

REGION NEWS—ANIMAL PROGRAMS

Thank you to the 371 participants completing the Adventure Cove Deck and Tunnel training via Zoom. We look forward to your assistance and hope that you enjoy our amazing pinnipeds.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Davis

The pinnipeds, Animal Encounters Village (AEV) animals and staff are preparing for the Lighthouse Theater presentations that will take place at Adventure Cove this season. The presentations will only be on weekends from May 6-21 and Aug. 19 through Boo at the Zoo with Training Tales at 11 a.m. and Dive into Adventure at 2 p.m. Daily presentations will be offered May 27-Aug. 13 with an additional Dive into Adventure demonstration added at noon featuring the AEV residents. The Training Tales presentation features pinnipeds. Please check them out so you'll be able to describe the fun to our guests!

Seasonal staff members are being hired for the Animal Programs Department in preparation for bringing our guests defining moments every day at the Zoo during the busy season.

Have you seen the new animal silhouette entrance signs at the Powell Road and Jack Hanna Way intersection? One is a big sea lion.

World Ocean Day will be celebrated at the Zoo on June 8. Think of all the fabulous creatures naturally inhabiting the oceans that are represented at the Zoo, including pinnipeds!

The Slothvasana yoga sessions in March were sold out. The fall series is scheduled for Nov. 4-5. Thank you to all the volunteers who supported conservation by purchasing a sloth T-shirt from prior events.

The Zoo's conservation in action can take many forms. **Aardvark** Kiazi was a hero to an older aardvark at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden by providing a blood donation. Ali developed an infection following a medical procedure and the transfusion of blood supplied by Kiazi saved Ali's life!

We look forward to seeing you in Adventure Cove. FYI, you can also visit the residents of the Cheetah Yard and Watering Hole in Heart of Africa cared for by the Animal Programs team.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

REGION NEWS—ASIA QUEST

It has been a quiet month in the region with only a few updates to report:

- Staff are preparing **sloth bear** Shiva for her trip back home to the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.
- Moving the **red-crowned cranes** to the north boardwalk yard has been delayed due to the need to build a shelter in their new yard.
- **Pallas' cat** Eevi will be heading to another zoo on a breeding loan.
- An **azure-winged magpie** is also leaving us for a new zoo.
- **Tufted deer** Angus is eagerly awaiting his new companion.
- At the time of this writing, **Asian elephant** Sabu has bred with Rudy but not Sunny.

Sarah Bush became the newest member of the full-time Animal Care staff. Sarah previously worked in AQ as a seasonal and spent time as a seasonal in HOA assisting with camel and pony rides.

ASIA QUEST ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION QUIZ

While there are many ways to identify **Amur tigers** Mara and Natasha, the differences in their front legs provides a quick answer to which is which. Can you identify the tigers correctly from the photos below?



Photos courtesy of Sarah Kirkman

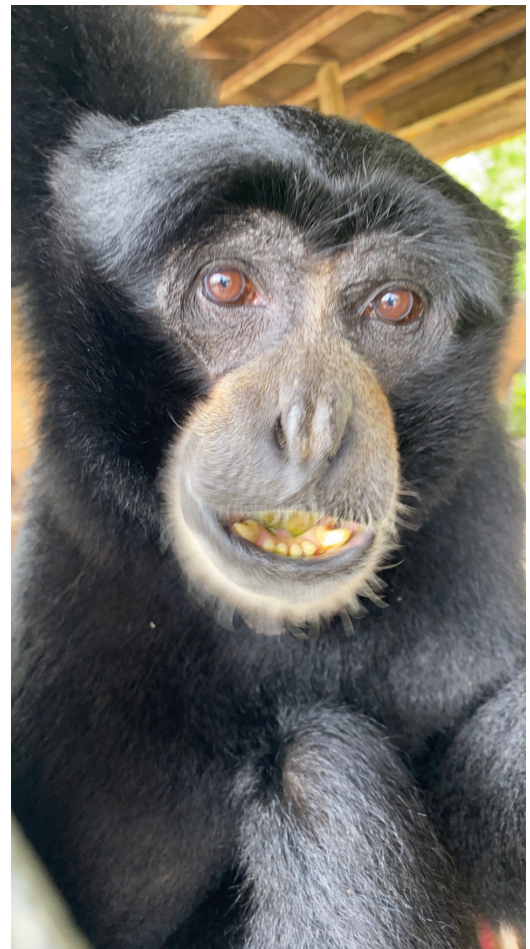
Answer: Mara is on the left and Natasha is on the right. Note that Natasha has black stripes on her front legs and Mara does not. If your answer was correct, please give yourself a pat on the back.

REGION NEWS—AUSTRALIA & THE ISLANDS

As we finally move into spring, more and more activity will be noticeable in the region. The **Kangaroo** Walkabout and **Lorikeet** Garden are now open on the weekends – that will change to daily in early May.

With the warmer weather, you should be able to see **Tasmanian devil** Thyme outside more often. Similarly, the **gibbons** and **siamangs** will be spending more time in their courtyard. Animal Care staff is hard at work getting the yards, moats and pools ready for the rest of the animals.

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium's new **weedy seadragon** habitat officially opens to the public on Monday, April 10. 'Weedy Seadragon Talking Points and Fun Facts' can be found on the portal under the "SHORES" and "AUSTRALIA AND THE ISLANDS" tabs.



Photos courtesy of Jessica Linek

REGION NEWS—CONGO EXPEDITION

The **bonobos** have been enjoying and taking advantage of the random 70-degree “winter” days by getting some bonus time in their yard when temperature parameters have been appropriate. Recently, keepers have begun examining the bonobos’ activity budget and have created a goal to increase their time spent foraging. Hence, logs that are roughly 4 inches in diameter and 1 foot long are now being delivered weekly. The bonobos absolutely love stripping the bark and munching on them! They have received a variety of species including apple, pear, sycamore and willow. Keepers have yet to discover a type they dislike! Building off that fact, they initiated a two-week trial of leafy browse to further increase foraging time and potentially improve the bonobos’ stool quality as a result of the extra fiber. Animal Nutrition delivered 5 pounds of browse daily that was divided amongst the bonobos. Again, a variety of browse was received but different acacia species comprised the bulk of it. The bonobos loved the trial and keepers noted slightly improved stool quality.



*Bonobo Faith enjoying a pear log.
Photo courtesy of Libby Nolan*

Our oldest **gorilla**, Kinyani, turned 40 on March 16! Jamani turns 3 on April 15 and Tabibu will be 30 on April 30.

Mandrill Bernard is growing like a weed and having a blast playing with his aunties. Malaika still watches him closely but is happy to let him blow off some energy away from her. He has started getting his own small portion of diet and is showing more interest in foraging. Mosi now weighs around 80 pounds and is continuing to mature into a beautiful adult male.

Excitingly, all signs are pointing to Hasina being pregnant! She is on the younger end of when females typically give birth for the first time. Thus, keepers are cautiously optimistic that we will have another bouncy baby come early summer. This is not only great news for us and our troop but for the mandrill population overall! Please be mindful though that it is not yet public knowledge.



The **leopard** boys are doing well. You may see seasonal or intern staff taking observations of their behaviors. Staff are continuing to treat the tip of Tyrion's tail for a reoccurring sore spot three times per week. It is currently looking great!

In previous updates, it was mentioned that a couple of our keepers were focusing on training with the **orangutans**. Last month, they were able to get voluntary blood samples from Sulango and Dumplin with the assistance of a blood sleeve device – hooray!! The entire department is super happy for and proud of all involved! This summer, the focus will be on getting voluntary blood samples from all three apes.

FYI, you might see breeding that looks aggressive. Don't be alarmed, it is a natural orangutan behavior called forced copulation. Additionally, the Life Support System (LSS) is working on clearing the scratches from the orangutan outdoor viewing window. Once removed and the weather warms up, you will get to see more of their beautiful faces as they silently judge you and all the guests. Finally, keeper talks are returning to the orangutan area! Please stop by and take a listen; scheduled orangutan keeper talks haven't occurred for several years.

Our **colobus monkeys** are doing wonderfully and are now a troop of six! Miss Bernadette had a little girl. It's her first time raising a baby as the infant born last year did not survive. She is doing well and figuring out motherhood beautifully. Although she watched Jabari with Jif, Bernadette was not allowed to hold him in the very beginning, so this is all new to her. Naturally, Grandma Claire (Bernadette's mom) is pitching in. She loves carrying the littles and helps rear all the babies!



The newest addition is Sekani's second kiddo. He also sired little Jif, who had his first birthday in January and is a small ninja. He just can't stop bouncing! It will be great for him to have a playmate once "Little Miss" gets a bit older. As of now, it is unknown when the baby will be viewable, particularly since the weather has been all over the place. Is it spring – winter? Who knows! We do know that it will have to be 50 degrees for all of them to venture outside with a newborn though.

Given that this is Bernadette's first baby and the early days are critical in colobus life, no public announcements have been made yet.

All is going well with the **okapis**. Damisi recently had skin irritation pop up behind her left ear but the area is responding well to topical treatments. She and El Jewar are still being paired for breeding.

Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

REGION NEWS—HEART OF AFRICA

Opening for the Season Details:

The gate by the **lion** windows/Watering Hole will be removed on April 7. The region is opening then in response to Easter. Since the Zoo typically sees larger crowds over the holiday weekend, staff want to offer guests the opportunity to come through the region to see the animals, provided weather permits. However, **giraffe** feedings will not start until Friday, April 14.

There will be some changes to the giraffe feeding deck. As you know, SSA is now our vendor for food, beverage and retail. In looking at all the current food locations, it was found that the snack shop just before the deck is no longer needed for food and beverage. Instead, visitors will purchase giraffe feeds from that space, which means there will not be a retail person on the deck. A couple of changes will also be made to the line. We are going back to the setup used during the height of COVID – people will enter the line on the Watering Hole side and exit on the Event Center side. In addition, strollers will be allowed on the Shamba. If staff find they have a negative impact on the giraffes, they will revisit the situation.

Keeper talks will start April 1. They will be held on weekends only except for Friday, April 7, during Eggs, Paws and Claws. The lion keeper talk will now be at 9:45 a.m. as opposed to 10.

As mentioned in last month's updates, there will be new gates/paths from the Savanna to the feeding yard. They are being called giraffe corridors. Ultimately, they will allow keepers to move the giraffes from the feeding yard to the Savanna in the evenings when there are no events scheduled, which will improve keeper safety when opening the gates at night. Usage of them this first year will be fairly fluid. Consequently, there will not be a scheduled time for animals to move around.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Other Updates for the 2023 Season:

We are probably not going to have **camels** this year as the Zoo is moving away from camel rides. There was talk of doing some sort of camel feeding experience but that is unlikely to happen now due to how much the renovations to the yard would cost. Therefore, the **ostriches** will most likely be moved to that space. Some fencing and a few other modifications need to be added but much less is involved with that than what is needed for a camel experience. In addition, staff is hoping to bring in **donkeys** for the old baby camel yard but there isn't any movement on that yet. Stay tuned for more information.

Weather and the finishing touches on construction are driving when Savanna introductions will begin. As always, it will be done in phases. Our **Thomson's gazelles** will go out first, the **slender-horned gazelles** will follow and our **dama gazelles**, including the new littles, will bring up the rear. Once staff is confident that they are reconditioned to recall, they will slowly start expanding the yard. Depending on the weather, the total process typically takes about a month.

Everyone in the region is doing very well and is quite ready for the weather to get warmer. The dama calves are getting big – names are anticipated in the not-too-distant future!

REGION NEWS—NORTH AMERICA

We are quickly heading toward **trumpeter swan** breeding season. As this will be the first time our pair experiences it together, keepers are watching carefully to see what happens.

Unfortunately, we lost Ollie goat recently. She ended up having a large mass in her chest that affected her suddenly, which caused many issues. The rest of the **My Barn** animals are pleased to announce that the petting yard is now open on weekends!



Mexican wolves Storm and Winter seem to be adjusting well to life without the pups around. If you happen to stop by on Fridays, you might catch keepers offering them their “fake carcass” feed. This would be a great opportunity to educate guests on how wolves move around a kill in the wild.

Black bears Joanie and Stevie are slowly waking up from their winter torpor. You might see them out and about on warmer days.

Keepers are working with the **lynx** girls on some new training behaviors. The girls are cooperating nicely!

All three **moose** calves are continuing to gain weight; each is almost 400 pounds. Currently, the two groups are still rotating but all four may be together later this spring.

Reindeer Sugar finally lost her other antler and Abby should be losing both of hers in the coming weeks.

Polar bears Lee and Aurora bred in late February. Keep your fingers crossed for the arrival of little cubs late this year!

The **brown bear** boys are becoming more active as they come out of torpor.

Wolverine Alvar moved back to the main yard and was reintroduced to Guillotine in mid-March. The introduction went very smoothly and both are enjoying each other’s company again.

Cougar Cal had a root canal a few weeks ago but is recovering well. His mobility is still being monitored on colder days as staff noticed the weather seems to affect his toes. The girls are doing well.

We are entering nesting season, so be on the lookout for nests as you walk through the **Dr. Bernard Master Aviary**.

Our **Arctic foxes**, **otters** and **eagles** are getting along just fine.



Photos courtesy of Jess Armstrong

REGION NEWS—SHORES

Thank you to everyone who has been helping with the **Komodo dragon** introductions.

Each **manatee** had a physical completed in February and is doing well. In other news, Scampi was released back into the wild a few weeks ago and a crew from Florida recently came in to help staff trim the mangroves in Manatee Coast. Additionally, Dave Ackerman and Dan Nellis (Animal Care) spent a week down south working with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to rescue manatees. They rescued a mother dolphin and her calf at the beginning of the week and an entangled manatee toward the end. Local news cameras were there for the latter – way to go, guys!!

Our **penguins** are still in nesting season.

One male and two female **Henkel's leaf-tailed geckos** have been received and are now in quarantine.

Stingray Bay, Touch Pool and Reptile Encounters all opened on Mar. 18. Touch Pool and Reptile Encounters will be open on weekends only, whereas Stingray Bay feedings will be daily.



Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

REGION NEWS—THE WILDS



We are happy to report the first births of the year. There are now six **takin** kids on the ground. Takin births are usually closely synchronized within a herd but this year was exceptional – four kids were born in one day! As of this update, they have not had their neonate exams, so their sexes are unknown.

Staff are gearing up for spring moves. Once the weather turns nice, they will be working on getting animals out to pasture for the season. They also have a few animals to move between other zoos for breeding programs.

The Wilds hosted their second Conservation Science Symposium on March 25 at Muskingum University. The day-long session highlighted research occurring at The Wilds with speaker and poster presentations.

It is not too soon to book a tour at The Wilds for this summer! Check the website for more information.



Photos courtesy of Graham S. Jones, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium