

Media Release:

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Crossing Continents in Zookeeping Knowledge

Zookeepers are swapping ideas and experiences in a cross-continent sister park agreement between the Territory Wildlife Park (TWP) and the National Aquarium in Baltimore (NAIB) in the United States.

TWP senior zookeeper Glen Ericson recently spent a month at the NAIB as part of an ongoing exchange program between the two establishments designed to share ideas and knowledge about keeping animals.

Mr Ericson said that whilst the two establishments are logistically different in terms of location, funding, visitor numbers and climate - they both share a passion for looking after animals, catering to visitors' needs, and entertaining and educating the public on conservation issues.

"In the US a lot of money is spent on developing zoos and aquariums, so the advances in technology tend to be more rapid than other parts of the world," Mr Ericson said.

"So while we can offer them advice and skills in their husbandry and specific requirements in Australian native animals, they in turn can show us their updated technology and advancements in keeping and training techniques."

Mr Ericson said the Australian exhibit at the NAIB features a variety of animals found in Northern Australia, with an emphasis on the Top End.

"The exhibit is designed to look like something you may see at a Northern Australian river gorge with lots of impressive imitation rock work over a massive 20,000 square metre area," Mr Ericson said.

"TWP supplied a number of top end native species to the Australian exhibit including the long necked turtle, yellow faced turtle, Mertens water monitor, frill necked lizard and death adder.

"It is quite difficult to transport some of these animals so as part of the program I've been able to assist with advice and techniques on establishing a breeding program for our native animals."

Mr Ericson visited 14 other zoological institutions whilst on exchange including the Bronx Zoo in New York, the Georgia Aquarium, Disney's Animal Kingdom in Florida, Philadelphia Zoo, Tennessee Aquarium and Atlanta Zoo.

The program, established in 2006 by TWP Curator Dion Wedd allows the establishments to alternatively host or send one of their zookeepers abroad to share experiences and knowledge.

Next year the TWP will play host to a keeper from the NAIB as part of the ongoing exchange program.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Glen Ericson on 8988 7228

Images

- 1. TWP Senior Keeper Glen Ericson with dolphin at NAIB**
- 2. Entrance to NAIB exhibit 'Animal Planet Australia – Wild Extreme'**

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