San Diego has decided to postpone our event which is traditionally held in May or June until the fall when hopefully our lives will be accustomed to whatever the new "normal" becomes. We will keep you posted on event details as we have them.



All of our members should also be aware of the Anna Merz Rhino Champion Award, named after one of the founders of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and awarded to a member who has contributed significantly to their chapter's BFR event for the past three years. This award also includes a trip to Lewa in Kenya so get involved on the chapter level and help us bring future events to life! If fundraising just isn't your thing but event planning is your jam then this is for you!

Stay tuned to our website and social media pages as we plan for 2020, hope to see you at our next meeting!

Meet Rodrigo Sala Moncada – AAZK San Diego’s Sponsored Latin American Keeper

By Yvette Kemp, AAZK SD Treasurer

In 2017, AAZK’s International Outreach Committee (IOC) proposed and developed a new program called the International Keeper Member Sponsorship, which came into effect in 2018. Through this program, AAZK Chapters from around the country are able to purchase a membership and therefore sponsor a Latin American keeper, who would most likely not be able to afford the \$55.00 U.S. dollar international AAZK membership fee.

Keepers were instructed to fill an application that was created by ALPZA (AZA of Latin America) and the IOC and then selected based on requested criteria. In 2018 three keepers were selected for a trial basis, and then in 2019, AAZK San Diego joined 9 other chapters in becoming a sponsor to other nominated keepers.

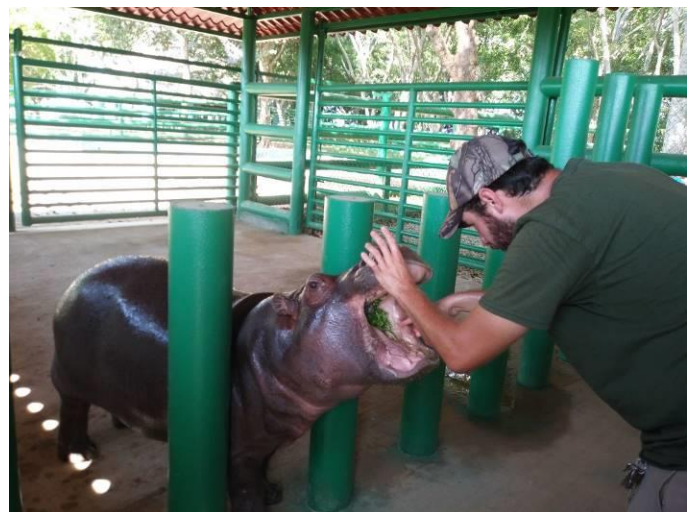
We have asked Rodrigo, our sponsored keeper, to tell us a little about himself and we are happy to share his information with you here.



I am a veterinarian (as many keepers are since there isn’t a keeper career in Latin America), and began my profession providing enrichment for black bears, striped hyenas, African lions, Bengal tigers and coyotes at Africam Safari in Puebla, Mexico. After that, I began training striped hyenas and Malayan and central American tapirs. I later became an elephant keeper where I began the process of introducing training for medical procedures, exhibit maintenance, and general animal care. At the same time, I joined the “Target Training Asian Elephant Project” in southeast Asia, working along with Mexican veterinarian, Gerardo Martinez.

I later worked at Yumka’ in Villahermosa, Mexico, as Director of Animal Welfare, creating enrichment and training programs for over 30 animals, which included African elephants, white rhinos, hippos, giraffe, peccary, squirrel and spider monkeys, tigers, jaguars, and capybara.

Now I am one of the training leaders at Eco Parque Interactivo, located in Buenos Aires, Argentina, where I develop training plans for various species. I also provide guidance to keepers who are working on new training plans for medical procedures and education programs.





I've been working in zoos for 10 years now, starting my career as a veterinarian and now focusing on behavior and training.

My favorite animals are elephants and striped hyenas, and my favorite career moment was when I began working the elephant project in southeast Asia, which I have been involved in for 8 years and counting. As for my ideal job.... It's what I get to do every day: training animals so that they can have a better quality of life.

AAZK San Diego would like to congratulate and thank Rodrigo for his passion and for sharing his story.

If you would like to know more about sponsoring a Latin American keeper and the program, please contact me at Yvette.Kemp@aazk.org.

Critically Endangered Wolves at California Wolf Center Participate in Research Study

By Heidi Pankratz, AAZK SD Member and Director of Animal Care, California Wolf Center

On February 24th 2020, the California Wolf Center in Julian welcomed a researcher and a veterinarian who specializes in canine reproduction to perform semen collection on eight of our Mexican gray wolves. The study is looking at how early Mexican gray wolves start producing sperm. This information will help with the management of this critically endangered subspecies, mainly through the Mexican Wolf Species Survival Plan or SSP.

The California Wolf Center currently houses a total of 35 wolves, including 28 Mexican gray wolves. This places the center in the number one spot for number of Mexican gray wolves at a single facility. In 2019, the center celebrated the birth of fourteen Mexican gray wolf pups, a record for us for number of pups born in one year. This gave researchers the opportunity to collect semen from eight 9-month-old males at the center this year.

The semen collection process can be complicated. Mexican gray wolves cannot be trained since they may be chosen to be released into the wild one day. Therefore, to catch the wolves, caretakers and trained volunteers shift them using a human line, then rely on the wolf's natural fear of humans which causes them to submit (lie down). A tool called a "y-pole" is placed on the wolf's shoulders and hips, which translates to the wolf as dominant pressure and encourages him to stay still. Then a towel is placed over the face to reduce visual stimulation, and the wolf is physically restrained and placed in a crate. This can usually be done without sedation. Once inside, veterinarians inject an anesthetic, and the wolf is placed on gas anesthesia. The semen collection team then uses an electroejaculator to stimulate the wolf's prostate and cause

ejaculation. The semen sample is collected, and the researchers can then examine the sample under a microscope. They count the number of sperm then examine their morphology and motility.

It's long been thought that wolves became sexually mature at two years of age. However, researchers are seeing that some males as young as 9 months are producing viable sperm. In fact, data so far shows about 28% of male Mexican wolves are producing sperm at 9 or 10 months of age. This information has implications for how these wolves are housed in multi-generational packs. To prevent inbreeding or unwanted breeding in general, males may need to be separated earlier than previously thought, or females could be given contraceptives. However, more information is still needed. Other factors can play a role in wolf reproduction—including pack hierarchy and physical breeding suppression placed on submissive males by the most dominant male. Dominant females also play an important role in deciding who breeds through their own selectivity.

This same collection process can be used to collect semen for banking and future use. Artificial insemination has already proved successful in Mexican gray wolves. This can help the SSP to breed animals that don't get along or use sperm from males who have already passed away, for example. In a population with only seven founding individuals, genetic rescue has become necessary. The current population of Mexican gray wolves in the wild hovers around 150 individuals, including the US and Mexico. The captive population has about 300 individuals. This unique sub-species still needs our help to avoid extinction. For more information, visit californiawolfcenter.org or send me an email at heidi@californiawolfcenter.org.

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 sdaazk.com.

Member Mondays

By Kym Janke, AAZK San Diego Board Member

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 Joana at aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com to get involved!



OK Kim Caldwell, for Member Monday #4 for December, let's hear what you like to do outside of work!
I love the mountains and I love dogs. I wish I could live in the mountains and have more dogs! This is a picture of myself and my dog Angus up in Big Bear, CA.
I think many of our members can relate to that Kim! Thanks for sharing!
If you would be interested in being featured in a Member Monday post stream, just email us at aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com to get more information!

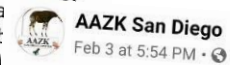


Happy Member Monday for March! Let's meet Ashley Salas, our March Member!
My primary job is for a law firm, The Utility Reform Network, which advocates for energy and telecommunications consumers. On the weekends I moonlight at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park as an Africa Tram Guide. This year, I will be celebrating my 11th anniversary at the Park. I love taking guests to see the plants and animals on tour, and talking about the great work being done at and by the Park! The excitement of what we will find is never ending!
Thanks Ashley!! Look forward to more posts about Ashley as March continues!

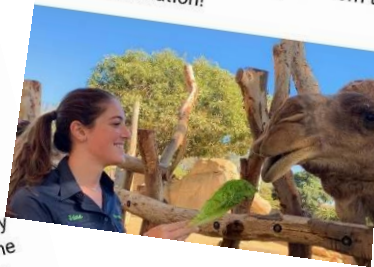


Happy New Year AAZK Members and Followers! Welcome to the first Member Monday feature for 2020!

Hello! My name is Jaime Friscia and I'm a new member to AAZK San Diego. I grew up in New Jersey and have loved animals my entire life, always knowing I wanted a career working with them. I went to the University of Minnesota to pursue a degree in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. I came to work for the San Diego Zoo as an intern in the education department in 2015 and after graduation they asked me to stay on. Currently, I am an Educator Guide teaching the public about the beautiful natural world and the animals I share it with.



If you would be interested in being featured in a Member Monday post stream, just email us at aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com to get more information!



Happy Member Monday for AAZK San Diego!! For the month of February we will be getting to know our member, **Carly Kuhlman**! Tell us about yourself Carly!

Hey everyone! 🌟 I'm Carly, Carly Jo, C.J., and I'm an Educator Guide at the San Diego Zoo and an Animal Care Keeper at the Living Coast Discovery Center! I was born and raised in San Diego, and am a SDSU Alumni (**#aztecforlife**)! I started at the Zoo as a high school intern, moved all over the US chasing my dreams, which brought me back home to my current positions, which combine my love for animals and taking the best care possible of them, and sharing their stories with the public!

Thanks Carly!! We look forward to hearing more about you this month! If you would be interested in being featured in a Member Monday post stream, just email us at aazksandiegomembers@gmail.com to get more information!



Welcome your 2020 Board of Directors to AAZK San Diego!

President: Kristen Craig



Vice President, Conservation Partner: Grace Yambrach



Secretary and Membership Coordinator: Anita Brooks



Treasurer: Yvette Kemp



Professional Development Officer: Bobby Brett



Social Media Officer: Joana Guerra



Members at large: Lauren Ayres Martinez, Kym Janke, Codey Kraft



The Keeper –Spring 2020

Did you know...



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A ZOOKEEPER TO BE A MEMBER!

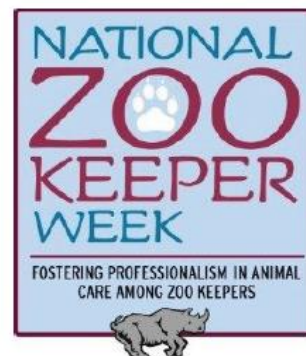
Local Professional Membership Benefits

- Free Workshops!
- \$5 savings on joint membership
- Discounts on merchandise at AAZK events
- Free & Discounted Day Trips to local animal facilities
- Influence Direction of Funds Raised
- Member Appreciation Events
- Networking Opportunities

National Membership Benefits

- AKF subscription
- Special rates for Conferences, Publications, and Products
- Membership to AAZK Online
- Vote in board elections, and for conference host
- Hold office and board directors level and/or chapter level
- Committee opportunities

Combo National and Local membership is only \$65 a year!



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
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San Diego, CA 92103**

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CALENDAR 2019 visit www.sdaazk.org for updates

Tuesday May 5: You are invited to participate and join us at the next AAZK Board meeting at 5:00 pm. This meeting will be themed for Cinco Mayo so bring your margaritas as we Zoom to adhere to social distancing! Our meetings are open to all and we welcome everyone's input and participation. For more information, email AAZK San Diego president at kristenreeneecraig@gmail.com

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89907028241?pwd=OGRHZnVJbS9sS2E3SDZQeWJXNGdSZz09>

Meeting ID: 899 0702 8241

Password: 020705

Friday May 8: AAZK San Diego Presents: Dr. Ron Swaisgood, Dir. of Applied & Animal Ecology, SDZG.

Topic: Translocating wildlife to re-establish ecosystems in Southern California

Dr. Swaisgood is the Director of Recovery Ecology at San Diego Zoo Global's Institute for Conservation Research. He oversees several species conservation programs locally in Southern California and around the globe. His interests lie primarily in the pragmatic application of ecological and behavioral knowledge to solving conservation problems.

Time: 4:00 PM Pacific Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87021663293?pwd=RUIWdkt2VVlwQ3JHbzNLU1pkbzdIUT09>

Meeting ID: 870 2166 3293

Password: 795051

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

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