



Dedicated To Professional Animal Care



National Zoo Keeper Week 2020
It Takes A Zoo: Zoo Keeping Takes Collaboration

Dear AAZK Chapter,

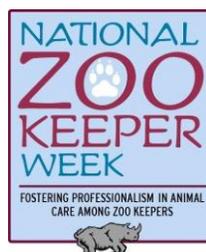
It's time to start thinking about National Zoo Keeper Week (NZKW) 2020. To better prepare AAZK Chapters and facilities for the week, the NZKW Program created this planning packet to aid in your success.

For #NZKW2020, we're highlighting the teamwork it takes to be a successful force in the zooquaria field. Not only will we be acknowledging different roles keepers take on, we will be touching on how collaboration with different departments and areas help you be the best conservationists and keepers you can. We will be providing tools to help communicate and share the true life of our profession. We need your help though -- over the next few months we will be asking YOU what you do to collaborate within your facility, what departments help you accomplish your goals and how they help you be a better animal care professional. We invite you to think about and share what few know outside of our field: *zoo keeping takes collaboration*.

Leading up to NZKW, AAZK's social media will dedicate days to specific departments that animal care professionals might call on to help achieve their goals. Infographics, photos and stories will be shared about what collaboration between departments look like for keepers. During NZKW, we will focus on recognizing keepers who utilize and bring together different aspects and departments to accomplish great things. We'll also talk about those keepers who are their own horticulture, maintenance, education department, etc! 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.

Included is a press release to provide your facility, ideas for chapter activities to help with education and recognition, 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 how #ItTakesAZoo and how you're celebrating #NZKW2020. 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 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. We also want to help make sure there are ways to celebrate NZKW in a time where social distancing and split departments may limit some traditional ways of recognizing the profession. AAZK is here to support chapters and keepers, as we are in this together.



Sincerely,

Jenna Schmidt
NZKW Program Manager
nzkw@aazk.org

Audrey Harmon
NZKW Program Vice-Manager
nzkw@aazk.org

American Association of Zoo Keepers, Inc.
8476 E. Speedway Blvd.
Suite 204
Tucson, AZ 85710
520-298-9688 Phone/Fax

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

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NZKW 2020: It Takes A Zoo

Press Release

National Zoo Keeper Week 2020 is about a spin on the popular phrase “it takes a village.” In order to explain the teamwork and collaboration needed of zooquaria staff, AAZK will be showcasing how collaboration of many different facets of a zoo make for animal care excellence.

Tucson, AZ – July 19, 2020

In recognition of dedicated animal care professionals, the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) and zooquaria across the nation are celebrating National Zoo Keeper Week from July 19-25. In addition to bringing awareness to the animal care field, AAZK’s NZKW promotes professionalism and the dedication to conservation shared by all keepers. This year, AAZK is introducing its #ItTakesAZoo social media campaign to showcase how zoo keepers collaborate with many different departments, and sometimes act as those departments in addition to their animal care jobs, to accomplish excellent animal care, conservation and education.

AAZK is made up of thousands of individuals whose work is invaluable, which is why in 2007, Congress decided 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, contributing more than \$896,000 to 235 conservation organizations in 2018 alone. Using their own time and money, keepers have kept this national organization growing for over fifty years, raising millions of dollars for rhino conservation through various events that stemmed out of an original “Bowling for Rhinos” idea. Despite all that dedication, their stories often go untold. Therefore, National Zoo Keeper Week 2020 empowers AAZK members across the country to come together and promote collaborations, teamwork and innovations with the new social media campaign of #ItTakesAZoo. The campaign will showcase the theme of this year’s NZKW, “It Takes A Zoo: Zoo Keeping Takes Collaboration.” The focus will be on the different collaborations that zooquaria staff utilize and what those different departments contribute to help provide excellent standards of animal care, go above and beyond in education and what their part is in conservation around the world.

Current AAZK President, Paul Brandenburger, shares “Zoos, aquariums, and other animal care facilities are fueled by a diverse and passionate assembly of professionals who strive to maintain the highest standards of animal husbandry, public education, grounds maintenance, and guest experience. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged those of us in the field in an unprecedented manner. The team-driven and collaborative responses by so many of the staff at these institutions has truly served to highlight the incredible people who devote themselves to the cause of preserving natural resources and animal life.”

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, join AAZK and their members across the country by following and posting #ItTakesAZoo, #ZooHeroes, and #NZKW2020 across social media.

National Zoo Keeper Week 2020 Programming

Social Media Campaigns

#NZKW2020 #ItTakesAZoo #ZooHeroes

For the past five years, NZKW has developed *hashtags* to engage and connect AAZK's followers on social media with keepers across the country. This year, NZKW has three hashtags specific for NZKW 2020 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. 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, AAZK encourages the use of the unified NZKW hashtags and titles.

Zoo Keeping Takes Collaboration

The NZKW team invites you to boast about your skills, accomplishments and hard work, whether that be you, your team, your AAZK Chapter or your animal care department as a whole. Share your stories about how you or your coworkers utilize all departments to make sure you are being the best keepers you can be! Email your stories of teamwork within your zoo to NZKW@azk.org and we will share them with the world. We will be creating resources to help you reach out to non-zoo professionals on topics like horticulture, maintenance, admissions, veterinary staff, education and much more!

Share Your Selfie!

Please download the selfie PDFs attached to the NZKW planning packet email with printable "selfie" pages. 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) or on Twitter or Instagram (@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 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 the NZKW Program's chapter postcard exchange! Connect with chapters across the nation and share how your chapter is celebrating teamwork in the zoo keeping profession! Between **June 1st and July 19th**, participating chapters will send cards to fellow chapters wishing them a "Happy NZKW!"

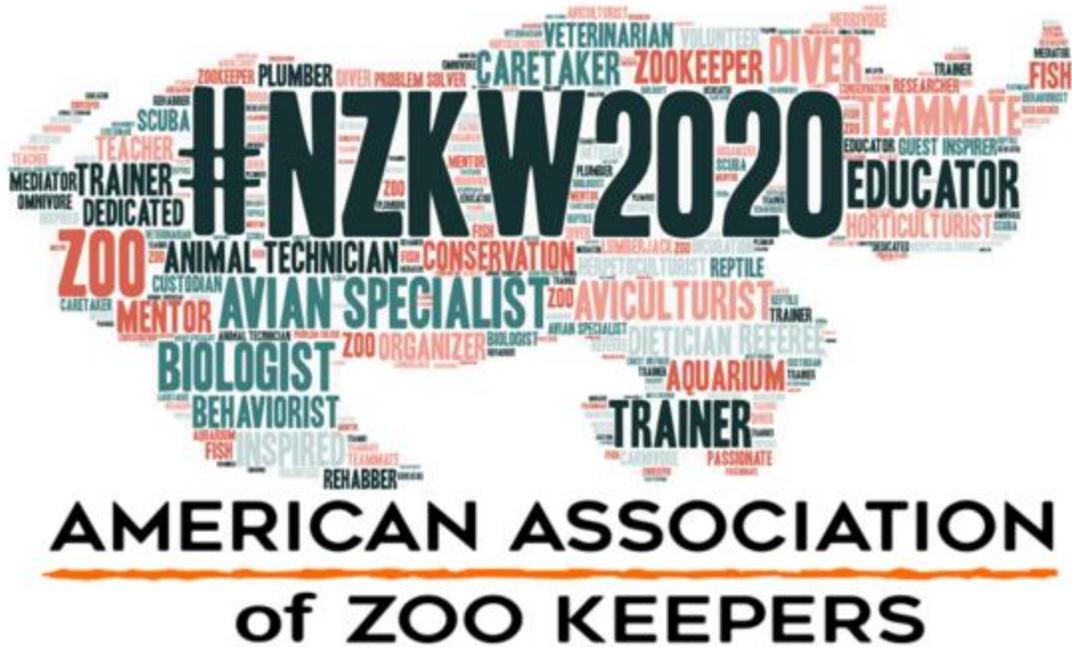
To enroll in the exchange, **contact nzkw@aazk.org** with your chapter's current mailing address, along with the name of the chapter member who is granting permission to share. Enrollment responses should be sent no later than **June 30th**.

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 19th**.

Word Clouds and Infographics:

During the past five years, the NZKW Program has created word clouds to emphasize the diversity of the animal care profession, both in title and in job description. 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. This was done by creating dynamic word clouds shaped in varying species, tools and phrases. The tradition will continue this year as new species are added to the word cloud family, as well as some new exciting shapes!



This year NZKW Program will be releasing sharable graphics to help educate about what other departments do zoo keeping by highlighting how #ItTakesAZoo to conserve species. Some graphics to keep an eye out for on social media include showcasing how horticulture, maintenance and veterinary services (and more!)

Events & Activities Resource Sheet

The NZKW Program Committee has put together a simple resource sheet on how National Zoo Keeper Week can be celebrated from the individual to the facility. This year we have added some ideas on how to recognize ourselves and peers while still maintaining proper social distancing and mitigation protocols, as some areas and communities may still be dealing with COVID-19. This can be found attached to this planning packet as a PDF or on the National Zoo Keeper Week section of aazk.org.

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! The NZKW Program has a few other things up their sleeve to educate and promote keepers...check your social media feeds regularly! If you have stories or ideas you would like highlighted please reach out to Jenna Schmidt or Audrey Harmon at NZKW@aazk.org.

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?

An AAZK national program to recognize and promote dedicated zoo and aquarium professionals year round, culminating in an annual week of recognition during the third week in July.

Purpose: The National Zoo Keeper Week Program exists to provide members with the tools and support to recognize their peers and promote the animal care profession during National Zoo Keeper Week and throughout the year.

Vision: The National Zoo Keeper Week Program will connect the public with animal care professionals in the name of raising awareness of what animal care professionals do year-round, recognizing their hard work, conservation efforts, and passion.

Mission: The National Zoo Keeper Week Program will provide tools and resources for the members that promote the animal care profession and educate the general public, each year finding innovative and novel ways of doing so.

When is National Zoo Keeper Week?

National Zoo Keeper Week begins *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 19-25, 2020

July 18-24, 2021

July 17-23, 2022

What is the theme of NZKW this year?

In acknowledgement of the team work it takes to run a zoo, with a special emphasis on the zoo keepers who utilize different departments to help care for animals and their wild counterparts, the 2020 NZKW theme is **It Takes A Zoo: Zoo Keeping Takes Collaboration.**

Who should you contact with questions?

Jenna Schmidt
NZKW Program Coordinator
nzkw@aazk.org

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. Last year NZKW worked on 'Keepin' it Real' by focusing on the little known sides of the animal care profession. Through infographics, testimonials and outreach we dispelled misconceptions about the profession and shared what keepers are really up to. NZKW is committed to education more than ever before and is focusing on expanding programming to be year-round in addition to the annual week in July.

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 the 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.”