

# NIABI ZOO

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## **Niabi Zoo Assistant Director to speak at first ever international Giant Otter Workshop in Columbia, South America**



*Niabi Zoo Assistant Director, Tammy Schmidt, asked to speak at first ever International Giant Otter Workshop in Columbia, South America.*

COAL VALLEY, Ill. (May 8, 2017) – Tammy Schmidt, Niabi Zoo assistant director, will speak about husbandry, reproduction, groupings and habitats at the first ever international Giant Otter Workshop at the Zoológico de Cali in Colombia, South America, May 9 to May 12.

This workshop is the first of its kind and will include European, North American, Central American and South American zoo professionals. The goal of the workshop is to create a Global Species Management Plan (GSMP) for Giant Otters. Establishing a GSMP provides an opportunity to combine information from several regional populations, thus expanding resources available on the population's size, carrying capacity, habitat and range.

“Niabi Zoo’s team are among the best in the zoological field,” says Lee Jackson, Niabi Zoo’s director, “Tammy is a great example of leadership and influence. She’s passionate and committed. Her contributions are helping to make the world a better place for all living things.”

Giant Otters are considered an endangered species – the biggest threat being habitat loss from human settlement and pollution. Currently, only seven zoos in the United States have Giant Otters, two of which have breeding pairs.

“Creating a GSMP for Giant Otters will allow us to maximize our efforts and create a long-term sustainability for these amazing creatures,” said Tammy Schmidt, Niabi Zoo assistant director, “I’m thrilled to be a part of this process.”

Although Niabi Zoo does not currently have a Giant Otter program, Schmidt has an extensive background working with this animal and continues to be involved with the Giant Otter conservation community. Most notably, she served as the Carnivore Curator at the Philadelphia Zoo in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 2008-2014 where she worked with a multigenerational group of Giant Otters including a prolific breeding pair. She’s also a member of the IUCN Otter Specialist Group, and has been an instructor for the Giant Otter Keeper Workshop in the U.S. in 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016. Schmidt also has experience with North American River Otters and Asian small-clawed otters.

“It’s very exciting that the first international workshop will be held in a range country for the Giant Otter. I’m staying in Columbia after the workshop to see this amazing animal in the wild!” said Schmidt. “I can’t wait to bring new knowledge back to my team at Niabi.”

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### **About Niabi Zoo**

Niabi Zoo offers an opportunity to explore more than 40 acres that encompass 200 animal species from multiple continents while enjoying the countryside of Rock Island County. This exploration guides guests through the discovery of more than 600 animals representing over 200 species from around the world. The Zoo places great emphasis on educating both children and adults about the importance of conservation and how they can play a part in saving species and their ecosystems for future generations. The educational center is an important part of their mission to connect the community with the natural world through conservation leadership and engaging educational experiences. Niabi Zoo strives to instill a sense of care and understanding for wild animals in each and every visitor as they work in the community. For more information about the Zoo, visit [NiabiZoo.com](http://NiabiZoo.com).