



MEDIA RELEASE

Zoo Keeper Awarded Prestigious Fellowship

Territory Wildlife Park zoo keeper Melissa Merry has been awarded the prestigious Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship.

The Fellowship, now in its 40th year, will enable Ms Merry to travel to the United States during next year's northern spring where she will spend two months learning more about the conservation of raptors such as eagles, kites and falcons.

"I have been passionate about birds ever since I was a girl growing up in South Australia and formed a particular interest in raptors since moving here four years ago to work at the Territory Wildlife Park," Ms Merry said.

"I am very excited about receiving this Fellowship as I will be able to learn so much more about the conservation of raptors and take those new skills and knowledge back to the Territory with me."

Apart from a four week internship at the University of Minnesota, Ms Merry will spend time at the International Centre for Birds of Prey in Charleston, South Carolina, the Carolina Raptor Centre in Huntersville, North Carolina and the Alaska Raptor Centre in Sitka, Alaska.

Ms Merry will then compile a report on what she has learned through her experience in the United States and plans to increase public awareness of the need to conserve raptors.

"Most institutions in Australia that deal with raptors are quite small by comparison to the ones I will be visiting during my time in the United States," Ms Merry said.

"The four places I will be visiting cater specifically for raptors and I will study closely what takes place in front of the large crowds as well as what happens behind the scenes, such as the care that goes into looking after these wonderful animals."

Ms Merry applied for the Fellowship after seeing it advertised on television and cannot wait until she goes to the United States, a destination she has not been to before.

"Potential applicants should definitely apply for the Fellowship as long as they have a passion for their subject and are able to demonstrate this in front of the selection panel," she said.

"A Churchill Fellowship can only serve to benefit you and your particular interest so it is definitely worth applying for."

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Media Note – For more information contact Melissa Merry on 8988 7200

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