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Loveland Living Planet Aquarium Opens New Aviary to Support Species Survival Plan

Two Keel-billed Toucans to be Introduced

DRAPER, Utah (June 26, 2017) – Loveland Living Planet Aquarium is doubling the size of their main bird aviary in their Journey to South America exhibit. The renovated aviary opens Friday, June 30.

The aviary is expanding from 10 feet to 24 feet high. The goal of the expansion is to give two new bird residents, **Keel-billed toucans**, an opportunity to breed. This toucan species needs at least 16 feet of vertical height to build a nest. While breeding can be challenging for toucans in captivity, this gives them a better chance to do so. They are native to Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela.

The Aquarium's Keel-billed toucans are part of a Species Survival Plan (SSP), administered by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The goal of an SSP is to oversee population management within zoos and aquariums, and to enhance conservation of the species in the wild. The SSP for Keel-billed toucans is "Red," meaning institutions with breeding pairs are needed to maintain populations.

"It's very important for these birds to have space to build a nest and potentially breed," said Scott Chambers, Curator of Mammals and Birds. "The current population of Keel-billed toucans is decreasing in the wild. We want to support conservation efforts and help protect this species."

The improvements are creating a natural, robust environment to enhance breeding conditions, while also allowing guests to understand complex, ecological relationships. The larger aviary will also be home to two Red-footed tortoises and the Aquarium's two Swainson's toucans, two of only 25 individuals within AZA facilities that are also part of an SSP.

The aviary expansion project is sponsored by the Utah Division of Arts & Museums.

The Aquarium has another smaller aviary in the Journey to South America Gallery that houses Aracaris (pron: air-a-sar-ees) and Green oropendolas.

The media is invited to cover the opening of the new aviary, and meet and interview members of the Aquarium Husbandry Team.



WHAT: Aviary opening

WHEN: Friday, June 30 at 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Journey to South America Gallery, Loveland Living Planet Aquarium
12033 S. Lone Peak Parkway, Draper, UT 84020

About Loveland Living Planet Aquarium

LLPA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that inspires people to Explore, Discover, and Learn about Earth's diverse ecosystems. A world-class facility, LLPA provides learning opportunities at all levels, interests, and ages. Since opening its new facility in Draper in March 2014, the Aquarium has welcomed nearly three-million visitors. Additionally, LLPA reaches more than 60,000 Utah students each year through its outreach education programs.

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