

**THE  
KEEPER**  
Fall 2003



**San Diego Chapter  
of  
The American  
Association of  
Zoo Keepers**

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**An Evening at Joan Embery's Ranch**

By Robert Cisneros, Hospital Keeper, SD Zoo



Approximately 85 people attended the July 22nd AAZK meeting at Joan Embery's Ranch. Guest speakers from four local conservation programs gave introductory presentations highlighting the purpose, progress and community needs of each project. There were no PowerPoint presentations, no slide shows, no fancy graphics; just four speakers detailing the conservation efforts of their programs in a suc-

cinct yet powerful way. Though brief, their presentations were filled with passion, concern, and commitment.

Our first speaker was Patrick Valentino, Director of the California Wolf Center, in Julian California. Valentino emphasized the educational aspects of the wolf center, and described efforts towards the re-introduction and recovery of the Mexican Gray Wolf.

Once known as the Julian Wolf Center, the organization's new name now reflects its mission of re-establishing wolves in their historic regions. The CWC is staffed by a group of dedi-



cated volunteers who help with education programs and captive breeding programs.

For more information about the CA Wolf Center, visit their website at <http://www.californiawolfcenter.org>.



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**Things That Go Bump In The Night**

By Nicki Boyd, Team Area Lead, Children's Zoo, SD Zoo

You may have had some unique animal experiences but listen to these and they may be hard to beat.

The Children's Zoo has a variety of education animals we call animal ambassadors. They are often called upon to fulfill the needs of marketing and

public relations on many media events. One of the more interesting events they have supported are the media blitz's of traveling to near by cities like Phoenix and Los Angeles. Travel time averages 3 to 5 days, with a variety of bookings each day at local TV and radio programs.

The animal that is to ac-

company us is carefully selected for it's adaptability as well as a calm and favorable demeanor, while being exotic enough to represent the zoo and it's conservation mission. And we have many meetings to decide what will be needed. Items such as  
*(continued on page 7)*

# At Joan's...

(Continued from page 1)



The second guest speaker was Geoffrey Smith from the California Wild Heritage Campaign. The California Wild Heritage Campaign is an organization whose goal is to help preserve California's unprotected wilderness and wild rivers. In San Diego



County alone, these proposed wilderness areas amount to over 45,000 acres. What exactly is wilderness land? Quoting the Wilderness Act of 1964, Smith defined wilderness as: "An area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain... an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation."

One way the Smith encouraged the public to get involved was to engage



in a letter writing campaign to our legislators. He emphasized that we as constituents have an incredible influence upon legislation and can greatly affect decision making and policy changes.

For more information about the California Wild Heritage Campaign, including sample letters to Senator Dianne Feinstein, visit their website at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CWHC-SanDiego> for local campaign and information, or  
<Http://www.californiawild.org> for statewide campaign information.

Rob Hutsel, Director of Projects and Programs at the San Diego River Park Foundation, was our third speaker. The mission of the San Diego River Park Foundation is to "support and empower community groups working to restore and enhance the river, and to foster stewardship of this important community and regional asset in perpetuity." Projects include the San Diego Wetlands Recovery Project, the Com-

munity Water Testing Program, and the Comprehensive River Education Profile.

Citing the river as a valuable source for our local flora and fauna, Hustel listed a number of ways that we can stay active not only to preserve, but enhance, the San Diego River:

- Be river conscious: talk, think and value the river,
- Be involved in a physical way; help beautify our river,
- Help out financially when possible, and
- Appreciate the river.

Visit their website at  
<Http://www.sandiegoriver.org/> for more information about the San Diego River Park Foundation and how you can help.



Our final speaker was Dr. Walter Boyce, Director of the Wildlife Health Center, School of Veterinary Medicine, UC Davis. Dr. Boyce highlighted the Southern California Ecosystem Health Project. He has been involved locally in a multi-year study whose goal is to better understand the relationship of mountain lions, deer, bighorn sheep, and the human population east of San Diego.

Boyce spoke briefly about an interesting trend noted during the tracking of bighorn sheep and mountain lions (both natural species). Information gathered during radio collar monitoring of both species indicated that the decline in bighorn sheep was in large part due to predation by the mountain lion population.

Boyce reported a hypothesis that fire suppression practices may be responsible. Fire suppression practices, force habitat changes, causing local deer to migrate outside of their natural ranges and into territory occupied by bighorn sheep. He commented that mountain lions are natural predator of deer and they follow local deer migration, encountering bighorn sheep along the way.





Further information about this project and the Southern California Ecosystem Health Program can be found

at:  
<http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/whc/Programs.html#SCEHP>



Though the presentations were limited to only 15 minutes per speaker, each made the most of every minute. Conservationists in every sense of the word, our guests speakers enlightened us with information, exhortation, and encouragement in becoming more involved in local conservation.

Besides the excellent information provided by our speakers, those who attended the event were able to enjoy a variety of food, learn about several different animals in Joan Embery's care, meet fellow AAZK members, and bid for items in the silent auction.



San Diego AAZK would like to thank Joan Embery and Duane Pillsbury for their generous hospitality. Not only were they gracious in providing their ranch for the presentations, but they also provided a close and educational look at the animals they have. Plus they ended the evening by hosting a delicious desert of ice cream with all the fixings.



The use of their ranch provides a unique setting for our talks each year and we are grateful for their involvement in the San Diego Chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers.

Thank you Joan and Duane and all our presenters and members who attended for this great evening!



# SDAAZK's Recent Presentations:

Reviews by Robert Cisneros

## The Wild, Wild Web

With Linda Coates, San Diego Zoological Society Librarian

When AAZK first began in 1967, one of its founder's goals was to encourage keepers to become experts in their field. At that time, most information on animal care was gathered anecdotally or through printed reference materials available through our libraries.

Today, keeper expertise entails knowledge covering a wide assortment of topics, including husbandry, behavior, exhibit design, reproduction, and studbook analysis, just to name a few. Though we still rely on our libraries as a main source for research, the advent of the World Wide Web has exponentially increased our accessibility to outside resources. In our AAZK August presentation entitled: The Wild Wild Web, Linda Coates, Zoological Society of San Diego Librarian, paved a path through the jungle of the internet using specific links and search engine information.

"Information comes in a wide array of different overlapping formats: hard copy, digital, audio and video," Coates said. "You have to be able to use a lot of different tools in order to access this information." In the past, a card catalogue and an understanding of the Dewey decimal and Library of Congress catalogue systems were the basic tools necessary to gather needed information. Today, the available resources are endless. Search engines, indices, data bases, and on line catalogues are some of the many tools utilized in web searches. Unfortunately, unless you know where to look, you can spend hours tracking down information that could have been found with just a few short key

strokes. Coates offers a solution, "the Zoo library has a web portal that gives you access to all of this information on zoos and conservation." The portal is a myriad of links and references to these websites around the world.

Space does not permit a complete summary of this informative talk. Nor could a summary do justice to the valuable resources made available thanks to our library staff. This follow-up will instead focus on a few of the more helpful websites and search engines that may assist you in acquiring information in a timely manner.

### BOOKS AND VIDEO

Using the Zoo library catalogue, you can look up many things including studbook information, videos, list of local libraries, and commercial book sellers. One way of finding information about a book or a topic is through AddAll (<http://www.addall.com/>). Information from AddAll will display a list of books by topic and their used and new prices.

### AZA

The American Zoo and Aquarium Association website provides information on upcoming conferences and workshops, job listings, keeper information and training information. Husbandry manuals and ethograms can also be found in the members only section. You can scroll through the list of available listservs and find one that meets your special need. The members only section in the AZA website (<http://members.aza.org/>) is available to Communicate subscribers only. If you receive Communicate then you are an AZA member. If you do not have a membership ID to access this informa-

tion, the library will provide you with access.

CAPTIVE BREEDING AND REINTRODUCTION (<http://darwin.bio.uci.edu/~sustain/bio65/lec15/b651ec15.htm>)

This hyper textbook was created by a UC Irvine professor. "It's a wonderful, wonderful resource; everything you wanted to know about captive breeding and reintroduction," adds Coates. From embryo transfer to condor reintroduction, this website has full text information and is very authoritative on the subject.

### ZOOLEX

This is a great site if you are interested in exhibit design. Here, you can find information on an exhibit for a particular species. The designs come from zoos all over the world. The information provided includes description, cost, and features that are dedicated to animals, keepers, and the visitor. Zoolex can be accessed at <http://www.zoolex.org/>

### CURRENT ZOO AND CONSERVATION NEWS

The library staff does more than just file books and guide inquiries. Linda Coates explains, "Daily, we cull all of the resources out there to bring you all of the news that's posted out there on zoos and conservation." This is helpful if you are just returning from a trip or vacation and want to find out what you missed during your absence.

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## Wild Web...

*Cont. from page 4...*

### RECORDS

According to Coates, the search engine Goggle (<http://www.goggle.com/>) is one of, if not the best search engine around. For instance, if you are searching for photos of a particular animal, go to Goggle, click on the images tab, type the name of the animal you are looking for and Google will display thumbnail pictures of the animal along with a link to that Web-page. You can use Goggle to find discussion groups or directories to web pages (displayed by category).

### CONSERVATION

2000 IUCN Red List of endangered species (<http://www.redlist.org/>). This international guide provides taxonomic, conservation status, and distribution information on endangered species around the world. Also included is information regarding status in the wild and relative risk of extinction. U.S. Fish and Wildlife (<http://endangered.fws.gov/>) has a website that provides details on endangered species around the world. Also included is information regarding status in the wild and relative risk of extinction.

### ANIMAL FACTSHEETS

The library has detailed, well researched fact sheets on collection animals. Fact sheets include a fact

summary page, maps, and a bibliography, including ZooNews articles. These fact sheets are compiled by ZSSD library staff.

The World Wide Web has revolutionized the way we gather information. Reference materials can be accessed or purchased without ever leaving your desk. The information is out there in cyberspace, all we have to do is know where to look... "If you need help, please come to the library and I'll be glad to walk you through the steps," encourages Coates.

Our library staff has taken the Wild out of the World Wide Web and tamed it. "It's a zoo out there!" muses Linda.

## "Do You Really Know What the Label on Your Pet's Food Says"

With Mark Edwards, San Diego Zoological Society Nutritionist

Our June SD AAZK talk was a 3:00 talk held at the Keeper Training Trailer.

Our guest speaker was Mark Edwards, Nutritionist for the Zoological Society of San Diego.

His topic was a repeat talk covering pet food labels and the regulatory organizations that govern how ingredients are described both on a quantitative and qualitative basis.

A review of Mark's presentation was

published in the Summer 2003 issue of the Keeper.

## Treasurer's Update

As of August 2003, the SD AAZK's treasurer, Nicki Boyd, reported our checking account to consist of \$10,062.03 and our savings account to have a total of \$3,164.02.

Of this money, \$500.00 was raised at the Joan Embery event from admission for non-members and the silent auction. \$96.00 came from eight new members that signed up that night, bringing the total membership to 77.

A total of \$6,644.00 is the final amount that was raised during this year's Bowling For Rhinos event, which will be sent to that fund. (Next year's BFR will take place on Saturday, June 5, 2004).

Of the \$3418.03 that will be left after the BFR donation, three SD AAZK members will receive approximately \$250.00 each in financial support to attend conferences coming up this year. A Conference Budget will be established for next year.

The Board discussed the possibility of having calendars made. Vice President, Bob Cisneros, is looking into different options to see if this would be financially worthwhile.

The next largest fund raiser for the Chapter will be in December with the Kobey's Swap Meet.

If you would like to assist in any fund-raiser or event, please contact our hotline at (619)231-1515 extension 4672.

## In The News:

# Rhino Population Continues to Increase in Kenya

This article was written by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). Founded in 1961 AWF is the leading conservation organization focused solely on the African continent. To learn more about AWF and its program, visit [www.awf.org](http://www.awf.org)

Friday, July 18, 2003

Not only is the eastern black rhino highly endangered, it is also localized in small populations of Kenya and northern Tanzania. Located primarily in fenced sanctuaries, these small populations hold the future of the species. Sanctuaries aim to have rhinos reproduce safely away from poachers, to increase and ultimately to repopulate other areas.

AWF Chief Scientist, Dr. Philip Muruthi, just returned from a 2 day visit to Ngulia Rhino Sanctuary in Tsavo, Kenya. "The AWF supported sanctuary has been a success" reports Muruthi. A night census was

has revealed that there are now 57 black rhinos at Ngulia, up from 53 individuals in 2001. An increase in births and no reported poaching incidents have allowed the Ngulia rhino population to grow. "We found that the security situation is still at high alert, following poaching in the adjacent Tsavo East National Park" says Muruthi. Muruthi also reported that Tsavo East National Park still offers much hope for rhino conservation. Allaying fears that poaching had eliminated the population completely, 30 black rhinos have been confirmed to be roaming freely in the unfenced park. There was an estimated 49 black rhinos in Tsavo East National park in 2001, so this is a setback for the "free-release" program.

But the rhino population is still reproducing with more than 2 babies sighted in the last 2 months.

With close to 500 individual animals, Kenya's eastern black rhino (*Diceros michaeli*) is still growing. The staff at Ngulia conveyed their appreciation of AWF's continued support of the government and other stakeholders such as the AWF.

Dr. Muruthi greeted the increase in ngulia's black rhino numbers with optimism, but cautioned that "the threats to rhinos are still profound, and we must not relax our efforts to save them. The staff at Ngulia continues to have urgent needs which can be met with the support of organizations such as AWF."

## Book Review

By Robert Cisneros, Hospital Keeper, SD Zoo

"*Life of Pi*" By Yann Martel

Published by Harcourt June 2002

326 pages

Message in a bottle: "Japanese-owned cargo ship Tsimtsum, flying Panamanian flag sank July 2nd, 1977 in Pacific, 4 days out of Manila. Am in lifeboat. Pi Patel my name. Have some food, some water, but Bengal tiger a serious problem." Pi Patel shared a lifeboat at sea with a 450 pound Bengal tiger for 227 days.

*Life of Pi* is the fictional story of the son of a zookeeper in Pondicherry, India. As a teenager, he embraces Hinduism, Christianity and Islam and personalizes them into a synthesized belief, merging each of them into a path of truth and piety. At age 16, Pi, his family, and a small menagerie of zoo animals destined for a North American zoo embark on a voyage to Canada aboard a Japanese cargo ship. Four days into the journey, the cargo ship sinks. Leaving Pi in a lifeboat with 4 very unlikely companions: a zebra, a hyena, an orangutan, and a 450 lb Bengal tiger. Eventually the tiger eliminates the other animals and Pi is faced with a new twist in surviving: keeping himself from being next on the tiger's menu. During the remainder of the 227 days, Pi uses his practical knowledge of animal behavior, combined with a quest for spirituality to keep both he and the tiger from perishing.

Many will find their own interpretations as they read this book. Animal care professionals will enjoy reading the chapters describing the Pondicherry Zoo, and in particular, Pi's notes on animal flight distance and escapes. At one point in the story, Pi and his brother Ravi are given a personal tour of the zoo, during which their father describes each animal's dangerous traits as they move from one cage to the next. The father instills in his sons a healthy fear and respect for the potential danger that lies behind every animal. As told by Pi, his father's philosophy extends beyond the captive animals:

*Just beyond the ticket booth Father had painted on a wall in bright red letters the question:*

*"DO YOU KNOW WHICH IS THE MOST DANGEROUS ANIMAL IN THE ZOO?"*

*An arrow pointed to a small curtain... behind it was a mirror.*

At sea, Pi's strong will to survive and his ingenuity in establishing his dominance as the Bengal tiger's trainer will inspire many who, like Pi, find themselves "sharing a lifeboat with a tiger." Preserving during a seemingly hopeless period, Pi sets his fears aside and utilizes his basic knowledge of animal behavior, which takes his survival whistle and whatever fish he can catch to establish his relationship with the tiger. Pi's challenge is to maintain this dominance while also keeping a healthy respect for his 450 lb boat mate.

The *Life of Pi* is an adventure, a tall tale, an allegory. Pi's epic 227 days at sea is related as a stream of consciousness. It is a discourse in one man's philosophy of life. It is a spiritual saga of survival and a lesson in exploring the boundaries of believing.

# Bump...

*(Continued from Page 1)*

amount of food, cages to house the animals while in the hotel rooms, bedding, training equipment, cleaning supplies, etc. need to be determined. Thanks to Mike McConnell, the CZ's Facilities Manager, we have traveling enclosures that not only break down into panels that fit into the van, but can be easily reassembled.

It is always interesting arriving at the destination to unload and set up the animals. People watch you walk by with something like a binturong and do a double take because they assumed it was some crazy looking dog.

Once at the hotel, we request rooms to be on the ground floor, which makes it easier to bring in the cages. And there is an agreement from the hotel that all furry, feathered or scaly guests are welcome.

We usually have to rearrange all the furniture in the hotel room to keep it a fair distance from the ani-

mals, something we learned the hard way after our scarlet macaw left chew marks at one place. We also have plastic sheets to cover the floor and as long as we show the animals to the house keeping staff, they usually don't mind the extra mess. But sometimes we can get too popular. I once had 5 house keepers trying to clean the room at the same time just to get a peek at the zoo animals. Now that is service! And we make sure no one tries to clean the room when we are not there for their and the animal's safety.

And we don't get just one room, we get two. We have found that the animal keepers need to have a separate room if they are to get any sleep. Most animals are nocturnal and can make it very difficult to sleep. On one of our first trips, we learned that opossums can get out of just about any type of temporary housing and that they really like Krispy Kreme donuts. I woke up to our opossum Virginia rustling through a bag right by my head. Talk about bed bugs! She only woke us up after she'd gone through the box of donuts and all the other supplies we had.

Another one of my hotel companions was our kinkajou Belize. She took over my room around 2:00 am running laps until I couldn't stand it anymore, so I

locked her in the bathroom. It only took an hour for her to figure out how to open the door and start her exercise program again. I finally had to restrict her to the traveling crate for the night. It just took me an hour to clean up her mess in the bathroom! We've also had an armadillo keep us up all night running around the bathroom.

It is hard to get up at 5:00 am and look perky for a 6:00 am news segment after a night like that. Then trying to find the news stations in a different town is an adventure in itself. Sometimes we would be so lost and tired we just had to laugh to keep our sanity.

So no matter if your traveling companion snores or tosses and turns, it can't be as noisy as the hooting owl, shrieking parrot, scratching armadillo, noisy opossum, marathon kinkajou, stinky echidna, huffing binturong, climbing porcupine, digging meerkat or peeping pygmy falcon! In a room like that, you expect things to go bump in the night!

## San Diego Chapter AAZK Updates...

- ◆ Due to the recent change in uniform policy at the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park, black sweat-shirts and t-shirts are no longer a part of the employee uniform. As an option to discarding these clothing items, SD AAZK has set up various collection boxes at the Zoo and Park where clean items can be dropped off. Clothes collected are being donated to various charities throughout San Diego, such as San Vincent De Paul's. Drop off spots at the Zoo are located in the Richmond Lounge and the Children's Zoo. At the WAP, the drop off spot is in the employee lounge. So far we have collected 91 old uniform shirts and sweatshirts. Thank you for your
- ◆ donations!
- ◆ As of next year, the San Diego Chapter of AAZK will have "Conference Budget" set aside to assist active SD AAZK members who would like to attend conferences but need financial assistance. Those interested will need to submit a proposal letter to the Board stating their intentions and needs by a yet to be determined date. Money from the Conference Fund will be divided among those interested. Details are still being worked out so and more information will be coming.
- ◆ The possibility of holding a photo contest was discussed. The photo contest may be held in conjunction with the making of a chapter calendar. Categories will include funniest, black and white, patterns, best sleeping, best mammal/ bird/ reptile, best action, and others. The winning photo of each category would be used for each month in the calendar. Both events are still being discussed.

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*The San Diego AAZK Chapter*

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## CALENDER

### LOCAL EVENTS:

#### *Watch for Updates*

**September 22, Monday:** 6:00 pm Social, 6:30 Presentation at the Zoo Rondavel. "Brown Bears of the Katmai Wilderness" A photo presentation of the behaviors of Alaskan Brown Bears by ZSSD Behaviorist JoAnne Simerson.

**October:** Photo Caravan at WAP, TBA

**November: TBA**

**December: Kobey's Swap Meet Fund Raiser, TBA**

### NATIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

**Wildlife Handling & Chemical Immobilization Course for Wildlife Professionals** January 16 – 18, 2003 presented by Mark Johnson, DVM, Global Wildlife Resources & the CA Wolf Center, Julian, CA (619) 939-6382

**AZA Managing Animal Enrichment & Training Program Course;** March 19-22 Orlando, FL. Info at aweider@aza.org

**AZA Eastern Regional Conference** March 26-29 Hosted by Riverbanks Zoo & Garden, Columbia, SC.

**AZA Central Regional Conference** April 30– May 3 Hosted by Milwaukee County Zoo, Milwaukee, WI

**AZA Western Regional Conference** May 14-17 Hosted by Calgary Zoo, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

**2003 AAZK Annual Conference** September 26 – 30 Hosted by Cleveland Chapter of AAZK. Info at (216) 661-6500

**1st International Conference on Zookeeping** in The Netherlands October 2 – 10, 2003 at Birdpark Avifauna. Info at <http://es.geocities.com/ixlares20/index.htm>

**6th International Conference on Environmental Enrichment** November 2 – 7 Hosted by Johannesburg Zoo Info at [www.jhbzoo.org.za](http://www.jhbzoo.org.za)