



Dedicated To Professional Animal Care



National Zoo Keeper Week 2018

Keeping it Together: Teamwork, Collaboration & Support

Dear AAZK Chapter,

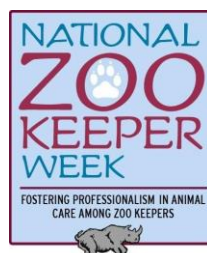
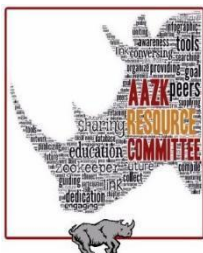
It's time to start thinking about National Zoo Keeper Week (NZKW) 2018. This year, along with raising awareness for the animal care profession as a whole, we would like to promote the importance of team building with the theme *Keeping it Together: Teamwork, Collaboration & Support*. To better prepare AAZK Chapters and facilities for the week, the NZKW Program and the AAZK Resource Committee (ARC) created this planning packet to aid in your success. Additionally, over the next few months we will be promoting animal care teams as well as AAZK Chapters and how working together makes them successful. We will be inviting you to recognize your own team via social media in the coming months: *What team accomplishments are you especially proud of? What methods have made your team successful? What can you achieve that you couldn't achieve without your team?* So keep your eyes peeled on our Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts on ways to celebrate with your teams.

During NZKW, AAZK's social media will also commit days to specific topics: *in situ (field) conservation, ex-situ conservation (breeding, incubation, etc.), training, enrichment, education & public outreach, animal husbandry, and some of our favorite animal stories*. How are all of these things made possible with the help of your team? We need you to share your stories with us to better engage the public – it's up to you to make NZKW 2018 our most successful year yet! This informational packet will not only help you prepare for NZKW, but also guide you through the process of sharing your stories, photos, and achievements of your team.

In this official planning packet, we have included a press release to provide your facility, ideas for chapter events and activities to hold the week of, a guide to AAZK's social media campaigns, and printable selfie papers. These elements can be used via social media and beyond to show the world what makes you #TeamKeeper, in what way you would like to recognize your team, and how you're celebrating NZKW. Please look for this packet to be updated annually; it will be sent out via email and available on the AAZK website.

The NZKW Program, ARC, and AAZK are here to help you make the most of National Zoo Keeper Week! As it is every year, this week is dedicated to sharing the passion and devotion of keepers to the world!

Sincerely,



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Celebrating Zoo Keepers' Strength in Numbers

Press Release

In acknowledgement of the team work it takes to care for animals and their wild counterparts, AAZK will be showcasing the collaborative skills of zoo keepers with the theme "Keeping it Together: Teamwork, Collaboration & Support" for 2018's National Zoo Keeper Week.

Tucson, AZ – July 15, 2018

In recognition of dedicated animal keepers and animal care teams, the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) and zooquaria across the nation are celebrating National Zoo Keeper Week from July 15-21. AAZK is continuing its successful #ImAKeeper social media campaign, which promotes professionalism and the dedication to conservation shared by all keepers. This year AAZK is introducing #TeamKeeper, which showcases the achievements and perseverance of animal care teams and their collaborative skills to achieving excellent standards of care.

AAZK is made up of thousands of individuals whose work is invaluable, which is why in 2007 the decision was made to devote a full week to recognizing the contributions keepers bring to the care and conservation of wildlife and wild places – National Zoo Keeper Week. Keepers accomplish amazing things as individuals, but even greater things are achieved when keepers work together. Therefore for 2018's National Zoo Keeper Week, AAZK members from across the country will come together to promote each other with the new social media campaign of #TeamKeeper. The campaign will showcase the theme of this year's NZKW, "Keeping it Together: Teamwork, Collaboration & Support," showing how much of a difference a strong team can make. The focus will be on collaborative conservation efforts, joint research and training projects, as well as achievements in animal care when working together.

Current AAZK President Bethany Bingham shares, "We are all part of one large team of animal care professionals working toward common goals. This concept of collaboration and combined initiative allows us to grow professionally, network effectively, and be a source for conservation both locally and globally."

AAZK invites all zoos, aquariums, and their guests to support this year's National Zoo Keeper Week celebrations, by following The American Association of Zoo Keepers on Facebook, Twitter (@AAZKINC), and Instagram (@AAZKInc) and sharing the posts with their social networks. By supporting AAZK, zooquaria and their guests can help promote the important work of animal care professionals across the country and around the world – and contribute to wildlife conservation at large.

This July, please join AAZK and their members across the country by following and posting #ImAKeeper, #TeamKeeper, and #NZKW2018 across social media.



SUPPORTED BY



Fostering professionalism
in animal care
among Zoo Keepers



National Zoo Keeper Week 2018 Programming

Share Your Team's Accomplishments

#NZKW2018 #ImAKeeper #TeamKeeper

Over the past three years, NZKW has started using *hashtags* to engage and connect AAZK's followers on social media with keepers across the country. This year, NZKW asks that you utilize official hashtags of National Zoo Keeper Week to continue that trend! By using these tags across social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), posts will be connected and easier to search for and share. Both of AAZK's social media pages on Facebook and Twitter will continue to share your photos and posts about NZKW this year, and further elevate the impact of the animal care field. While keeper appreciation week and similar terms are frequently utilized, the current goal of the NZKW program is to go beyond appreciation and move towards professional **recognition**. As such, ARC and AAZK wholly encourage the use of the unified NZKW hashtags and titles.

The NZKW team invites you to boast about the accomplishments, skills and support of your team, whether that be your team at work, your AAZK Chapter or your animal care department as a whole. Conservation efforts and excellent animal welfare can only be achieved when working together. Share your stories of team work with us (Kristen.scaglione@aazk.org) and we will share them with the world.



Share Your Selfie!

Please download the PDF attached to the NZKW planning packet email with printable “selfie” pages (entitled [Selfie Printables NZKW 2018.pdf](#)). You are encouraged to print the pages out on recycled paper or other materials, and fill them in with words or statements that you think complete the provided text.

Get creative! Take selfies (or regular photos) during your daily duties at work, with the animals you care for, or doing research in the field – and always remember to follow the social media policies of your facility or company. Share your images to the AAZK Facebook page (American Association of Zoo Keepers), Instagram (@AAZKInc), or on Twitter (@AAZKinc) with any (or all!) of this year’s hashtags. AAZK will share selected images in the weeks leading up to NZKW - you may even see a few familiar faces from your favorite committees and the AAZK Board of Directors!



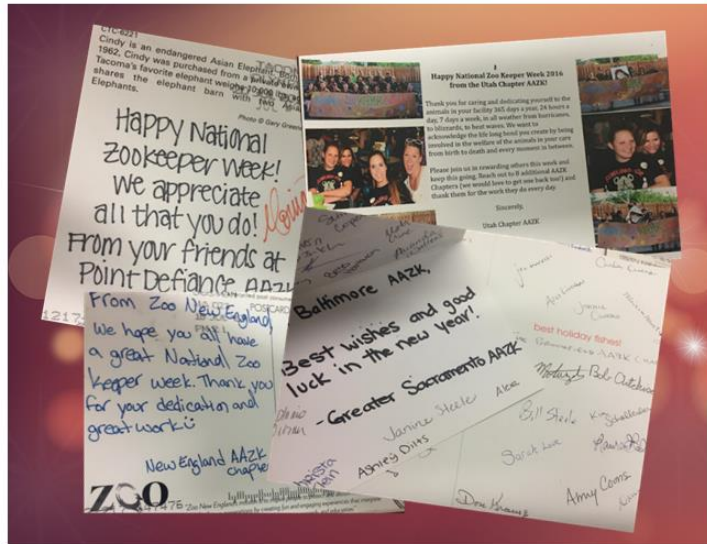
Please note, by sharing a photo with AAZK you’re acknowledging the following:

I hereby grant the American Association of Zoo Keepers permission to use my likeness in a photograph in any and all of its publications, including website entries, without payment or any other consideration. My permission indicates that my host institution has granted permission for the release of this photograph. I understand and agree that the image will become property of the American Association of Zoo Keepers. I hereby irrevocably authorize the American Association of Zoo Keepers to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish, or distribute this photo for purposes of publicizing the American Association of Zoo Keeper’s programs on social media, first and foremost for the promotion and educational value of the zoo keeping profession, but also for any other lawful purpose. In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photograph. I hereby hold harmless and release and forever discharge the American Association of Zoo Keepers from all claims, demands, and causes of action which, I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization. I am 21 years of age and am competent to contract I my own name. I have read this release before submitting a photo, and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release.



Postcard Exchange

Consider truly making it a *National Zoo Keeper Week* by participating in ARC's chapter postcard exchange! Connect with chapters across the nation and share how your chapter is celebrating team work in the zoo keeping profession! Between **June 1st and July 15th**, participating chapters will send cards to fellow chapters wishing them a "Happy NZKW!"



To enroll in the exchange, **contact Jenny.walsh@aviary.org** with your chapter's current mailing address, along with the name of the chapter member who is granting permission to share. Enrollment response should be sent no later than **June 30th**.

All enrolled chapters will both send a card to a randomly assigned chapter and receive a card from another chapter. Cards should be from either your chapter or affiliated institution. Gifts of any sort should not be sent; this project is meant to connect chapters rather than exchange goods.

The random assignments of receiving chapters will take place upon registration. Participants will receive the name and mailing address of their assigned chapter via e-mail and will be required to have their cards sent no later than **July 15th**.



National Zoo Keeper Week #ImAKeeper Graphics:

Over the past three years, the NZKW Program has created word clouds to emphasize the diversity of the animal care profession, both in title and in job description. In 2015, word contributions were submitted by followers on the former NZKW Facebook page and by delegates at the National Conference in St. Louis; additional contributions were also made by delegates at the 2016 National Conference in Memphis. With the previous generations of word clouds, AAZK and NZKW recognized how keepers were (and still are) much more than skilled laborers – they are complex problem solvers in an ever changing profession. Last year, under the guidance of ARC the NZKW team created these beautiful and dynamic animal word clouds, to personalize the position each keeper holds. NZKW will be publishing many more over the course of 2018. This year, in addition to varying species, the word clouds will feature different roles, tools and teamwork itself – so keep an eye out!



Other Programming

Every year, NZKW strives to bring the best of AAZK and the animal care profession to you, your chapter, and your facility. This year is no different! ARC and the NZKW Program have a few other things on deck to promote keepers... check your social media feeds this spring!



About the American Association of Zoo Keepers and National Zoo Keeper Week

The American Association of Zoo Keepers is a non-profit volunteer organization made up of professional zoo keepers and other interested persons dedicated to professional animal care and conservation. AAZK's mission is to advance excellence in the zoo keeping profession, foster effective communication beneficial to animal care, support deserving conservation projects, and promote the preservation of our natural resources and animal life. For more information, visit www.aazk.org.

National Zoo Keeper Week promotes the dedication and hard work of animal care professionals year round, celebrates animal care professionals' achievements during the third week in July, shares the accomplishments of AAZK Chapters, creates awareness of AAZK Chapters' dedication to conservation and wildlife to the public, and communicates the necessity for zoos and aquariums by way of animal care professionalism, research, and fundraising efforts.

Fact Sheet

What is National Zoo Keeper Week?

A program sponsored by the AAZK Resource Committee to recognize and promote dedicated zoo and aquarium professionals year round, culminating in an annual celebration during the third week in July.

What is the AAZK Resource Committee?

The AAZK Resource Committee (ARC) is an AAZK Committee dedicated to providing AAZK Chapters, members, and institutions with the tools necessary for elevating the animal keeping profession and the zooquaria field as a whole. In addition, ARC aims to answer the most common questions in the keeper profession, while addressing new issues related to the zooquaria field. The NZKW Program now falls under the ARC umbrella.

When is National Zoo Keeper Week?

National Zoo Keeper Week starts *annually* on the third Sunday of July. Remember – it's never too early (or too late) to start planning for NZKW; check out the dates for upcoming years:

July 15-21, 2018

July 21-28, 2019

July 19-25, 2020

What is the theme of NZKW this year?

In acknowledgement of the team work it takes to care for animals and their wild counterparts, the 2018 NZKW theme is **Keeping it Together: Teamwork, Collaboration & Support.**

Who should you contact with questions?

Kristen Scaglione

NZKW Team Lead

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What has NZKW done in the past?

National Zoo Keeper Week has focused on the diversity of zooquaria professionals – in what they do on a daily basis to what they do with their whole careers. These have been highlighted by posting daily keeping facts, chapter spotlights and inviting chapters across the country to share their stories. Chapters have shared their photos, activities, and events with AAZK National in order to bring zoo and aquarium staff together. NZKW has grown over the past couple years as more and more chapters get involved! Past themes of 'Keepers Care' and 'Golden Keepers' kept the focus on the above and beyond work keepers do for conservation both inside and outside their facilities. This year will have the same focus, but will be looking at keepers as a collective force, not individuals.

Why is there a National Zoo Keeper Week?

As the need to protect and preserve wildlife and their vanishing habitats continues to increase, the animal care professional's role as educators and conservation ambassadors has become essential. Zoo and aquarium professionals care for hundreds of species, including mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates.

Three hundred and sixty-five days a year, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, in all weather (from hurricanes to blizzards, to heat waves, and everything in between), keepers have to be ready for anything. They are involved in captive animals' lives and welfare from birth to death and every moment in between, and often create lifelong bonds. A keeper's day can include an array of tasks including cleaning, food preparation and feed out, medical treatment, training, enrichment, landscaping, exhibit design, animal introductions, public outreach and education, and much MUCH more.

Most animal care professionals have bachelor degrees or higher, many with advanced degrees, and continue to advance their education by attending workshops, conferences, and certificate programs annually. They are not just skilled laborers, but professionals who continue to expand their knowledge of an ever-advancing field. Working with animals requires constant complex problem solving and progressive learning. Beyond their daily duties, keepers are involved in research projects, field work, and conservation organizations.

But, in the end, being a zoo keeper, aquarist, aviculturist – whatever you call it, they're all animal care professionals, and it is more than just a job. It's a career; it's a passion, it's a calling. THAT'S why we recognize zoo keepers year round, and THAT'S why we have a week dedicated to promoting their skills, dedication, and enthusiasm for wildlife to world. *Join AAZK every third week in July, to celebrate National Zoo Keeper Week!*

Representative Susan A. Davis introduced House Resolution 509 on June 21, 2007:

This resolution was proposed to encourage individuals on a national level to engage in programs, activities, and ceremonies during National Zoo Keeper Week which encourage species conservation and public awareness of the important role of zoos in wildlife conservation.

"Expresses support for the goals and ideals of National Zookeeper Week. Recognizes the contributions zookeepers make to the care and conservation of captive exotic animals and to research, public education, and recreation. Expresses a renewed dedication to the appreciation and preservation of animal wildlife and nature and an invigorated effort to foster conservation projects and increase awareness of the need for preservation."

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AAZK is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

