

## TRACY AVIARY REJOINS RANKS OF ELITE ZOOS

### **Aviary Regains Accreditation from Association of Zoos & Aquariums, Which Had Been Denied in 2006**

**SEPTEMBER 16, 2009, SALT LAKE CITY** - Tracy Aviary has a new feather in its cap. Today the Aviary announced that it has been granted accreditation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, placing it among the nation's elite zoological facilities.

"The Tracy Aviary is one of the best in the world because it has met the highest standards in the world," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "It takes hard work and a sustained commitment to excellence to meet Association of Zoos and Aquariums Accreditation Standards."

Aviary leaders were delighted by the decision, which was announced last weekend by the AZA's independent Accreditation Commission.

"Obtaining AZA accreditation is an important achievement that will help us to attract and retain excellent staff, raise funds, and diversify our bird collection," said Aviary executive director Tim Brown. "More important, it is a seal of approval from leaders in our field that endorses the progress the Aviary has made and our exciting direction for the future."

The AZA denied accreditation to Tracy Aviary in 2006, citing uncertain funding and aging facilities. Since then, Aviary employees have worked diligently to improve and replace outdated exhibits and infrastructure. And in 2008, Salt Lake County voters overwhelmingly passed a \$19.6 million bond for improvements at the Aviary, providing a critical showing of community support for the institution.

"The Aviary owes a debt of gratitude to the Utah philanthropic community, Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County governments, and especially the citizens of Salt Lake County," said Brown. "Without their support, the leadership of Davis Mullholand and our fantastic trustees, and the huge and ongoing effort of the Aviary staff, this achievement would not have been possible."

The Aviary applied for accreditation earlier this year. In July, AZA inspectors conducted a rigorous on-site investigation at the Aviary. The inspecting team observed all aspects of the Aviary's operations, including animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff, and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; and visitor services. Aviary officials then took part in a formal Commission hearing last Sunday in Portland, Oregon, after which the accreditation decision was announced.

Work on the initial bond-funded projects is scheduled to start soon. The Aviary's master plan envisions an "Aviary of the Americas," where visitors can explore themes of migration and propagation, trace the migratory path of birds from Canada to Argentina, and learn about the important role Utah plays in that journey.

"Accreditation is a major achievement, but it's not the end of the story for us," said Brown. "Over the next three years, the Aviary will get better and better. I hope Utahns will visit the Aviary, enjoy the improvements we've already made, and catch a glimpse of our exciting plans for the future."

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting an institution dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, the AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats.