The third week of July is National Zookeeper Week throughout the country. The keepers at Roger Williams Park Zoo are incredible professionals who are dedicated to the animals they care for each day. Our keepers don’t only clean up after animals, and make sure they are fed, they also monitor their health, provide stimulating mental enrichment, train, decorate exhibits, and educate the public regarding hundreds of animals here at our Zoo. Their consistent goal is to be at the forefront of ensuring we provide all our animals with the highest welfare possible. Animal keepers work in extreme weather conditions throughout the year, come in on holidays and may come in during the middle of the night to check on a sick or ailing animal. The next time you visit Roger Williams Park Zoo, take the time to talk to one of these amazing individuals, learn about the creatures they care for and thank them for doing a great job taking care of our animals!

I look forward to seeing you at the Zoo!

SO, YOU WANT TO BE A ZOOKEEPER?

By Jeremy Goodman, DVM
Executive Director, RWP Zoo and RI Zoological Society

So, you are thinking about career options. Due to your love of animals of all kinds, the idea of being a zookeeper seems very exciting. The profession can be rewarding and interesting. Zookeepers work hard and are most often described as dedicated to animals, conservation and the environment. What does a career as a zookeeper entail? Let’s find out.

INFORMATION FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AGE STUDENTS

For young people in elementary school thinking about working with animals, there are interesting and fun ways to learn more about the profession.

• Take a trip to a local zoo, aquarium, or natural history museum.
• Watch the animal keepers at work and observe what they are doing. Ask them questions.
• Read books and magazines, watch nature shows on TV and visit websites on natural history, wildlife, and related topics.
• If allowed by parents, get a pet because taking care of a dog, cat, fish or other small animal teaches responsible animal care.

• Join a school’s science club, participate in scouting activities or find educational programs at a local zoo or aquarium.
• Go outside - observe wildlife in the yard, on a hike, or in a park.
• Attend ZooCamp – campers see the animals and learn about what goes on at the Zoo!
SO, YOU WANT TO BE A ZOOKEEPER!

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LOOKING AT CAREERS

As a high school student, there are some additional areas to explore if interested in a career as a zookeeper.

• It is important to never stop reading about and observing animals.

• Associate with other “animal” people and organizations.

• Students in middle school or high school may consult a guidance counselor regarding animal-related careers. Ask the counselor to recommend the right classes to prepare for a college education focusing on animal related fields.

• Take a look at the American Association of Zoo Keepers site, https://aazk.org/ for information regarding all aspects of the career.

• When the appropriate age – get a part-time job, consider working or volunteering at a local animal shelter, veterinary hospital, horse stable, zoo, or aquarium. This kind of work assists in gaining valuable experience that could benefit a zoo career. For more information on the Roger Williams Park Zoo’s volunteer opportunities, click www.rwpzoo.org/careers/volunteer

COLLEGE STUDENTS MAKING CHOICES

Once in college if the career of a zookeeper is still a priority:

• Take courses in life sciences, biology, animal science, natural resource management, veterinary medicine, environmental studies.

• Get a part-time job or internship in an animal-related facility, including vet hospitals, wildlife rehabilitation centers, zoos, or aquariums.

• It is VERY important to get as much on the job experience as possible working with exotic animals. Rarely does anyone (no matter what level of education) get their first paid full-time position without some sort of work experience to back up their knowledge.

• The best way to get that experience is to do an internship. For more information on the Roger Williams Park Zoo’s internship opportunities, go to www.rwpzoo.org/careers/internships.

Working in a zoo or aquarium in any capacity can be a rewarding opportunity. To get an idea of the zoo and aquarium world in general, please visit the Association of Zoos and Aquarium website at aza.org.

See you at the Zoo!
Rebecca Hollenbeck embodies what it means to be a zookeeper. She is dedicated to her profession, passionate about conservation, and tirelessly works with her peers to save species around the globe. In addition to her position as a zookeeper at Roger Williams Park Zoo, she is also vice president of the organization’s American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) chapter. AAZK’s mission is to advance excellence in the animal keeping profession, foster effective communication beneficial to animal care, support deserving conservation projects, and promote the preservation of natural resources and animal life.

As part of the work of the local AAZK chapter, Hollenbeck explains that “each July, we host a fundraising event called Bowling for Rhinos. The goal is to have fun while raising money to support the conservation and community work at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya.”

In 2018, after the success of the July Bowling for Rhinos event, Hollenbeck was nominated by her local AAZK chapter and then selected by the AAZK national board of directors to receive AAZK’s Anna Merz Rhino Champion Award allowing her to see the fruits of her labor at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Anna Merz was a British conservationist who, according to an article in the New York Times “went to Kenya seeking a serene retirement but became so appalled by the slaughter of black rhinoceroses that she helped start a reserve to protect them, becoming a global leader in the fight against their extinction.” A monetary award was set up in her name to honor those also fighting for the survival of wildlife.

Thus, in May Hollenbeck and her husband Chris found themselves in Kenya visiting the Lewa Conservancy observing how the funds sent from Rhode Island were put to use advancing Merz’s mission.

Hollenbeck spent ten days learning about the Conservancy’s conservation efforts, meeting businesswomen who are benefitting from AAZK contributions through a micro-lending program, visiting a modern library and visiting with school children who showed off the latest technology and conversed with Hollenbeck about current trends in the United States.

“I was excited to meet the rangers who walked the land daily looking for poachers and counting rhino and checking on other
animals. The rangers were proud to say that they had not had a poaching of rhino horns or elephant tusks on the reserve since 2013. But the most exciting aspect was learning how Lewa made sure the community prospered to help stop the poaching. If the residents receive a quality education and are engaged in meaningful work, then poaching to survive is not necessary. So, it was witnessing the whole system, all the various parts of the Conservancy working together that was most gratifying,” says Hollenbeck.

“Lewa is so much more than rhinos, so much bigger than I comprehended. Rhinos are certainly one of the main reasons we have our fund-raising event but seeing the work the staff at the Conservancy accomplishes at the 27 schools, health clinics, small businesses and animal conservation is overwhelming.” Hollenbeck says the whole trip was a “life-changing” experience. “I was surrounded by people every day who were making a difference in the lives of so many endangered animals, but were also hopeful, inspired and passionate about the work at Lewa. It didn’t matter who I met, a teacher, ranger, mechanic, maid – everyone was 100 percent invested in the Lewa work. Everyone I met wanted to be part of the work at Lewa.” Hollenbeck says that after this trip she has a better understanding of how important the AAZK work is to Lewa, and is excited about the July 27, Bowling for Rhino event at AMF Cranston Lanes, 1450 Elmwood Avenue, Cranston, RI 02910. For more information regarding Bowling for Rhinos go to www.rwpzoo.org/bowling-for-rhinos.

For additional information on the Lewa Conservancy in Kenya, go to www.lewa.org
DIY WILD ANIMAL ORIGAMI BOOKMARKS

Love animals? Love reading? Hate folding the corner of your page to mark your place. Then these wild critter bookmarks are here to save the day! They’re easy to assemble and simply adorable.

What you need:
• Colored paper
• Scissors
• Glue
• Pen/Pencil

Follow these easy steps:
1. Take a square piece of paper and fold it vertically and horizontally.
2. One large square is divided into four small squares, cut out 1/4 square with scissors.
3. Draw the diagonal line on two opposite squares, cutting outer portion of lines, leaving one square and two triangles.
4. Apply glue over one triangle and place another triangle over it.
5. Now your basic bookmark is ready! Add eyes, nose, teeth and eyes for your own unique critter!

Try this:
• Create an entire series of adorable critters for all of your books.
• It’s also a fun back to school craft!
• Try making these bookmarks out of recycled paper.
• Turn this craft into a learning experience. Explain to your little one why it is important to save and protect all species.

GUESS ZOO?

These photos show close-up views of interesting animals. Can you identify what’s in each picture?

Answers located on bottom of page.
MEMBERS CORNER

Download your digital eMembership Card on the App Store or Play Store for fast and easy access.

Download the eMembership Card app, under institutions select Roger Williams Park Zoo. Click "Find my membership cards," enter your last name and the phone number used when purchasing - then start using your card!

Start Using Your Membership Right Away!

Please allow up to 4 hours for eMembership card app to update with your membership information. But don’t wait to visit the Zoo! Just bring a valid photo ID to any admissions booth to take advantage of your membership right away.

Please note: If you purchased your membership through the mail, your membership will be active within seven to ten working days of receiving your payment. If you are unable to find your membership on the eMembership card app, please contact the membership office at 401-785-3510 x375 during our business hours for further assistance.

Discover Panama: The Land Between Seas with Lou Perrotti, Director of Conservation at Roger Williams Park Zoo

Travel Dates:
February 27 – March 6, 2020
9 days, 15 meals

Explore the colors, culture, natural beauty, and wildlife of Panama with Roger Williams Park Zoo’s director of conservation, Lou Perrotti! See firsthand the work the Zoo does to save amphibian species around the globe in a visit to the El Valle Amphibian Conservation Center. Cruise through the canal aboard the Pacific Queen on a partial transit and stay at the Gamboa Rainforest Resort. Travel via dugout canoe to meet the indigenous Emberá people. Hike along rainforest trails to a waterfall. Stay in Anton Valley, a community nestled entirely within a volcano crater. Meet the locals and learn about Panamanian folklore, artisan crafts, and rum distillation in Chitré. Make memories that will last you a lifetime!

Rates: Double $2,949, Single $3,549 *Book by August 27 and save $100 per person!

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For membership information call (401) 785-3510 x375 or visit rwpzoo.org.