

WAZA to Honour Parque das Alves Founder with Annual Hediger Award



A dedicated German veterinarian who helped create the largest bird park in Latin America and worked tirelessly to protect endangered species will be honored at the upcoming 72nd World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Annual Conference in Berlin.

Dr. Anna Croukamp, who founded the Parque das Aves with her late husband, Dennis Croukamp, in Brazil in 1993, will receive WAZA's Heini Hediger Award, given annually to leaders within the global zoo and aquarium community.

Dr. Croukamp and her husband were living in Namibia when they conceived the notion to create a bird park on 16.5 hectares of subtropical forest adjacent to the Iguassu National Park in southern Brazil. Eleven months after the Croukamps entered the country, Parque das Aves was opened, and has since grown to house over 200 species.

In 1997, Dr. Croukamp created the Blue-fronted Amazon parrot conservation project, and Parque das Aves contributes to several Brazilian government National Action Plans for endangered species, including the Lear's Macaw and the Yellow Cardinal.

"WAZA is proud to recognize the courage and commitment of Dr. Anna Croukamp,"

said Doug Cress, Chief Executive officer of WAZA. “She and her husband risked everything to create Parque das Aves, but the rare mix of conservation, education and sustainability they established is a model for others to emulate.”

Dr. Croukamp was awarded Brazil’s highest civilian honor, the Medal of Legislative Merit (Medalha de Mérito Legislativo) by the Brazilian Congress, and was awarded the key to the city of Foz do Iguaçu in 2015.

Heini Hediger (1908-1992), a Swiss biologist noted for his work in animal behavior, is known as ‘the father of zoo biology’. WAZA has honored his legacy through the award that bears his name since 1996.

Previous winners of WAZA’s Heini Hediger Award include Rick Barongi (Houston Zoo), Sally Walker (IUCN), Lena M. Lindén (Nordens Ark), and Gordon McGregor Reid (Chester Zoo), among others.

WAZA is the global alliance of nearly 400 leading zoos and aquariums in over 50 countries. For more, visit www.waza.org or contact secretariat@waza.org

