

# ZOO CONSERVATION OUTREACH GROUP (ZCOG)

Investing in the Future: Scholarships for Professional Development and Training

In 2005, Zoo Conservation Outreach Group (ZCOG) established a single scholarship, the ZCOG Conservation Training Scholarship, to provide Latin American zoo and aquarium professionals an opportunity to participate in AZA Professional Training Program courses. Thanks to a growing list of donor institutions and a thriving partnership with AZA's Professional Development Committee, the single scholarship has since expanded into a program of eleven annual awards. Over the last few years, these scholarships have helped forty-two individuals from ten different Latin American countries participate in a wide variety of AZA Professional Training Program courses – and the benefits to the animal management, environmental education, and conservation programs at the twenty-seven zoological institutions these individuals represent are already being realized.

The dramatic growth of ZCOG's Conservation Training Scholarship Program reflects a strong commitment to supporting the professional development of Latin America's future conservation leaders. Moreover, it demonstrates an understanding that capacity building and professional training are necessary components of both *ex-situ* and *in-situ* wildlife conservation efforts. Increasing scholarship and training opportunities – for both international and United States-based zoo and aquarium professionals alike – must therefore be a priority for the zoo and aquarium community if we hope to improve institutional standards, address sustainability needs, and contribute more effectively to global biodiversity conservation.

The following testimonials provide strong evidence of the positive impact that scholarships and the training opportunities they provide can have on zoo and aquarium professionals, particularly those working in developing countries. Likewise, they demonstrate that an investment in professional development and training is an investment in both the global zoo and aquarium community and the future of our planet's rich natural heritage.

If you or your institution would like to support professional development and training through a cooperative scholarship program, please contact [dhilliard@auduboninstitute.org](mailto:dhilliard@auduboninstitute.org).

Special thanks to all of our scholarship program partners: Audubon Zoo, Cameron Park Zoo, Dickerson Park Zoo, Ellen Trout Zoo, the Friends of the Alexandria Zoo, Jacksonville Zoo, Houston Zoo, Naples Zoo and Caribbean Gardens, the National Aviary, San Antonio Zoo, and the Western North Carolina Nature Center.

**DANIEL HILLIARD, PhD**

*Executive Director  
Zoo Conservation Outreach Group (ZCOG)*

## THE CROC COURSE, AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE



Thanks to the support of ZCOG's Ellen Trout Zoo Crocodilian Conservation Scholarship, I had the great experience of attending AZA's Crocodilian Biology and Captive Management course at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm, where I learned the best trends for management, biology, and conservation of crocodiles.

At Africam Safari, my educational outreach work with crocodiles has sometimes been limited due to a lack of husbandry and management experience with these important animals. The course, however, gave me the necessary tools and experience to deal with crocodile management situations and thus help improve the educational components of our conservation and educational outreach programs.

Attending the [Crocodilian Biology and Captive Management] course was one of the best educational and professional training experiences I have had. I had the opportunity to actively participate in husbandry exercises and develop many new ideas for conservation and educational outreach projects thanks to the experienced instructors and the creative colleagues that shared the course with me.

I am very grateful for the support I received from ZCOG through the Ellen Trout Zoo Crocodile Conservation Scholarship. Without this support this valuable training experience would not have been possible.

**CARMEN LINARES**

*Director of Conservation Education  
Africam Safari*



## CROCODILIAN BIOLOGY & CAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Over the last four years, I have been studying caimans in the wild, but I had little experience dealing with crocodilians in captivity. With the growing conservation interest in caimans it is important for me as a herpetologist, to increase my knowledge of crocodilians' biology and captive management. In

March 2012, thanks to the support of ZCOG and the Ellen Trout Zoo Crocodilian Conservation Scholarship, I had the chance to attend the Crocodilian Biology and Captive Management course held at the Saint Augustine Alligator Farm.

The course was really inspiring. It included all the necessary topics on dealing with captive crocodilians. All the instructors involved were very experienced and willing to help in every way possible. I returned to Brazil full of new ideas that I will put into practice at my work.

This was an amazing experience for me as a biologist. It really helped me grow in my career. Thanks ZCOG for this great opportunity!

**LUIZA PASSOS**

*Universidade de Minas Gerais (Brazil)*



## ADVANCES IN ANIMAL KEEPING

I was able to participate in the AZA's Advances in Animal Keeping training course thanks to the assistance of the Zoo Conservation Outreach Group (ZCOG) Conservation Training Scholarship, which covered all of my

course and travel expenses. The AZA course surpassed all of my expectations! Most importantly, it demonstrated to me that money doesn't have to be a limiting factor for improving animal welfare in zoos and aquariums. Instead, limited financial resources can be viewed as a professional challenge – and many things that do not depend on money can be done to help improve the well-being of animals in our care.

Participating in AZA training courses represents the best opportunity for zookeepers and curators to learn firsthand about the highest quality animal care standards in the world – and the many scholarships ZCOG provides makes these unique training opportunities possible for me and my colleagues in Latin America.

**DAVE WEDHEKING**

*Manager of Animal Health  
Cali Zoo, Colombia*



## CONSERVATION EDUCATION

The AZA's Conservation Education course provided me with the tools to design and evaluate education programs, and what I learned from the wonderful, week-long course will help improve our zoo's conservation education programs. However, the AZA training course experience was not only academic. I also had the opportunity to meet and share experiences with educators from several AZA zoos

and aquariums, and I am sure that these new contacts will help me as I develop new education programs and projects at the Jaime Duque Zoo. This experience would not have been possible without the support of ZCOG and the Dickerson Park Zoo, so I would like to thank them for providing me the opportunity to live this amazing experience.

**CATALINA RODRÍGUEZ ÁLVAREZ**

*Coordinadora Biología y Educación  
Zoológico Jaime Duque, Tocancipá – Cundinamarca  
Colombia*

## Exotic Animal Mortality Insurance Program

### ELIGIBLE CLASSES:

- ZOOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS
- EXOTIC ANIMAL PARKS / FARMS
- RESEARCH FACILITIES
- ANIMAL TRANSPORTERS/DEALERS
- RELATED ORGANIZATIONS
- EXHIBITS

### CARRIER:

- ALL CARRIERS ARE "A" RATED OR BETTER BY A.M. BEST

### LIMITS OF MORTALITY:

- CUSTOMARILY PURCHASE PRICE OR EVALUATION

### COVERAGE OPTIONS:

- FULL MORTALITY (INCLUDING DISEASE)
- NAMED PERIL INSURANCE, CATASTROPHIC LOSS – FOR LARGE COLLECTIONS (E.G., ZOOS)
- ANIMALS IN TRANSIT
- EXTENDED MORTALITY AFTER DELIVERY



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