



**Press Release
For Immediate Release
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**For More Information
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DEDICATED ZOO KEEPER GETS CHANCE AT WORK IN THE FIELD

Wednesday, September 29, 2010, Toronto, Ontario: A North American team of expert fish conservationists will assist local authorities in Madagascar to preserve and protect critically endangered fishes in the Ivoloina River. This project, called the Madagascar Fishes Project, is an international conservation project that has been in place since 1990 and, in addition to successfully identifying numerous new species, has supported conservation in Madagascar National Parks. Toronto Zoo Keeper, Tim McCaskie, along with Dr. Paul Loiselle of the New York Aquarium and Mr. Alexei Saunders of the Denver Zoo, will be working in the field surveying fish for the next several weeks.

Madagascar is the fourth largest island nation and is located off the east coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. It is home to some of the most critically endangered freshwater fishes on the planet as identified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The native freshwater fishes face a number of challenges to their survival such as habitat loss, deforestation and the introduction of exotic species.

Toronto Zoo's Mr. McCaskie is an expert in captive breeding of endangered African fish species. Dr. Loiselle is a renowned expert and taxonomist of the fishes of this region and was recently recognized by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) for his conservation work in Madagascar. Mr. Saunders is the Coordinator of the North American Conservation program for the Malagasy fishes.

The Toronto Zoo is a major sponsor of this project through its Endangered Species Fund. In addition, Tim has been holding fundraising events at the Zoo for over a year, through the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK), to support his travel expenses.

"Tim is especially interested in documenting the original habitat after working for several years at Toronto Zoo with these endangered species," comments Cindy Lee, Curator of Fishes at the Toronto Zoo. "There is always a strong possibility of finding more fish that have yet to be identified. Since his travel partners are well acquainted with Madagascar, having worked there for over a decade, he will be learning a tremendous amount from them and the Malagasy biologists. Tim's work in Madagascar represents a great example of international conservation partnerships."

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The Zoo is located on Meadowvale Road north of Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east or west bound.
Hours of operation are 9:00 am –7:30 pm with last admissions at 6:30 pm. General Admission (ages 13-64) is \$23, Children (ages 4-12) are \$13, Seniors (aged 65+) are \$17, Children ages 3 and under are free. Parking is \$10. Events and admission prices are subject to change without notice.
For general information, call (416) 392-5929 or visit

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