

## **TORONTO ZOO WINS TOP ZOO AWARD**

EDMONTON, Oct. 3: The Toronto Zoo, one of North America's top-rated zoos, has received the premier award of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums for its popular new exhibit area – Tundra Trek.

Association President Rachel Leger congratulated Toronto Zoo on receiving the Baines Award for outstanding achievement: “This is a great example of an exciting new exhibit area that combines the best in animal care with a design that maximizes the visitor experience. It ensures that Toronto Zoo visitors will be increasingly made aware of the urgency of dealing with the dramatic changes occurring in Canada's Arctic, their impact on wildlife, and the need for individuals to become involved”.

The exhibit, opened this summer, brings the reality of Canada's north to Toronto Zoo visitors, showcasing spectacular animals as well as native traditional knowledge. It dramatizes the rapid pace of climate change occurring in the north, its impact on the environment and animals, and spells out what must be done by individuals, organizations and governments.

The Baines Award was presented to Toronto Zoo at the closing banquet of the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums in Edmonton. Other awards presented include:

### **Col. G. D. Dailley Award**

This award, presented for success in breeding programs dealing with rare or endangered species, was jointly awarded to the Toronto and Calgary zoos for their work in bringing back the Black-Footed Ferret to the Canadian prairie.

This outstanding Canadian success story has resulted in the reintroduction – this week – of a group of ferrets in Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan. The Toronto Zoo took the Canadian lead in this project many years ago, and has been joined by the Calgary Zoo, as well as other partners such as Parks Canada. They have worked with US-based organizations to rebuild the ferret population to the point that they can be released to the wild.

The ferret, considered to be extirpated in Canada, is one of North America's most endangered species.

### **Peter Karsten Conservation Award**

Presented annually for achievement in conservation, the 2009 award was presented to Riverview Park and Zoo in Peterborough, Ontario for the development of the Kawartha Turtle Trauma Centre. This innovative new centre provides medical, surgical and rehabilitative care to injured turtles from anywhere in Ontario. It is a significant contribution to Canada's conservation movement, and is unusual in the manner in which it has brought together concerned citizens, corporations and governments to work together in a common cause. It is also considered to be a major achievement for a relatively small zoo.

#### Animal Enrichment Award

This award, presented to zoos or aquariums that have achieved significant progress in the design and management of exhibit areas that enrich the lives of animals, was won by the Zoo Sauvage de St. Felicien for their new Amur Tiger exhibit area.

This wonderful new exhibit is set in an outstanding physical location that is welcoming to the tigers and is designed to have minimal environmental impact. It ensures extremely good visibility for visitors, but also provides privacy for the animals. The new exhibit area is complemented by an outstanding educational and training program.

#### Eleanor Oakes Award

The newly-installed temporary habitat area at Montreal's Biodome received this award, presented for significant achievement by a zoo or aquarium for smaller projects.

This addition to the Biodome facility provides great flexibility in introducing new habitats and new animals to visitors. It is supported by appropriate educational materials and special visitor activities, all designed to interest the public in little-known ecosystems and their animals, setting out clearly and dramatically what people can do to support species and habitat preservation. In bringing this new information to the Biodome, staff knowledge of such species and their needs is also expanded.

#### Animal Care Professional Award

Bernard Gallant, a zookeeper for over 20 years at Magnetic Hill Zoo in Moncton, New Brunswick, is the first-ever recipient of this new award. Mr. Gallant, the zoo's animal care manager, is described as a professional who strives for excellence in animal husbandry and believes in the fundamental importance of conservation education at all levels. He has been a major influence in the transformation of Magnetic Hill Zoo for the past two decades.

Louissette Cote a staff member at Zoo Sauvage de St. Felicien for 28 years, was awarded a certificate of Merit in this category.

#### Volunteer of the Year

Mark Smith of Edmonton's Valley Zoo received this award. He has worked as a volunteer with the zoo for over 20 years, and while he has worked with many animals during that time, has a particular interest in raptors. He is described as having a "natural

gift” in working with birds, and combines the outstanding care he provides to animals with research inquisitiveness.

Thomas Newman of Mountain View Conservation Society, Langley, B.C. received a certificate of merit in this category, recognizing the five years and over 1500 hours he has devoted at the zoo.

#### Certificates of Merit

Certificates of Merit, recognizing major contributions to the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums, were presented to:

Cynthia Lee, Curator of Fishes at Toronto Zoo, and Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums since 2004. In her role with the Association, she has made a major contribution to modernizing its accounting and financial practises.

Jill Marvin, Director of Animal Collections, Aquarium de Quebec and a member of the CAZA Board of Directors since 2005. She has been a dynamic, energetic presence in the zoo industry for 20 years and has played a major role with the Quebec Zoo and Quebec Aquarium as well as leading the CAZA Conservation Committee.

*The Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a not for profit national organization that represents Canada's 25 accredited zoos and aquariums. It sets standards through its accreditation program, leads and coordinates work in the fields of research, conservation and education, and represents its members' interests with governments at all levels. For further information, contact:*

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