

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
Thursday, July, 18, 2013**

**For More Information
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Photo Credit: Toronto Zoo

IT'S OFFICIAL - NATIONAL ZOO KEEPER WEEK IS HERE!

Thursday, July 18, 2013 Toronto, Ontario: In support of National Zoo Keeper Week, Toronto City Council has proclaimed Sunday, July 21 through Friday, July 26, 2013 as "Zoo Keeper Week" in the City of Toronto! The Toronto Zoo, your local Southern Ontario Chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, is proud to invite you to a weeklong event celebrating National Zoo Keeper Week. This event will offer rare insight into the unique roles the Zoo Keeper plays within the Toronto Zoo. Come on out and catch a surprise Meet The Keeper Talk, see the tools of the trade, learn about keeper conservation initiatives, and meet some of the WILD animals. Also, be sure to watch the crazy antics of zoo staff as they compete in special games that mimic zoo keeping work. This is a week you will not want to miss, with special events everyday!

Mayor Rob Ford issued an official proclamation declaring Zoo Keeper Week. Zoo Keepers devote their lives to caring for animals and have become advocates for vanishing wildlife and promoting the critical need to protect endangered species and preserve nature's wild lands. Animal populations worldwide are declining at an alarming rate with many species facing extinction. Zoological institutions, including the Toronto Zoo, have become the final hope for many endangered species recovery programs through conservation research, release programs and by providing an environment in which the general public can view and appreciate disappearing wildlife. The Toronto Zoo has been instrumentally involved in such programs as the breeding and reintroduction of the black footed ferret, Vancouver Island marmot and the Puerto Rican crested toad, to name only a few.

Zoo Keepers play a vital role in the ongoing fight for species survival and the presentation of the natural homelands inhabited by the animals they care for. National Zoo Keeper Week provides the opportunity to recognize the efforts of our Zoo Keepers and increase awareness about the importance of animal conservation.

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"This week is special to Zoo Keepers because it provides us a dedicated time to share all aspects of our work with visitors. Our work is our passion and as a result many Zoo Keepers are heavily involved in conservation initiatives with species that they look after on a daily basis," said Nicole Presley, Wildlife Care Supervisor, Toronto Zoo. As well, it is an opportunity to take pride in the work we do and to renew our commitment to strive for the best care we can provide."

During Zoo Keeper Week, the Toronto Zoo, in partnership with the Southern Ontario Chapter of the America Association of Zoo Keepers, will present staff and public activities to celebrate the contributions of its keepers to the Zoo's wide range of programs and its mission to inspire others to love, respect and protect our wildlife and wild spaces. Special activities will take place at the Africa Picnic site and include "Keeper Games" from 12:00 pm noon to 1:00 pm Monday, 2013-07-21 through Friday, 2013-07-26, watch as Toronto Zoo Keepers from different 'zoogeographic areas' face-off against each other in Keeper vs. Keeper challenges! Don't forget about Special Animal Visitors at 11:00 am and 2:30 pm daily, and fun kids' activities including "Dress Up as a Zoo Keeper", "Name That Animal", animal tattoos, stickers and more!

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Toronto Zoo is accredited by CAZA (Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums). Look for this logo whenever you visit a Canadian zoo as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. For more information, visit www.caza.ca. Current Zoo Hours: 9:00am to 7:00pm. Last admission is one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$28.00. Children 2 and under are free, Children 3-12 are \$18.00 and Seniors 65+ are \$23.00. Parking fees apply. Prices include applicable taxes and are subject to change without notice. Events are subject to change without notice. The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25th).

torontozoo.com