



For Immediate Release

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NATIONAL ZOOKEEPERS WEEK OBSERVED AT ZOO ATLANTA
Annual observance spotlights the real-life work of animal care professionals

ATLANTA – July 19, 2011 – At Zoo Atlanta, the role of zookeeper isn't the stuff of fiction; it is a daily illustration of professionalism, commitment and devotion to more than 1,500 animals representing species from around the world.

National Zookeepers Week began July 17 and will be observed at Zoo Atlanta through July 23. Highlighting the work and achievements of zoo and aquarium professionals nationwide, the week is observed annually in July by the American Association of Zoo Keepers, a nonprofit organization with chapters throughout the U.S.

"National Zookeepers Week is a great time for us to reflect on the talents and contributions of our amazing force of animal care professionals," said Raymond King, President and CEO. "They are stewards of our own collection, as well as role models working toward the good of wildlife living throughout the zoological community."

Roughly one third of full-time employees at Zoo Atlanta are animal care staff working in four primary departments. Once considered unskilled labor that rarely demanded more than cleaning or feeding, zoological animal care is now a highly competitive profession requiring education, specialized training and hands-on experience. In 2007, the Atlanta City Council issued a proclamation recognizing the keepers at Zoo Atlanta, and the organization continues to build a growing reputation as a source of talent for the national zoological community.

About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. Complex

Carnivores, a new series of exhibits featuring bush dogs, fossa and binturong, opened on April 1. Zoo Atlanta is also proud to be one of only four zoos in the U.S. that giant pandas call home: Lun Lun's newest cub, Po, born November 3, 2010, made his public debut in spring 2011. Other highlights include the nation's largest collection of western lowland gorillas, the nation's largest zoological collection of orangutans and a global center of excellence for the care and study of vanishing reptiles and amphibians. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.

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