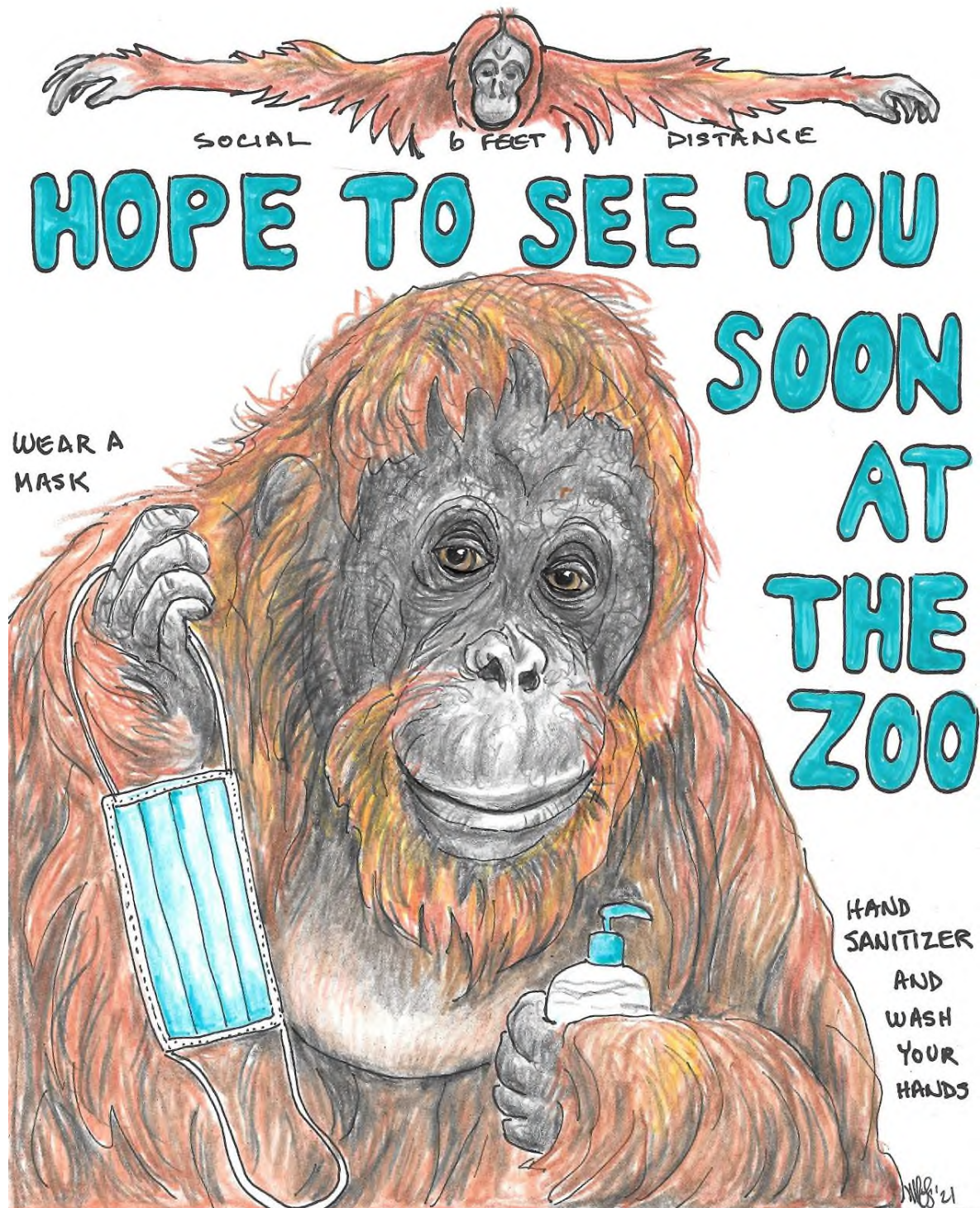


March 2021

The Columbus Zoo
and Aquarium
Volunteer Newsletter

ZooNews





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The mission of ZooNews is to promote awareness, education, preservation and conservation of our natural world.

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Like many people, I'm reflecting on what has changed over the past year. One thing that hasn't changed is the dedication, flexibility, and resiliency of Zoo employees and staff while 1) exceeding health and safety regulations and 2) providing top-notch experiences. I'm proud to be a part of the team, even if it's only from my computer for now (awaiting my vaccine).



The Zoo News newsletter is making a few adjustments to better meet the needs of new and returning adult volunteers, docents, and divers:

- The newsletter will be published at least once a quarter to match with the changing volunteer roles/needs of each season (we're already planning our May issue!).
- Each region will update us as warranted, so some months will be bigger than others. There is a lot of news in this issue – you may need a highlighter!
- Our goal this year is to intentionally focus on useful and relevant information that will improve YOUR experience while on zoo grounds, and/or to keep you in the loop until you return.

The newsletter staff is diligently working on articles about animal contact areas (such as the Asia Quest Aviary, see page 3) and the region-specific "stations." As most people haven't been on grounds for at least a year, we think it will be beneficial to provide some talking points and advice from experienced volunteers.

My tips:

- Check the portal for updates at least once a week.
- To sign-up for a shift on Volgistics from your smartphone, use the "desktop site" at log-in.
- Be yourself and let your passion shine. Instead of telling kids that kangaroos have big feet, show them the footprints in the walkway past the shade structure. Ask kids to use their own foot as a comparison. Then challenge them to see if they can jump as far as a kangaroo using the multiple footprints that provide a few short hops leading up to the big one (26 feet). I like to hop first, which helps break the ice for some children, and fun to do ☐

We're always open and looking for contributions, so if there is an area on which you'd like to provide some tips, or even write a few lines for us, please let us know!

Email us at CbusZooNews@gmail.com.

See you around the Zoo,

Emily Rapoport

Editor-in-Chief, Zoo News Newsletter

Tips from a Docent: Volunteering in the Asia Quest Aviary

Tucked away at the side of the Asia Quest region, across from the markhor, the Asia Quest Aviary is often overlooked by Zoo guests. Some people walk by and exclaim, "It's just birds!" Others are terrified of birds and they fear being "attacked," so they hurry past the area. A few people are confused by the signage and they think there are tigers in the habitat. Guests who skirt around the aviary don't know what they are missing! The aviary is not "just birds" and our feathered friends are well behaved, for the most part. In the summer, the Asia Quest Aviary is the home of ten species of birds, one species of (adorable) deer and one species of tortoise - the Burmese black mountain tortoise.

You do not have to know everything about every bird before volunteering in the aviary. This is truly one of the places where you can learn on the job! Download the AQA spreadsheet from the Portal (see the first Asia Quest listing) and take it with you. In addition to the muntjac, you should be able to identify the cattle egret, the Reeves pheasant and the magpie geese at the outset. As you spend more time in the aviary you will become familiar with the animals' personalities and favorite hangouts. Some birds, like the magpie geese, establish territories and they defend them with a passion. Others, like the white-crested laughing thrushes, the black-throated laughing thrushes and the azure-winged magpies are not territorial at all. You will learn the unique calls of some of the birds, but do not be alarmed if you hear a "meow" in the aviary. The black-throated laughing thrushes mimic calls of our native birds, including the gray catbird.

About those deer

If I am working at the aviary entrance, I ask guests to please stay on the path and to look for our muntjac. ("Reeves muntjac" can be a mouthful and it's hard to remember, so I just call them "muntjac.") Before they can exclaim, "Look at the BABY deer!" I say that our muntjac are neither babies nor are they the smallest species of deer in the world (that's the pudu). Reeves muntjac are native to China and they are quite common in rural areas.

People may be tempted to pet them, so I ask guests to keep their distance and to avoid touching any of our animals, no matter how much they beg to be petted! Tyler and Peanut are half brother and sister; Chowlei is not their mother, as some people assume. Tyler is easy to identify. As the male deer he has antlers, not horns. He spends a lot of time being

"friendly" with the girls but he has been "fixed" so there will be no babies. Frequent visitors to the aviary may know that Chowlei has had seizures in the past. If they ask you can tell them that she is on medication and that she is doing very well. Her seizures seem to occur more often when it's hot, and they may not be very noticeable. Peanut is being treated for an occasional cough, but if you see any unusual behavior be sure to radio the animal care staff.

Training tidbits

You have undoubtedly heard the expression "bird brain." While some bird species are not especially gifted (to be kind), others are remarkably smart, and they are very trainable. Lanister, the Reeves pheasant, is trained to get on the scale and he will be crate-trained in the future. The Northern shoveler duck Sylvester and the smew were brought inside when temperatures dropped below freezing. The smew is crate and scale-trained. He has also been trained to get on a mirror box so the animal care staff can check his feet. "Super worms" are high value treats for the smew! The azure-winged magpies are in the Corvid family. Without a doubt they are the most intelligent birds in the aviary. Like their cousins the crows and the ravens, they are good problem solvers.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

More about working the Aviary

Guests love to hear stories about our animals, and as you gain more experience you will have your own stories to tell. Some of the birds are real characters. Turner and Piker, the white-crested laughing thrushes, love shiny objects including keys, coins, pens and tabs from soft drink cans. If they *can* pick something up they *will*, so be on the lookout for foreign objects. Turner and Piker may jump up and down and “swear” at you for taking their toy, and if looks could kill...! The pair are also the “watchdogs” of the aviary and they are quite noisy if they sense “danger” such as service dogs passing by. Sometimes they will become excited by noisy guests and you might ask the visitors to give them more space.

As in all animal contact areas, we need to ensure that guests open only one door at a time, that they stay on the path and refrain from touching the animals. We ask them to close umbrellas because they may scare the birds, and if children are eating we may ask their parents to close snack bags because our animals are on special diets. Those messages can be brief and friendly; after all, guests are here to see and to learn!

- Bev Larson

Source: Thank you to Ann Wookey, Asia Quest animal care staff and self-proclaimed “bird nerd.”

AVIAN EYELASHES

Did you ever think about birds having eyelashes? Some of them do, but eyelashes in birds are not often studied. Cornell University undergrad student Kai Victor is helping the Cornell Museum of Vertebrates analyze eyelashes on birds in its collection.

Unlike mammalian eyelashes which are made of modified hairs, avian eyelashes consist of modified feathers. So far Victor has found eyelashes in at least one species in 28 of the 205 bird families studied. Most of these species tend to be large in size, nonmigratory, and nonaquatic. Their function is probably protective such as keeping the eyes clear of particles when flying, running or burrowing.

If there is such a thing as “eyelash envy” among birds, the most envied might be the secretary bird, whose long, curly lashes would be perfect for a bit of flirting (pardon the anthropomorphism). If you are searching for avian lashes among the Columbus Zoo animals, head to Heart of Africa and check out the ostriches, *Struthio camelus*. Ostriches were once known as camel birds because of their prominent eyes with sweeping eyelashes, as well as their jolting walk.



-Karen Linn

Sources:

Allaboutbirds.org

Columbus Zoo Information Manual

BIRD BEAK EVOLUTION

Question: What came first, the beak or the seeds?

Those of us who spend countless hours watching birds come to our backyard feeders have undoubtedly noted the diverse feeding behaviors and the many sizes and shapes of bird beaks. It is evident, even from casual observation, that different beak sizes and shapes impact the eating behaviors of birds, but it is less clear what factors may have led to the evolution of bird beak size and shape.



Early observations by researchers Boag and Grant on Daphne Island in the Galapagos noted that after a severe drought, small, soft seeds on the island were replaced with larger tougher seeds and that subsequently, the average beak size of the Medium Ground Finch became substantially larger. Both beak depth and body weight were selective advantages in times of drought and high adult mortality. The increased beak depth was a more effective “tool” allowing the finches to better crack open the larger seeds. Until recently it was felt that availability of food was the major selective pressure that drove the shape and size of a bird’s beak.



A recent publication by Nicholas Freidman, et.al. in the December 2019 *Proceedings of the Royal Society* has shown that it is more than just food availability that impacts the shape and size of a bird’s beak. This research team compared the impact of a number of factors including body size, climate and foraging activity on the beak size and shape of Australian honeyeaters, a very diverse group of birds. They found that the thickness of the honeyeaters’ beak was impacted by what they ate, but also by how they foraged, and the climate where they lived. As an example, the Black-headed honeyeaters that lived in a colder region of Australia had shorter beaks. The authors further reported an unanticipated finding; beak characteristics in turn affect the evolution of a species’ song. Species with longer beaks sang slower while those with longer/narrower beaks sang at lower frequencies. This is an example of the complexity of adaptations – seed availability led to changes in the nature of the species’ songs, which may in turn lead to other seemingly unrelated behavioral outcomes.



Inherited traits may be beneficial for some behaviors, but they may also serve as a selective disadvantage for others. Small beaks, for example, are better suited for heat retention (thus, found in colder climates) but on the other hand may be less well suited for shedding heat in the summer months. As a “trade-off” birds may adapt their behavior in warmer months by limiting foraging to early morning and late afternoon to limit heat stress. The bottom line is that the variety of interesting traits we can observe in birds are influenced by a number of competing factors, many yet to be identified. These in turn impact behaviors such as song generation, foraging activity and so forth.



Since one of the most important functions of the bird’s beak is feeding, there is an obvious relationship between beak shape and what a bird eats. Finches and grosbeaks have large cone-shaped beaks that can be used for cracking seeds.

Insect eaters such as warblers have thin pointed beaks which are used to pick insects off of leaves and twigs. Woodpeckers have a strong chisel-like beak which is used to peck holes in trees and reach insects under bark.

Hummingbirds have long tubular bills that they use to sip nectar from flowers .

However, researchers are just beginning to note that this association may be weaker and **far more complex** than previously noted. The complexity of the evolution of bird beaks is logical given the number of tasks that birds perform using their beaks: foraging, eating, nesting, singing, drinking, preening, defense, feeding their young, etc.



- Sally Rudmann

Question: What comes first the beaks or the seeds? Answer: It depends. The question is far more complex and multifactorial than originally thought and more research is necessary.

Factoids:

- Bird beaks have two parts – an upper and lower mandible. The upper mandible is part of the skull and does not move independently while the lower is hinged and moves up and down.
- A bird's beak is covered with skin that produces keratin, which in turn gives the beak its strength and durability.
- Some birds grow structures on their beaks during breeding ostensibly to make themselves more attractive.
- A bird's beak is vascular and contains numerous blood vessels making it sensitive to pain and bleeding if injured.
- Preening is an important function of a bird's beak (typically about 10% of the day). Preening typically involves reaching back to the preen gland to get oil and then using the bill to preen each feather moving from the base to the tip to remove parasites, reset the barbs and distribute the oil.

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NORTH AMERICA RESCUE STORIES

As we rejoice in the story of cougar cubs Captain Cal, Goldie and Poppy - their rescue, rehabilitation and new life in Columbus - it is important to remember that they are just the latest chapter in a long saga of non-releasable wild-born, orphaned, injured or "nuisance" animals that have found a home at the Zoo. The North America region is an orphanage, a foster home of sorts, and has been for years. Over time there have been other cougars, including matriarch Jessie, the first cougar "rescuee," and wildfire rescues Lewis and Clark, who came in 2015, as well as moose, bobcats, eagles, otters, cranes and aviary residents that all needed human intervention to survive.

It started with a bear. The first known "adoptee" was grizzly bear Mrs. Growly, who arrived from Yellowstone in 1967 at about seven months of age. She is believed to have been wild born, but there aren't any details of how she came into human care.

Since then, we know more about the back story of these animals that we rescue. It's hard to imagine gigantic brown bears Brutus and Buckeye as cuddly little cubs, but that's what they were when they arrived from Anchorage, Alaska, in the summer of 2004 at about six months of age.

Their mother was shot by police officers after she charged a resident. Soon thereafter it was discovered she had



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

cubs, one of which was rescued the following day, the second one 15 days later. Alaska Fish and Game reached out to AZA-accredited facilities looking for a possible home for the cubs, and the rest is history. A picture of the two playing in the water that first summer and juvenile paw-print casts are located in the mine shaft viewing area.



Photo courtesy of Kathy Ragsdale

The first black bear adoptions were Booboo in 1984 and Bubba in 1995, both at around six to eight months of age and both after having been raised by and confiscated from humans. Thankfully, Ohio now has stricter laws regarding the ownership of exotic animals.

Current black bears Joan Jett and Stevie Nicks were rescued in 2016 in Montana and Wyoming respectively. Found in inappropriate locations and in poor physical condition, they

were believed to be about one year old at the time and authorities considered them orphans too. After it underwent extensive rehabilitation, the bears went into their current yard in the spring of 2017.

- Nancy Mulholand

NORTH AMERICA: A LOOK BACKWARD

North America was the first realistic zoo-geographic area when it opened in the spring of 1985. The Zoo looked entirely different at that time. The entrance was at the current tunnel opening and there were only two buildings on the east side of the Zoo, pachyderms and herbivore-carnivore (now Asia Quest) both of which were considerably smaller than they are now.

Guests entered North America by walking through the pachyderm building and across a small bridge (not the current one) to the north of the swan yard.

The first collection consisted of cougars, timber wolves, bison and pronghorns. Cheetahs resided in what is now the Mexican wolf yard. The collection has changed throughout the years as additional animals have come, and the physical layout was updated several times. A black and grizzly bear area was completed in 1986, and the wolverine habitat in 1990. Moose came in 1991, prairie dogs in 1995 and the aviary opened in 1998, My Barn and Habitat Hollow opened in 2002 and reindeer became permanent, rather than seasonal visitors, when Polar Frontier opened in 2010.

- Nancy Mulholand

Sources: Columbus Zoo staff Shelly Roach, Kelly Vineyard, Josh Keller; various press releases, newsletters

POLAR BEAR OFFSPRING ON THE MOVE



Docents in Polar Frontier continue to receive plenty of questions about our growing polar bear cub Kulu along with his mother, Aurora, and aunt, Anana. Guests frequently ask about the status of previous cubs born in recent years at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. Two of Aurora's earlier cubs who left Columbus for other zoos have moved – or are headed – this year to new zoos.

Nora, born in 2015, went to the Oregon Zoo in Portland, Oregon, then the Hogle Zoo in Salt Lake City, and will return to the Oregon Zoo in March that facility said in a news release. Meanwhile, Nuniq, who was born the following year and later went to the Henry Vilas Zoo, moved last year to the Kansas City Zoo.

Nora, who weighs about 500 pounds, is expected to be paired with another female later this year, the Oregon Zoo reported. Nuniq, who the Kansas City Zoo says in a news release weighs 1,045 pounds, joins a 31-year-old female bear.

Nuniq's twin sister, Neva, and her half-sister, Anana's offspring Amelia Gray, also born in 2016, remain as favorites at the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.

- Barney Wolf

Sources: Smith, Nikki, assistant curator, North America Region, Press Release, Kansas City Zoo, Oct. 6, 2020, Press Release, Oregon Zoo, Jan. 27, 2021

ZOOCABULARY

Alphabet Soup: Here is a guide to some commonly used abbreviations for zoo-related organizations.

AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) founded in 1924, is a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of accredited zoos and aquariums in the areas of animal care, wildlife conservation, education and science. AZA is America's leading accrediting organization for zoos and aquariums and only accredits those institutions that have achieved rigorous standards for animal care, education, wildlife conservation and science. As of January 2021, there were 240 AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums.

www.aza.org

TAG (Taxon Advisory Group) These groups were established in 1990 to examine the conservation needs of an entire taxa. For example, gorillas, chimps, bonobos, gibbons, and orangutans are all part of the Great Ape TAG. Some basic taxonomic groups for which AZA TAGs exist include amphibians, felids, penguins, and marine fish.

www.aza.org/taxon-advisory-groups

CITES (Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species) of Wild Fauna and Flora is an international agreement between governments whose aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild plants and animals does not threaten their survival.

www.cites.org

AAZK (American Association of Zookeepers) was established in 1967. It is a non-profit volunteer organization made up of zookeepers and other interested persons dedicated to animal care and conservation.

www.aazk.org

AZADV (The Association of Zoo and Aquarium Docents and Volunteers) was established to facilitate communication and the exchange of information between zoo and aquarium docents and volunteers. In 2013 the name was changed from AZAD (The Association of Zoo and Aquarium Docents) to “reflect the expanding role of zoo volunteers.”

www.azadv.org

SECORE (SExual COral REproduction) is an international organization whose purpose is coral reef conservation.

www.secore.org

SSP (Species Survival Plan) is the program that makes breeding recommendations in order to maximize genetic diversity among zoo populations. All AZA member zoos must follow SSP recommendations as part of their accreditation.

www.aza.org/species-survival-plan-programs

- Kathy Goldsmith

Adapted and revised from the March 2009 Docent Newsletter

FAQ: WHAT TEMPERATURES AFFECT THE ANIMALS

March in central Ohio - one day it's winter, the next it's spring. Are the animals inside, outside or do they have access? It's 60 degrees, why isn't Heart of Africa open? Let's take a look at this period of transition.

The temperature at which an animal is provided outdoor access is dependent on many factors. There are no set rules: what works for one animal in one region might not necessarily hold true for other areas.

There are two main factors that predominate in the decision to put animals outside or keep them inside:

- Animal care staff are trying to maintain the animal's temperature stability.
- Animals can be acclimated to lower than natural temperatures.

All temperature guidelines are flexible, depending on wind, precipitation, footing and cover availability. They are age-related too. The presence of very young or elderly animals may affect their entire group, and conditions in the yard such as snow, ice and muddy soil also factor in.

Body shape and size are significant factors in how effectively an animal responds to temperature extremes. Animals with round bodies and short legs, such as an elephants, lose heat through their skin slowly and are less prone to cold stress than tall animals with long limbs, such as a giraffes. It's the ground temperature, not air temperature, that is considered for tortoises - they are "low riders".

Temperature *guidelines* for giving some animals access on *calm, sunny days*.

- Gorillas, bonobos, mandrills, colobus monkeys, langurs and siamangs: 45 - 50
- Flamingos, Asian otters, kangaroos, leopards, elephants, sloth bears: 35 - 40
- Heart of Africa - lions: 20, hoof stock: 30 - 50, vervet monkeys and giraffes: 50
- Koalas: 60, Komodo dragons: 65

Just because you don't see an animal it doesn't mean it's cooped up inside. Many animals, such as those in Heart of Africa, have yards beside their barns that aren't visible to guests that they can access on mild days. The Heart of Africa animals must go through a process every spring where they are re-introduced slowly to the savanna so keepers can re-teach recalls and introduce animals that have been separated over the winter. The staff starts by sectioning off a small portion of the savanna, and then half the savanna, before introducing animals to the entire space. The weather needs to be *consistently warm* for the keepers to be able to do this day after day. The process starts mid-March and can last through the middle of May.

- Nancy Mulholand

Sources: Adam Felts, curator, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium; Animals on View Temperature Range Columbus Zoo and Aquarium; Hickman, Cleveland; Roberts, Larry (1984) Integrated Principles of Zoology. St Louis Times Mirror/Mosby College Publications; Randall, David; Burggren, Warren, French, Kathleen; Eckert, Roger (1997) Animal Physiology, Mechanisms and Adaptations. W.H. Freeman Co.



REGION NEWS—ANIMAL PROGRAMS

Despite the winter weather, the region remains a wonderful place to visit the indoor residents of Jack Hanna's Animal Encounters Village (AEV) and the sea lion/harbor seal tunnel. However, the deck will be closed to volunteer opportunities at least until March.

We miss **sea lion** Simba but will never forget him. In fact, a heartwarming memory of him can be viewed via the Wine for Wildlife event video link. When comedian Pete Lee mentions his favorite animal at the Zoo is the giraffe, Simba quickly barks loudly in protest. Lee immediately retracts his statement in favor of Simba, who then waves a flipper in farewell to the virtual audience. It was an Oscar-worthy performance by our pinniped pal!

Since the Adventure Cove section of the region opened, guests have flocked to book the special experiences offered, including the Wildlights Sea Lion Encounter, behind-the-scenes tours and Pizza with Pinnipeds events. The animals have continued their training program for those events as well as in preparation for when the world settles and the attached pavilion and show pool can be utilized more regularly for demonstrations.



Photo courtesy of Lindsay Demuth

The energetic sea lion pups born in June – male Norval and female Sunshine – have delighted guests by joining the adult sea lions in the central and north pools.

The four **harbor seals** now have access to the outdoor pools and you never know when they will haul out onto a rock for a photo opportunity! They are originally from SeaWorld Orlando and can be identified by these flipper tags: Ferris – white; Sloanne – purple; Hillie – red; Keaton – green.

The binder containing region information can now be carried conveniently to the Adventure Cove site in a pinniped-themed tote bag created by docent Mary Smith. She also supplied the aqua magnetic board upon which magnets can be placed to indicate the current sea lion and seal occupancy in the main pools. Even though it can be challenging at times to identify an exact animal when they are all zooming through the water, guests are pleased to know which animals are on view in which pool.

Staff have started Chatting with Cheetahs tours, intimate encounters where guests get to meet some of our **cheetahs** and a few other animals. They also get to take a behind-the-scenes look at our cheetah run and watering hole experience while on the tour.

Our thoughts are with the trainers who cared for cheetah Ophelia. She was euthanized as the result of a recurring injury and its detrimental impact on her quality of life. Ophelia and her sisters, Luciana and Isabelle, were born December 4, 2016 at Tanganyika Wildlife Park. All were named after characters in Shakespearean plays. Ophelia was known for having a solid black stripe at the base of her tail.

In AEV, the **sand cats** have been very active in the habitats and animals have been shifting through as usual. Since there is less traffic in the winter months, the trainers have also been introducing some other animals into the habitats that have not ventured there before. So, be on the lookout for **cockatoos**, **toucans** and **macaws** as you walk through the hall! FYI, you might see tape on the windows for those critters while they figure out their new habitats.

Although the outdoor habitats are technically closed until the weather improves, Stevie **silver fox** has been spending time in them because she can tolerate the cooler temperatures. At the time of this writing however, she is recovering from a medical procedure and is not viewable as a result.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Staff continues to change which animals go into the various habitats. The **penguins** were in the Wharf habitat for Wildlights but have returned to the Promotions building for the remainder of the winter. The Wharf is now mainly inhabited by **otters** and Melvin, the **duck**.

New and different animals are being added to the Animal Encounters Tours to keep them more unique for everyone. Recently added additions include toucans, a **ground hornbill**, Curry **Indian crested porcupine**, a second otter and, at times, a penguin. Animals working on their debuts include Nico (non-flight) red-fronted macaw, LT scarlet macaw,



Photo courtesy of Astrid Kreidl

Percy **prehensile-tailed porcupine**, Ke\$ha **hairy armadillo**, Estella (flight) red-fronted macaw and Delta **capybara**. The tours have been popular and have enabled the trainers to still touch hearts and teach minds in these distant times.

AEV has been offering and presenting “assembly-style” programs via Zoom with great success. With some creativity and modifications, interactive and educational presentations are being produced for kids who are in school and at home that include the “What Zoos Do” program and grant-funded “Wild Wonders.”

Animal Programs tours and virtual programs are still occurring at the Promotions building. Sloth yoga was a success as always. In an effort to provide more opportunities for people to be healthy and connect with animals, a series of Workouts for Wildlife at the Safari Golf Club began in January. Guests have been accompanied by cheetahs and penguins in addition to rainforest and Australian animals.

Now that 2021 is well underway, a special expression of gratitude is offered to inaugural Animal Programs region leader Ann Karrick, whose love for the region’s animals is undeniable. Her years of dedication to the region are deeply appreciated as is the wealth of information she passes along to guests as well as the volunteer community.

Hope to see you all in the region soon!

REGION NEWS—ASIA QUEST



Photo courtesy of Nancy Mulholand

Welcome back to Asia Quest! It's been a while since our last full update, so let's check in on what's going on with the animals in the region.

The **elephant** herd is doing fine; there are still hopes and plans for pregnancies in the group. Beco is now 12 and had a comic-book themed birthday celebration on February 27.

The big news in the region is that there are plans in place to welcome a male **greater one-horned rhinoceros** in the spring. Soon, you will see construction in the outdoor rhino yards in preparation for his arrival. Once complete, there will only be one large yard. More information about the new arrival will be shared as it becomes available.

In the **red panda** yard, Kora and cubs Bandit and Santi can still be seen in the habitat. Dad Gen Tso has left Columbus for the New Zoo in Green Bay, WI, where he will meet a new lady friend. The current plan is for Rinzen to breed with a new female, but no specifics are available yet. Bandit and Santi likely won't depart for new homes until the fall.

All is well in the **aviary**. Keepers are expecting some new Chinese hwameis, which are a variety of laughingthrush.

No changes to report in the **markhor** group. All the females of reproductive age have been implanted as no breeding is planned for this year.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Mulholand

The previously-suspended plans to get a male **Pallas' cat** are back on. However, there is no timeline for a new arrival as of yet. Manda has been enjoying the new hammock in her habitat.

In **Amur tiger** news, keepers hope to breed Natasha and Jupiter soon. Mara is still enjoying the full run of both boardwalk yards.

The baby **tufted deer** born recently is being hand raised and is doing very well. He has been reintroduced to Joslyn and she is allowing him to share her space. When he is a little bigger, he will be introduced to Dexter and the outdoor yard. The **cranes** and **musk deer** are all fine.

No babies this year for the **sloth bears**. Heiderose is having her diet adjusted as she's put on a little weight with cold-weather inactivity.

The bat habitat is now home to a new **mouse deer**, Oona, who is Lily's mother. She is getting used to her space in the back and will soon be introduced to the habitat in sections. The **golden-mantled flying foxes** have been taking turns in the small enclosure within the habitat so they can eat without interruption and hopefully put on a little weight.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Payne

Two new male **silvered leaf langurs**, Bernie and Jasper, have been welcomed into the bachelor group. They are getting acquainted with their new friends and will soon join the other boys in the habitat.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Mulholand

REGION NEWS—AUSTRALIA & THE ISLANDS

There have been quite a few transfers from the region. **Hamerkop** Leia, the **storks**, **cockatoos** Bert and Grover and **otters** Alana and Pearl have all moved to new homes. The storks went to the Bronx Zoo to be with a larger flock and are loving it! With the departure of Alana and Pearl, we have a total of 10 otters that comprise 2 different groups.

We lost Darla, one of our **black swans**, toward the end of February. She will be missed.

We now only have **Australian walking sticks**, but no arthropods are visible in the nocturnal building at this time. Their windows have been boarded up temporarily, so visitors can proceed directly into the night walk area of the building.

Glitter **skink** moved to reptiles.

We currently just have one male **hadada ibis** in the Congo Aviary.

Katy and Thor are proud parents to a **koala** joey! Baby is out of the pouch nearly all the time and is cute as a button. Katy is very proudly sharing off her little one.



Photo courtesy of Bill Blair

Gouda **loris** is pregnant and due soon. However, none of the lorises are currently viewable due to COVID precautions as lorises are primates and there is open mesh in their public habitat. Thus, they will remain behind the scenes for the time being.

The **kangaroo** walkabout can't wait to welcome back volunteers! Please sign up and come out to see these amazing macropods in all their glory!

The lanyard card is up to date on the portal. It includes the kangaroos with some tag information to help with telling them apart, so please print one off to keep with you.

REGION NEWS—CONGO EXPEDITION

The **okapis** are doing well. Keepers have been using some cypress mulch as bedding and substrate in a few stalls and the okapis are enjoying it. The animals also received snow as enrichment a couple of weeks ago and Karatasi surprised everyone by quickly and eagerly eating it.

Leopards Jamie and Tyrion are also doing well. Tyrion enjoys enrichment that involves water, especially water inside of buckets or jugs. The boys have lots of new logs and stumps in their indoor habitat. They really enjoy rubbing and scratching on them.

The **orangutans** are doing quite well, even with all the busyness occurring outside. They spent all of January and about half of February in the old gorilla building instead of the orangutan area. The move gave them a break from early morning “wake ups” due to construction noise in addition to a change of scenery. Dumplin in particular enjoyed the move because she received more keeper attention in those rooms. The keepers cannot wait to get them situated in their new building.

Mandrills Mosi and Matilda continue to live in a subgroup together and rotate in and out of the front room. Mosi is growing like a weed and is more and more colorful each day. Matilda has her hands full with him. However, she is small and quick, so she gives him a run for his money. Julie and Eebi also live in a subgroup with each other and rotate between rooms in the back. Unfortunately, due to the way the building is set up, Julie and Eebi cannot have access to the front room for guests to see them.

Our **gorillas** are doing well. Staff have been doing cardiac ultrasounds with Mac and Ktembe, which they submit bi-yearly to the Great Ape Heart Project. Cardiac ultrasounds are done on males yearly but staff tend to do awake ones every other year. Mac is a bit behind schedule as they really want to do an awake one with him this year. Keeper Heather has done a fabulous job training for this behavior.

Jamani is the cutest thing. She is very active and explorative. She is also spending time with all of the individuals in her group and touches Dad often. He is very patient and respectful of her. Sue is often seen giving her back rides and Nadami has been allowed to interact more with her little sister.

Keepers offered snow to the gorillas as enrichment and they really seemed to enjoy it. In fact, Kamoli was seen throwing a snowball at Mac. All of the kids are getting along very well. Kamina has been an incredible big sister to Zahra, who is a pistol and keeps everyone in line. All of the gorillas in Oliver’s group are also doing well.

All is well with the **bonobos**. Staff recently performed their first voluntary EKG with Jimmy! This, along with the voluntary blood pressures and cardiac ultrasounds, will allow them to better monitor his heart health. Several other bonobos are being trained for those procedures as well, and quite a few out of that group are already doing blood pressures and ultrasounds voluntarily.

Harold and Harriet **hogs** are both fine. Keeper Jessica continues to work with Harold on his “melty pig” behavior. This will allow for a better chance of seeing his underbelly and help staff look for abnormalities or injury if necessary.

Our **colobus** friends are still inside and are over the snow and cold! Sekani and Jabari have another breeding recommendation. Everyone is hoping for a little baby colobus this year!



REGION NEWS—HEART OF AFRICA

Happy 2021! We are currently in the clutches of winter but, thankfully, spring is just around the corner! Below is a brief update on what's happening in the region.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Mulholand

Lion Roary is rotating his time with Kazi, Imara and Nyasi, which is how they will be managed moving forward. Introductions between Roary and Asali have been discontinued due to concerns of her age and his motivation.

Ostrich Myrtle moved to the Cincinnati Zoo. They recently lost one of their two females, so Myrtle moved down there to be her friend. All reports have been that she is doing great! The rest of our ostrich girls are doing equally well.

All of the **vervets** are getting along just fine.

Our **giraffes** are doing wonderfully. Calves Ralph, Schaefer and Sammie are growing quickly and enjoy spending time with other members of the herd. So far, they have all been with Kasamba, Shaggy, Nitro, Logan, JP, Kipawa and Enzi. Tours have been booking like crazy and having visitors in to feed the herd has been nice for everyone involved.

All of the other animals in the hoof-stock barn are doing quite well. They are staying warm and counting down the days to savanna introductions, which are only about a month away!

On a sad note, we lost **East African grey-crowned crane** Bahati. He sustained an injury that led to removing part of his wing. Although he was healing well, he took a sudden turn after about a week. Though not confirmed, keepers believe Bahati got an infection that they were not able to combat. Bahati was a favorite to many due to his huge personality. He will be missed.

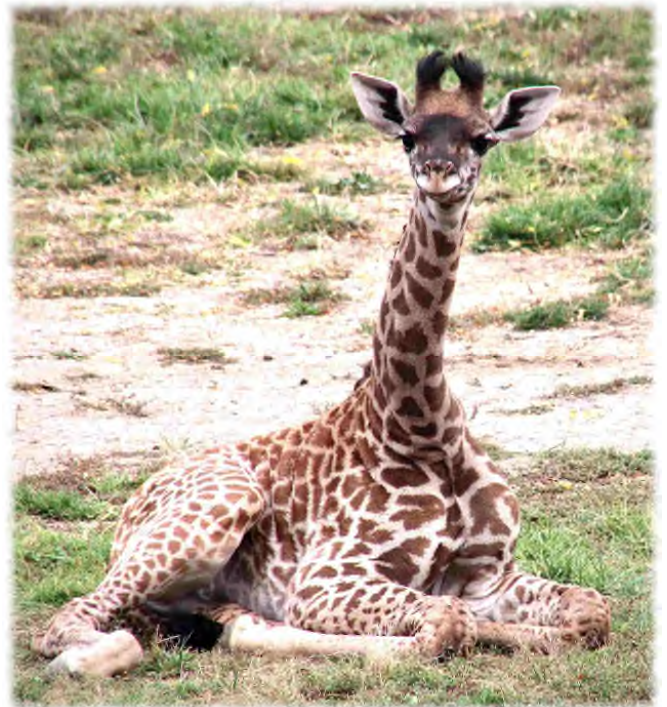


Photo courtesy of Jane Cirigliano

REGION NEWS—NORTH AMERICA

Swans Cher and Georgeanne were moved to My Barn due to the extremely cold temperatures. They are settling in and doing well.

All of the barn animals (**goats, sheep, cows and chickens**) are doing well.

Mexican wolves are doing well. The program had a very successful year as a whole, so we did not get a breeding recommendation this year. The wild population has increased by 24 percent and 20 pups were cross-fostered from zoos and conservation centers into wild packs!



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Banjo **pronghorn** is doing well.

The **bison**, Clover and Hermie, are doing well.

Beaver Zucchini recently had a procedure to remove a mass. Both she and Acorn were behind the scenes for two weeks while she recovered. Zucchini is doing very well but is missing some fur at her surgery site. Both beavers are now back in their habitat and have quickly built an impressive lodge next to their pool!

Otters Paso and Catori are doing well.

The **eagles** are doing well. Keepers rebuilt the upper nest this past month.

The **aviary** welcomed a few new residents: a hermit thrush, bluebird, rose breasted grosbeak, cedar waxwing and two scarlet tanagers.

Montana **bobcat** continues to be one of the most spoiled residents in the region and is receiving laser therapy for some arthritis.

The **lynxes** are doing well and continue to work on target training.

Stevie and Joan **black bear** are doing well.

Jessie **cougar** allowed for a voluntary blood draw last month and she is in good health. The three cubs, Goldie, Poppy and Captain Cal, have settled in nicely and have been introduced to Jessie. Keepers are still monitoring their interactions but everything is going perfectly. Thanks to everyone who has helped out with the extra watches!!!

Alvar and Guillotine **wolverine** have been separated for denning. Alvar is currently living in the otter holding area where he can still see and smell Gui. Consequently, Gui has the yard and building to herself. If breeding from last summer was successful, she could give birth anytime between Jan. 21 and March 7. Fingers crossed!

The **sandhill cranes** are doing well.

Bertha **moose** is doing well.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Mulholand

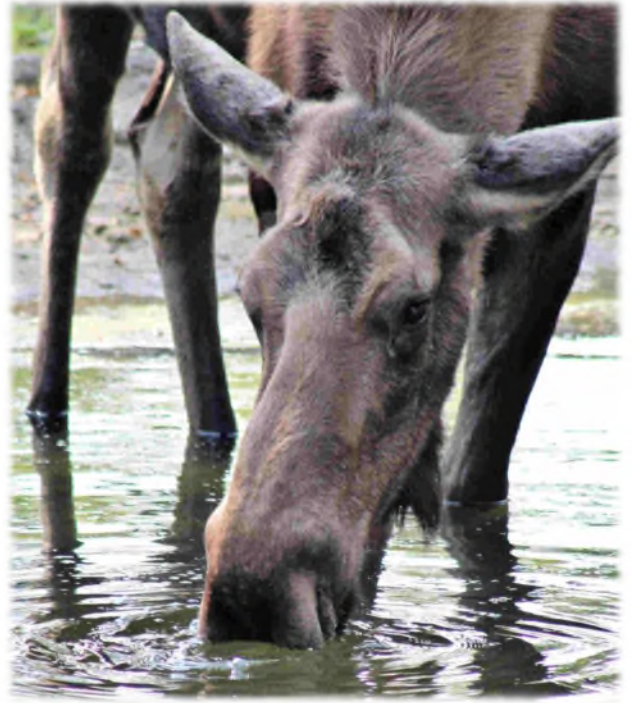


Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

The **reindeer** have shed their velvet and you may see them sparring with deadfall or each other. In case you haven't heard, you can now get up close and personal with our wonderful reindeer in a new encounter offered by the Zoo. The visit lasts 30

minutes and takes place daily at 2:30. Please visit the Zoo's website to book a tour today!

The **prairie dogs** are active on warm days but prefer to hide out in their burrows when it's cold.

The **Arctic foxes** are white and fluffy and enjoying the snowy days.

Brown bears Brutus and Buckeye are doing well. They are spending lots of time snoozing in their cave.

Polar bear Anana is now back in the public aisle. Aurora and Kulu will be viewable on alternate days with Anana. The location of Lee's new zoo home was finally released. He is now at the Louisville Zoo and his keepers report that he is doing great!

REGION NEWS—SHORES

Our **penguins** are busy with nesting season and have already laid some eggs this year.

The **manatees** received their physical exams on February 2. At that time, Stubby weighed 2,331 pounds, Scampi was 314 pounds and Squirrel brought up the rear at 181 pounds.



Photo courtesy of Barb Baugher



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Big news from the reptile building – seven **massasauga rattlesnakes** were born, which is a huge accomplishment! There are only a small number of institutions that have successfully bred them, and this is a first for the Columbus Zoo. Congratulations to the reptile staff!

Brown pelican Skipper has settled in just fine and looks like he has lived here for years. He and Ken are getting along better every day.

We have had several **southern stingrays** born at Manatee Coast. They have been moved to a behind-the-scenes area to grow and will eventually reside in Stingray Bay.

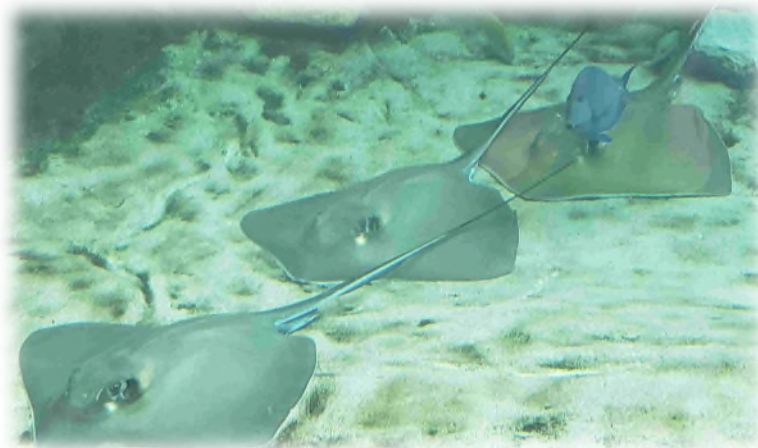


Photo courtesy of Kathy Ragsdale

REGION NEWS—THE WILDS

By the end of November, staff usually have all of the animals that need additional shelter and heat moved in from pasture for the season and everyone involved is settling into their winter routines. However, that was not exactly the case at the rhino barn. When the **white rhinos** returned from pasture, there were three very pregnant females.

The pregnancies had been confirmed earlier last spring. Since most of our white rhinos are trained to stand for blood collection, staff can use that behavior for pregnancy testing with the help of the CREW endocrinology lab at the Cincinnati Zoo. The knowledge gained from the results helps staff know which animals to monitor more closely. They don't always get to observe the actual breedings, so they end up with a pretty broad window regarding due dates. Therefore, they carefully watch for all of the typical behavioral and physical changes as the pregnancy progresses.

When a female rhino is close to giving birth, she will move away from the herd to give birth alone. Staff see the same behavior when females give birth out in pasture at The Wilds. They stay separated for a couple of weeks after the baby is born. When they do rejoin the herd, they do so cautiously – always keeping themselves between their baby and any possible threat. With those things in mind, team members have to be ready to accommodate our females once they come back to the big herd barn if they have not yet given birth. Thus, when a female starts showing signs of an impending birth, staff separate her from the herd into one of the smaller enclosed stalls they use as a maternity ward. By doing so, she is afforded the same privacy she would have out in the open. If all goes well, she is reintroduced to the main herd with her new calf after three or four weeks.



Photo courtesy of Bonne McGowan

The first of our three to give birth was Kifaru. She was born at The Wilds in 2011. A first pregnancy at 9 years old is late for our herd and, for that reason, staff had been concerned about her ability to breed. They didn't know if she had a problem or if the blame fell on our breeding bulls being inexperienced when they first arrived. Needless to say, they were very happy when they received the positive pregnancy-test results last spring. From there, everything proceeded normally and Kifaru gave birth in the early hours of December 9. The team was able to watch the whole process on video. Although they could tell things looked good, they could not discern that the calf was a female until they arrived at the barn later that morning. She was named Binti by the Schubert family.

Second in line was Kali, who was born at The Wilds in 2013. This was her first pregnancy as well and, since she too was above the average age for that occurrence, the same concerns mentioned above existed prior to her conceiving. In the end, there was nothing to worry about. She delivered a male calf just after midnight on December 18. He was named Akagera by Janet Eads. Staff believe that the experience of growing up in an active-breeding herd in addition to being around a lot of other mothers and calves helps prepare our females for motherhood.

Last was Zenzele. In 2004, she was the first rhino ever born at The Wilds. With four previous calves, she is the most experienced rhino mother. She has two daughters and two granddaughters in The Wilds' herd and, on Christmas Eve, Zenzele delivered a male calf. This calf was the star of an online baby shower, which included a raffle for naming rights. Krista Hyme won the raffle and named him "Mo-joe" to honor her father.

The father of all three calves is Roscoe. Despite being inexperienced when he arrived, he eventually figured out how to be a successful herd bull and has sired seven calves since. Given that success, the SSP will likely move him in the future. At that time, we may welcome a less-represented male.

The calves bring the total of white rhinos born at The Wilds to 25. It also reinforces their success with multi-generational breeding. The Wilds remains the only place outside of Africa with calves born four and five generations removed from their wild ancestors. Kifaru and Kali are both fourth-generation animals. Their calves make a total of six fifth-generation animals born at this remarkable institution. Please visit The Wilds soon to see these new additions to the herd!