



Reaching out to connect with the wild

You may have heard about the Zoo's flagship Conservation Outreach project, the Wechiau Hippo Sanctuary, but did you know that the Zoo's Conservation Fund supports about a dozen different conservation projects every year? "Each year we fund up to a dozen conservation projects in whole or in part," says Head of Conservation Outreach Brian Keating. "From grizzly bears and whooping cranes to hippos and snow leopards, a big part of our selection criteria involve supporting projects that are connected to animals our visitors see at the Zoo. When people see these animals, we want them to know that they can help do something to save them in the wild."



Dee Keating

Above: A glimpse of an elusive wild snow leopard.
Below: Rodney Jackson points out fresh tracks.

In search of snow leopards

Last March, Brian and Dee Keating travelled to the Himalayan Mountains to meet with Rodney Jackson of the Snow Leopard Conservancy. The Zoo has been supporting the Conservancy since 2001 and has granted just over \$19,000 US over that time. While there, Brian and Dee went on an unforgettable snow leopard trek. Get a taste of the drama of seeing a wild snow leopard as you read this excerpt from Brian's journal.

March 16, Friday: Day 8

Today was a day to remember. We saw the snow leopard, and not only saw it, but enjoyed its company for well over an hour.

Late in the day, after our first wash in over a week in the fast fading afternoon sun (a bucket bath with some warm water!) we headed back to our valley rock lookout.

Nurbu, one of the camp staff, suddenly appeared below us on the trail, quickly informing us that there was a leopard sighting just 30 minutes down the trail, with the cat on a blue sheep hill yet! We left all our stuff and burst over the hill, and ran. I lost Dee when she veered off to gather some things at the tent. Within 10-15 minutes, running almost the entire way, we were there, and so was the snow leopard! He was lying quietly and patiently about 30 metres above his tangled mill, draped like a carpet of fur over the rock at the top of a small cliff. His mill sat in a heap at the valley bottom like a pile of hairy burlap, with a magpie picking away at it, between two bushes within easy view of where we sat.

The leopard watched with intent as all of us arrived in dribs and drabs. His thick tail hung down long off the side of the slope, as he lay on a rock prominence, looking down at us with indifference. The fur on his face was stained red with blood, and the carcass looked seriously ravaged. As we watched, the cat eventually settled completely, and dozed off, only opening his eyes now and again to check us out. Rodney later called it 'drunk on meat', when they feed so much that they become lethargic and indifferent. The cat, an adult approximately 6 to 7 years of age, eventually got up to move his position, but hardly a half a metre, and then flopped down again like a sack of heavy potatoes. He blended in immediately when he lay down - his camouflage was simply perfect.



Rodney Jackson

Grassroots efforts save snow leopards

By providing funds to predator-proof livestock corrals, train in-country professionals, produce educational materials, and develop an award-winning community-based ecotourism program, the Calgary Zoo is helping the Snow Leopard Conservancy save these magnificent cats in countries like Nepal, India, Pakistan and Tibet.

"Our grassroots conservation and education activities grow from within communities, building strong foundations for locally-driven protection of snow leopards," says Darla Hillard, Education Director with the Snow Leopard Conservancy.

With increased tourism, local people have the opportunity to earn money from visitors so they are better able to tolerate the occasional loss of a sheep or goat. Each predator-proofed corral, built with help from the Zoo's Conservation Fund, saves as many as five snow leopards from being killed by herders in retaliation for livestock raiding. The Conservancy's camera-trapping census is also a vital tool in gathering accurate population data on the cats, at the same time providing a training ground for local people.

"The Calgary Zoo has been one of our most consistent partners in saving these endangered cats," says Hillard. "The positive effects of our partnership are reflected most tangibly in the area that Brian and Dee Keating visited last March, where snow leopards are being locally monitored, and where the attitude of the local community has been transformed from viewing the snow leopard as a pest to seeing it as a jewel of their mountains."

For more information visit www.snowleopardconservancy.org.

CONSERVATION OUTREACH

Snow leopard update

Make sure to see these fabulous cats in all their winter glory – but don't forget that you'll find them in a different place until early next year. Adding extra outdoor space for the elephants meant relocating the snow leopards from their old home. Right now, Peter and Indira are temporarily housed in the Canadian Wilds section's cougar habitat. They will eventually take up residence in the old spectacled bear habitat just behind the Elephant Crossing outdoor amphitheatre.

We're currently upgrading this habitat so it can accommodate snow leopards. Changes will include providing more vertical space for the leopards, repairing the roof, improving the public viewing for this habitat and making accommodations for future snow leopard cubs.



Want to learn more about snow leopards?
 Register for "Going High with Brian Keating" on page 17 and hear more about Brian's adventures with these cool cats.

International award recognizes Zoo Outreach

We are proud to report first place honours for the Calgary Zoo at the fifth annual Skala International Ecotourism Awards. The Conservation Outreach Department drew first for best practice in the category of Educational Programs and Media in relation to our international work with the Wechiau Hippo Sanctuary in West Africa.

Ecotourism, when done well, aims to encourage the conservation of the environment and help to promote the development of responsible and sustainable tourism. It aims to emphasize the importance of the interaction of the

physical and the cultural, striving to highlight the traveller's responsibility and the need for active community participation in resource management.



The Calgary Zoo was acknowledged for its work in spreading the news about community conservation to diverse audiences. Here in Canada, we use live presentations and printed media to bring-to-life the success story that is the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary. Meanwhile, back in Ghana, we support environmental awareness-raising at the local level through education programs and materials development.

For more information about Skala International, contact www.skala.org.

Go green! Read your newsletter on-line

Did you know that receiving your newsletter by email can help our conservation efforts? You'll be saving trees and the Zoo will redirect the money it saves in mailing and printing costs toward its conservation programs. Simply email your request to memberships@calgaryzoo.ab.ca and let us know that you would like to participate. We will discontinue your hard copy newsletter and send you an email message each time a new issue is published. Thank you for going green!



Discover Life on Earth!
ARCTIC: Jul. 27-Aug. 9 w/Brian Keating & Les Stegenga. The Svalbard archipelago including Spitzbergen. Amazing scenery and wildlife. Chance to view a solar eclipse. From \$6,195.

BOTSWANA: Jan. 25-Feb. 11 w/Cathy Gaviller. \$8,150 from Maun. "Secret season" for great wildlife, lush scenery and great value.

CHILE: Jan. 25-Feb. 10 w/Sarah Smith. \$5,550 from Santiago: mountains of Torres del Paine, Lake District, Atacama desert & wine country.

CHINA: Mar. 30 - Apr. 18 w/Barb Campbell. \$4,975 from Beijing, Beijing, Xi'an, Lijiang, Shanghai plus Pandas! NEW: visit the Tibetan town of Zhongdian, called Shangri-La.

CHINA ECLIPSE: Jul. 24-Aug. 8 w/Don Hladiuk and w/Glenn Hawley (R.A.S.C.) \$4,699 from Shanghai. Travel the Silk Road and witness a total solar eclipse.

ECUADOR - SPRING BREAK: Mar. 15-29 w/Margie Woo. \$4,965/child, \$5695/adult or teen. Galapagos, Quito, Otavalo market and the Amazon!

SUMMER SAFARIS - great for families

Kenya - 3 departures: (1) June 29-July 15 w/Laura Glick; (2) Aug. 2-18 w/Les O'Brien, (3) Aug. 9-25 w/host pending. \$4,678/child; \$6,220/teen; \$6,926/adult

NEW: Tanzania: July 12-29 w/Gayleen Jorgensen. CA\$4,175/child; \$5,535/teen; \$5830/adult.

NEW: Ecuador: June 28-July 15 w/Cathy Gaviller. \$5,995/child; \$6,760/adult or teen. Amazon, Andes, Galapagos & Quito.

INDOCHINA: Sept. 25-Oct. 15 w/Anne Wolever. \$5,479 from Hanoi. Highlights of Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos.

INDIA: Jan. 31-Feb. 18 w/Laura Glick. Revised: \$6,200 from Delhi. Tigers plus Taj Mahal, the river Ganges and so much more.

KENYA/TANZANIA: (1) Feb. 14-Mar. 2 w/Roger Barry; (2) Sept. 14-Oct 3 w/Sarah Smith; and (3) Sept. 21-Oct. 10 w/Judy Archer. Classic East Africa: Samburu, Ngorongoro Crater, and the amazing migration in the Masai Mara or the Serengeti.

MADAGASCAR: Sept. 7-Oct. 6 w/Trish Lund. \$6,995 from Antananarivo. A truly unique destination: lemurs & more!!

PERU: Sept. 28-Oct. 15 w/Barb Campbell. From \$5,970 from Lima. Manu (Amazon), Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley & Cusco.

PERU/ECUADOR: Jan. 26-Feb. 16 w/Gayleen Jorgensen. Machu Picchu, Sacred Valley, Cusco, cruise in the Galapagos.

Supporting Conservation Outreach.
 Call Civilized Adventures at 205-4120 or see www.civilizedadv.com