

**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
**For Immediate Release**  
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Abbey Christensen  
Public Relations  
Tracy Aviary  
801-596-8500 ext. 111  
abbeyc@tracyaviary.org

### **International Vulture Awareness Day at Tracy Aviary**

Fun activities, education programs and close encounters with Nature's best recyclers

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Salt Lake City, Utah – The world would be a messy, smelly place without vultures and to celebrate these under-appreciated sanitation heroes, Tracy Aviary will host International Vulture Awareness Day on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011 with activities starting at 9:30am and ending at 4pm. This avian celebration will be as educational as it is entertaining featuring a variety of activities including a Parade of Vultures to kick off the celebration, an “Eat or Be Eaten” bird show, and a vulture-themed story time followed by meeting a Turkey Vulture up close!

Tracy Aviary's bird collection includes four species of vultures: Turkey Vulture, King Vulture, Andean Condor, and Black Vulture -our newest additions making their debut at this event. Vultures occupy a unique niche in the bird kingdom, dining almost exclusively on carrion – carcasses of dead animals. Turkey Vultures are a common sight throughout Utah, often seen soaring in kettles high in the sky. It's one thing to see them miles away, and a totally different thing to see them at Tracy Aviary, where they are literally just feet away from you. Michael Casassa, a native to Washington D.C. and a frequent visitor of Utah, explained, “I've seen many Turkey Vultures high in the sky before but never this up-close and personal. I had no idea their faces were so red and their wings were so large. It's great to get this intimate encounter with such beautiful creatures.”

Also included in Tracy Aviary's bird collection is the majestic Andean Condor, the largest species of vulture in the world. Bridger Collins, a guest visiting from Bountiful, UT was astounded by the size of the Andean Condor wings. "I had the privilege of seeing him while he had his wings spread out and was blown away by his huge wing-span," Collins said.

Tracy Aviary Bird Programs Manager, Helen Dishaw, explains the important role Vultures play in nature, "There are 23 species of vulture around the world and you can see four of them at Tracy Aviary. No matter where they come from, vultures fill the same role in their environment and it's an important one. By feeding on carcasses they help to reduce the spread of disease that would otherwise impact all animals, including humans. It's estimated that most vulture populations are at less than 50% of what they were 15 years ago. The good news is that conservation organizations around the world, including Tracy Aviary, are working to help vultures. The first step is raising awareness of these often-misunderstood birds – with awareness comes knowledge and with knowledge comes appreciation."

This year, Tracy Aviary is going all out in an attempt to educate the community on the importance of Vultures. For a full schedule of activities, please visit our website at [www.tracyaviary.org](http://www.tracyaviary.org).

**Tracy Aviary is located 589 East 1300 South inside Liberty Park, enter from 900 South and 600 East. Hours of operation: daily from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Cost: \$7 for adults; \$6 for seniors, military and students; \$5 for children ages 3-12 and children under 3 are free. Tracy Aviary fosters caring for the natural world, enriching and transforming lives through our connection with birds. For more information please visit our website at [www.tracyaviary.org](http://www.tracyaviary.org).**

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