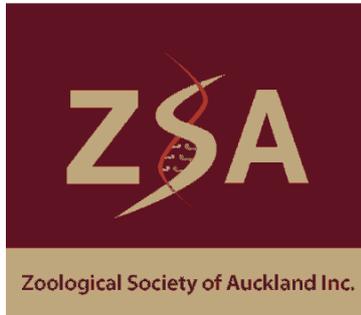




Zoological Society of Auckland

**Society Quarterly
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*We never know the worth of water till the well is dry.
Thomas Fuller 1732*



President's Annual Report **2010**

Tena koutou katoa.

A year ago, I outlined the major redevelopments that had been the Society's priority throughout 2008 and early 2009. These were instigated in order to re-establish the original goals of this iconic Society and to re-invigorate the membership. Along with the substantial change in operational structure, the name of the Society was also re-aligned in order to place the emphasis on the more holistic and scientific term "zoological". And so 2009 began after much hard work and upheaval, with a view to gently instigate our new aims and objectives yet provide some degree of functional stability. We aimed to provide an exciting range of seminars that would appeal to all ZSA members, and from the feedback of members and guests, I think we certainly succeeded. From working with cheetah rehabilitation/breeding to research on bird brains; from animal behaviour to Darwin's voyage; from Africa to New Zealand; through zoos, islands and seashores – and all delivered by a wide range of industry professionals. Behind the Scenes events were well attended as was, what is now a ZSA signature event, Africa Night.

2009 was also an important year for another reason – it marked the 80th anniversary of the Society. As such, the Board felt that this milestone should not go unnoticed, and as such the Society put on a stylish celebration in September for all members and supporters, held at the Old Elephant House, Auckland Zoo. Attended by the Mayor of Auckland The Right Honourable John Banks, Chair of the Zoo Board Councillor Graeme Mulholland, Director of Auckland Zoo Jonathan Wilcken and other prestigious guests, the evening also provided an opportunity to publicly and officially recognise the long and dedicated service of our Events Coordinator, Jean Wilson.

During the year, the number of active paid members rose slowly, although individual seminars were extremely well attended. The quarterly newsletter started to take shape and work was undertaken to develop the grant scheme. In addition, the website (www.zoologicalsociety.co.nz) went live and, although

still in its infancy, provides a much needed web face, marketing and information source for the Society.

So to 2010. Our main priority for this year is marketing and promotion. It is clear that we need to get the message out to a far greater audience. We will be taking the opportunities that have been offered to us by Auckland Zoo to increase our profile using their marketing machine, and we will explore other avenues to market the Society within other industries and organisations. To this end, we will call upon all our members and associates to individually 'spread the word' and invite guests to our seminars and other events.

We will ensure that the Society provides a seminar series every bit as professional and interesting as that provided in 2009, and associated with two of these seminars, stimulating field trips. It is my hope that the seminars are utilised to a greater degree for professional development, both for speakers and attendees. The organisation for our Africa Night event, although now scheduled in October, is under way, and we look forward to another great evening – and of course, a sizeable donation for the Conservation Fund. As with 2009, we will bring news of other events by organisations with similar interests, and we will further develop collaboration to ensure that we can provide a network of like-minded organisations.

We are indeed a small organisation and inevitably, our success and speed of development is proportional to the time, effort and number of people who are willing to provide invaluable voluntary support. To this end, I once again thank all the members of the Board of Managers for their continued and passionate work for the Society.

Thank you to Auckland Zoo for their continued collaboration and support, including the input from Peter Fraser, Conservation Officer at Auckland Zoo and professional zoo staff and volunteers. Lastly, I would like to thank those members that have stuck with us through the changes and welcome those who have joined us for the first time. I hope your time as a member of the Society will be long and beneficial. I look forward to a year of growth, excitement and new experiences.





Recent Developments

ZSA Travel and Conference Fund

It is with great pleasure that the ZSA is able to announce that its members may apply for travel and conference grants.

Approved by the Board in April, in line with the president's report to the AGM, the society is now able to offer three grants of up to \$500 (or in exceptional cases \$1,000) to any member that is taking part in professional development or presenting findings at a conference. Calls for expressions of interest are on-going, so members may submit applications at anytime. However applications will not be considered until specific dates in the ZSA calendar.

Applicants must be fully paying members of the society at time of application, and the activity must be related to Natural Sciences, in particular Zoology. Applications are assessed by the ZSA Grants Sub-committee convened by the Vice-President Mark Farnworth who states "This is a very exciting time for the society and, although small, the grants represent a significant step forward for the ZSA in terms of promoting and assisting with the dissemination of the Natural Sciences."

The society hopes that, as membership grows, so too will the number and size of the grants offered. Full information regarding terms and conditions of the grants as well as an application form may be found on the ZSA website: www.zoologicalsociety.co.nz

PRESIDENT'S REPORT—APRIL 2010

Kia ora,

For the ZSA, the year really starts in February, at the first seminar and then the AGM. So it was a powerful kick-off to 2010 with Peter Fraser (Auckland Zoo's Conservation Officer) providing a memorable seminar on 'conservation in Auckland Zoo'. After Peter's seminar, the audience were left in no doubt as to the zoo's commitment to conservation and its impact on projects both within New Zealand and abroad.

The following week saw a larger crowd at the AGM than had been present for a number of years and included the Director of Auckland Zoo, Jonathan Wilcken, and the Chair of the Zoo Board, Cr Graeme Mulholland. Here I outlined the achievements of the previous year and our intended goals for 2010. In short, our base has now been set and we must develop and expand by focusing on marketing to our potential audience. Two new members joined the board, Willow van As and Renny Hayes, and we said goodbye to board member and treasurer Margaret Ball. Once again, on behalf of the Society I would like to express our thanks for Margaret's continued input and important work. Our two new members have had a dramatic and immediate impact; Willow has initiated and developed our Facebook site as well as secured a number of this year's speakers, whilst Renny accepted the mantle of Treasurer at the last Board of Manager's meeting and is also busy looking into a marketing strategy for the ZSA. I look forward to working closely with them both over the coming years.

Since February we have had two wonderful speakers, Dr John Perrott on Kookaburra range limitation in New Zealand, and Steph Behrens on vessel strike of Bryde's whales in the Hauraki Gulf. The seminar series promises more to come (see page 11).

The ZSA board have been particularly busy over the last two months and 2 new areas have been developed. We now have an operational travel grant application system open to all paid up adult members of the ZSA (see opposite). We also launched our member's only page on the website, which will include the latest newsletter, grant funding application forms and other member-specific information. We have yet to add all members and provide passwords; however, I envisage this to be fully operational by the end of May.

An exciting field trip has now been confirmed for Sunday 20th June at Hamilton Zoo. Final details will be out soon.

Best Regards,

ZOOLOGY IN THE NEWS

Cows are fish???

Taking the relatively new cladistic view of taxonomy which looks at grouping organisms by single lines of ancestral descent, the group we have come to know as 'fish' may not exist as an entity – not without cows anyway. The problem occurred to cladisticians when trying to establish the evolutionary tree of three organisms – a salmon, a lungfish and a cow. Now traditional taxonomists place the swimming, streamline, aquatic pair – salmon and lungfish – neatly into one group and the large, ruminating land mammal somewhere else. However, looking at lineage, the salmon branches off on its own first, then sometime later the lungfish branches from the ancestral root of the cow. The fact that the lungfish has lungs and a number of other characteristics that allowed it (its ancestor) to develop into air breathing land animals – and eventually cows – means that cows and lungfish are more closely related to each other than either are to salmon! As such, using rules of cladistics the cow and lungfish have a common ancestor of their own, whilst the salmon and lungfish also share a common ancestor with cows (and all other mammals). Thus, if you choose salmon and its ancestors as being the 'fish' group, lungfish can't be included;



artvamanda.blogspot.com/2010/03/cow-panda-ma

if you choose the group lungfish and salmon as being 'fish', you must also include cows (and all other land vertebrates). Clearly, explaining to kids that the 'moocows' in the field are really fish is likely to meet with some intuitive resistance. (Adapted from Science vs Instinct; Conservation Oct-Dec 2009 Vol 10 No.4; P 25)

Pests demonstrate “self-control”

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists are tapping into the biochemistry of one of the world's



most damaging insect pests to develop a biocontrol agent that may keep the pest away from gardens and farms.

Aphids spread diseases that cost gardeners and farmers hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Some of the insecticides available are not environmentally friendly, and because aphids are developing insecticide resistance, some growers are being forced to use more of the chemicals.

Ronald J. Nachman, a chemist with the ARS Southern Plains Agricultural Research Center at College Station, Texas, is working with chemical signals known as neuropeptides that aphids and other organisms use to control and regulate a wide range of body functions, such as digestion, respiration, water intake and excretions. The effect triggered by the chemical signal is normally turned off when the neuropeptide is broken down by enzymes in the body. Nachman is developing neuropeptide mimics, or analogues, with slightly altered molecular structures that will not break down. His goal is to kill the pest by disrupting its digestion, water intake or some other biological function.

Information adapted from *Peptides*, 2010; 31 (3): 498 DOI: [10.1016/j.peptides.2009.07.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.peptides.2009.07.001)

NEWS FROM THE ZOOS

Wellington Zoo

Named as a finalist in Wellington's prestigious business Gold Awards in recognition of its sustainability programmes. The winner will be named on May 19th so good luck to them. Talking of winning, Wellington Zoo walked away with the 'Best New Large Exhibit' at the Zoo and Aquarium Association annual conference at Healesville Sanctuary, Victoria, Australia. The award was for the superb new animal hospital and centre for native wildlife care aptly named The Nest — Te Kohanga. The building is designed such that the zoo visitors are able to watch vet staff go about their business, including surgery.



White rhino mother Kito and father Kruger, produced a bouncing baby boy in March, although it wasn't an easy start for the young calf. Blood blister in his eyes meant that he was blind at birth and thus feeding became an issue. However, his sight has improved and he is now feeding correctly.



Hamilton Zoo



In May 2009, Kim White visited the Ape Centre at Zoo Negara in Malaysian Borneo. There she met a 20 year old chimp Rambo who had repeatedly escaped from his enclosure and was now confined to a small concrete den. Kim vowed to return with funds and expertise to help build a better enclosure and reintroduce Rambo with the main troop. The expertise Kim took along in March/April was Catherine Nichols, and she will be telling that story at the June seminar.

Southern Encounters Aquarium and Kiwi House

A newly hatched, if not premature, kiwi chick is the pride and joy of Southern Encounters Aquarium and Kiwi House, run by Orana Wildlife Trust.



Parents Tu and Ana, incubated the egg naturally for 43 days after which it was harvested for artificial incubation and hatched after only 69 days (the norm is 75-82 days). Orana Park also won another award for New Zealand at the ZAA conference,

taking the Best New Small Enclosure with their kea habitat walkthrough aviary. Sadly the mother of 4 one year old cheetah, Kura, died suddenly a few days after her cubs' first birthday. The initial results from post mortem examination indicate enteritis as the cause of death, although more details are being sought.



Franklin Zoo

The 'big' news at Franklin Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary is that Jumbo, now named Mila, the only African elephant in New Zealand, is doing very well. At the Sanctuary the ex-circus elephant receives 24 hour care and continues to embrace her new environment which has given her space to explore, toys to play with, sand pits for dust baths and wallows so she can enjoy being an elephant. The Franklin Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary is now appealing for funds to build a new barn with indoor heating and warm water for wash-downs. To help, go to http://www.franklinzoo.co.nz/assets/frz_donation_for_jumbo_form.pdf for more details.

Auckland Zoo

An exciting new venture awaits 5 Auckland Zoo hatched kiwi. The birds, 2 pairs and a single female, represent the first international transfer of kiwi in 20 years. They are to be split between San Diego Wild Animal Park, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and Germany's Frankfurt Zoo, and will be valuable assets in introducing new bloodlines to America and Europe, and providing opportunities for advocacy and research. And speaking of New Zealand's natives, Auckland Zoo has now received a \$2.69 million Lotteries grant to complete the fundraising for this huge \$16 million project. To be opened in September 2011, Te Wao Nui will provide zoo visitors a unique experience of New Zealand's fauna, flora and culture.



Seminar Series: Member's Report



My first experience of being a member of the Zoological Society of Auckland was attending a seminar given by Steph Behrens on Brydes whales and vehicle collision in the Hauraki Gulf. The topic was close to my heart as I volunteer for Project Jonah as one of their marine mammal medics. A fellow medic and board member, Willow van As, sold me on coming to the talk and joining the ZSA.

Fuelled by coffee, biscuits and the smell of wood chips we settled in to what was an informative, engaging and highly enjoyable talk. Steph's passion for whales was obvious and infectious. Her experience of similar problems with ship strikes on the East coast of the US and also the Mediterranean Sea showed her depth of knowledge and realistic outlook when translated to our own Hauraki Gulf.

The engagement of key stakeholders demonstrates her commitment to obtaining a workable solution for a complex issue.

After the talk the audience responded with a range of thoughtful questions and offered up their own suggestions and ideas. This included the engagement of children for their untainted, simplistic approach to problem solving and also the possibility of collaboration with Auckland Zoo.

I'd like to thank Steph and the ZSA for a wonderful night and the start of many enjoyable experiences as part of the ZSA.



Did you know?

- It's pronounced "*Brooder's*" and the whales are named after Johan Bryde who formed S. Africa's first whaling station.
- They grow up to 17m and weigh in at 41,000Kg.
- Gestation lasts for 12 Months and sexual maturity occurs as late as 13 years.

EXCITING SEMINARS FOR 2010

TIME

6:30 pm – 8:00 pm Grasslands Room, Auckland Zoo.
Meet 6:25 pm sharp at Auckland Zoo front gate of Motions Road, W. Springs.

COST (per seminar)

ZSA Members and Auckland Zoo Staff - **Free**

Auckland Zoo Volunteers, OAP and tertiary students on presentation of Student ID card - \$5.00

General Entry - \$ 10.00

(Door fee provides donation for work of the Zoological Society of Auckland)

SEMINAR PROGRAMME:

Illustrated presentations on zoology, natural sciences and conservation related topics, with opportunity to ask questions and to talk afterwards over light refreshments. Duration: 40 minutes to 1 hour.

- 20 May: Assoc. Prof. Dianne Brunton “Song, Life History and the Bell Bird”
- 17 June Catherine Nichols “Chimp Rescue”*
- 20 June *Associated Field Trip: Hamilton Zoo**
- 22 July Dr. B. Gill “Land Vertebrate collection at Auckland Museum, scope, importance and history”
- 19 Aug. Dr. M. Curtis “New brain cells for old brains”
- 16 Sept. Conservation Week (speaker TBC)
- 21 Oct. Prof. M. Walker “The magnetic sense”
- 18 Nov. Prof. R. Gray “Tool manufacture, culture and cognition in New Caledonian crows



ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUCKLAND INC



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

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one)

NEW RENEWAL Membership number: _____

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