



REGION NEWS—ASIA QUEST

The 2023 edition of Wildlights is going well in the region. We have special lights on the outside and a great holiday display on the inside of the Asia Quest building.

Two new **Amur tigers**, a male and a female, arrived in early November and are out of quarantine. They are both from the Lee G. Simmons Conservation and Wildlife Safari in Omaha, Nebraska. Simmons is the breeding facility for the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha. We have a breeding recommendation for the pair; neither has any offspring.

Male Diesel weighs 365 pounds and was born on April 4, 2017. He is from Moscow while female Vera was born in Minnesota on April 27, 2017, and weighs 255 pounds. Vera is very comfortable in the back holding area, so she will go into the outdoor habitat first. Diesel will go into the habitat soon after as he is getting more comfortable every day. Staff is working on recall training with both tigers. Photos and identifying information for the new tigers will soon be available.

Bamboo coverings were placed on the tiger and **tufted deer** fences to eliminate sight lines between the new tigers, the deer and tiger Mara who is in the north yard of the boardwalk area.

We have four new male **silvered leaf langur monkeys** for the bachelor group. They came from the San Diego Zoo and have been castrated. Although they have cleared quarantine, they will not be put with the boys until they get more familiar with our environment. The new langurs are:

Akhir – born 11/13/2017

Batu – born 12/9/2015

Kayu – born 9/24/2017

Waluh – born 7/21/2016

You will not be able to see **sloth bear** Heiderose as often since she is denning in case of pregnancy.

The **Mexican wolves** are in the south yard of the boardwalk area due to construction in North America. Barring slippery conditions, the boardwalk will be open in the winter but the end loop of it will be closed to visitors. The North America staff will continue to care for the wolves as usual.

The **Asian elephants** are doing fine. The Elephant Building will close at 8 p.m. during Wildlights.

While many of the **Asia Quest Aviary** birds are inside for the winter, we still have 14 small birds (azure-winged magpies, black-throated laughing thrushes and Chinese hwameis), pheasants, ducks and two Reeves muntjacs in the outdoor habitat.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

REGION NEWS—AUSTRALIA & THE ISLANDS

As the Zoo geared up for Wildlights, many of the animals in the region settled into their winter habitats where they will remain warm and cozy till spring. Some animals have already made the move to their winter homes while others are in the process of doing so. It's a busy time of year for our Australia keepers!

Porcupine Saffron is now in the **kookaburra** habitat located in the Nocturnal Building Aviary and the kookaburras are in the back holding area.

Slow lorises Gouda and Muenster can still be seen in their habitat but Cheddar has moved to another zoo.

The **otters** will have access to their yard as long as it is 30 degrees or warmer and, since their pool is heated, it is still filled. Peanut and Gus will always be together in the habitat whereas the other six otters will rotate their time outside in different combinations.

You may note that the **parrots** (some of the Congo Aviary animals cared for by Australia staff) are staying outside longer. Keeper Moe has trained them so well that they will come inside very quickly if the weather takes a cold turn. Thanks Moe!



*Photos courtesy of
Jessica Linek*

As we wrap up 2023, we want to thank all the volunteers who have worked in the region and at special events. We would also like to thank the Animal Care staff for their presentations at our meetings, for never hesitating to answer our questions and for keeping us well informed. Before we close this year out, we want to encourage you to come and work "down under" in 2024. It's going to be a great year!



REGION NEWS—CONGO EXPEDITION

The **okapis** are doing well. Unfortunately though, Damisi miscarried again. Keepers suspected that was the case based on certain behaviors observed between her and El Jewar. They then confirmed via voluntary blood draw that she is no longer pregnant. The news is especially disappointing since it is the second time this has happened and El Jewar's genes are very valuable to the population right now.

If you are visiting the region and stop by the okapi yards, please be advised that the animals have access and the choice to be outside dependent on weather.

A special shout out to Congo keeper Alexis who successfully did her first ever voluntary blood draw with Damisi! Damisi has a solid blood draw behavior and is great at teaching new staff the ropes of voluntary draws on okapis. As it happens, the Congo keepers had a number of significant accomplishments over the last month or so in regard to blood draws. In addition to Alexis's success with Damisi, Keith and Libby had a successful draw on **bonobo** Gander (it was the first time blood had been drawn from one of our bonobos in approximately 15 years) and Keith and Chelsea found success with Dumplin **orangutan**. Although blood has been collected from her before and she is fully trained for the behavior, her veins are extremely difficult to access and blood flow is often very limited. This time however, they were able to draw three full vials!

Finally, Karen and Keith have been working with **gorilla** Mo'ana. They had the first successful blood draw on a gorilla at the Columbus Zoo. Equally impressive, it is believed that Mo'ana is only the 11th gorilla in the country to allow a voluntary blood draw. Staff members could not be prouder of their efforts, and they know this is just the beginning of their accomplishments in this arena.

In other gorilla news, Kamoli and JJ arrived safe and sound in Atlanta. The transport went very smoothly and both are acclimating nicely to their new spaces and training well for their staff. They are going to have their own yard while there but will not be viewable to the public.

Sully turned 9 years old on Nov. 24. Kwame is growing like a weed and starting to climb and crawl all over the place. She is also enjoying spending time with Kamina and Zahra.

The **leopards** have loved the fall weather and playing in leaf piles that keepers have been making in their yard. For the last month or so, the boys have been given access to their dens during Zoo hours as part of a response to ongoing observations of them pacing in the yard. For the most part, they have chosen to stay in public view but seem to like having extra options during the day. They will continue to have access to their yard weather dependent.

Baby **mandrill** Izara is continuing to grow and is getting very brave about climbing independently. She has become great friends with half-brother Bernard. They are frequently seen playing together with their mothers, Hasina and Maliaka, and Aunt Matilda watching closely. The rest of the group is enjoying the last of the good weather for the year and can be seen in their yard as weather permits.

It has been an exciting time at bonobos! At 1:08 p.m. on Nov. 7, Faith gave birth to a beautiful baby boy! Susie, Bertie, Kibibi and Donnie provided a warm welcome and surrounded Faith throughout labor. Both Mom and Baby Boy are doing great and keepers are maintaining a close eye on the two – making sure to observe and note successful nursing. Fission-fusion arrangements will be made on Faith's terms. In other words, keepers are taking signals from her as to when she is ready for a new group. Within the first week of the little guy's life, he had the chance to meet almost all of our bonobos! Faith is doing an excellent job balancing friendly introductions and curiosity while also setting boundaries and disciplining the youngsters when they are being too rowdy near the baby.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Wiles

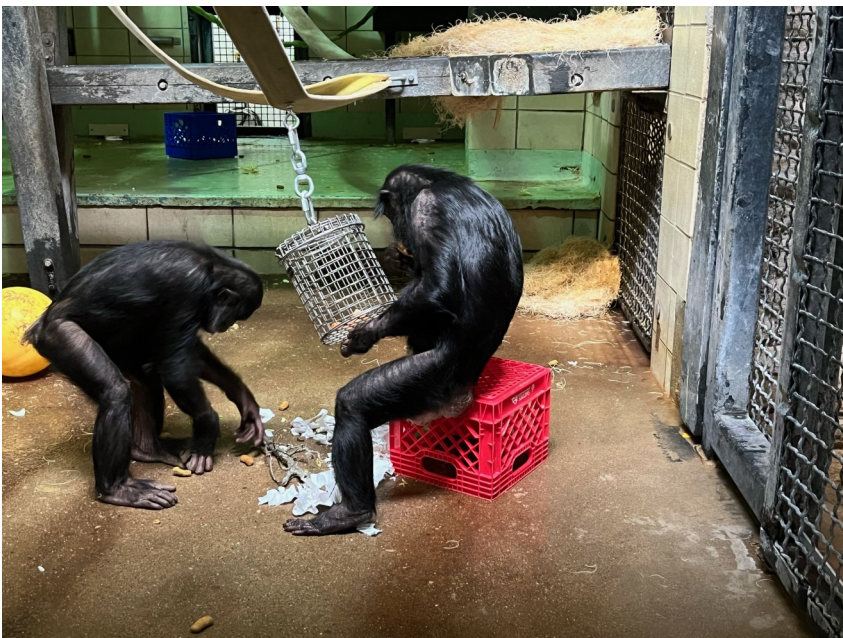


Photo courtesy of Keith Von Stein

The bonobos have also received fun new enrichment devices – greens feeders, which are stainless steel puzzle feeders created by Otto Enviromental. We have 10! Keepers stuff the insides of them with straw, browse, produce or enrichment items, much like Kongs or PVC cups with smears inside. The bonobos are extremely motivated to work and problem solve to retrieve the goodies inside.

REGION NEWS—HEART OF AFRICA

The **Thomson's gazelles** have all moved to the giraffe barn for the winter and have a new roommate, **dama gazelle** Kabili. Some might remember from last year that Zultan resided with the Tommies over the winter. Now that he has been castrated, he is able to stay with the full herd this year, which he loves! Keeping him with the rest of the herd gave staff the opportunity to place Kabili, an intact male, with the Tommies. This is a much better arrangement for Kabili who was housed by himself last year. As you can see from the attached photo, he is a very happy boy. Kabili and the Tommies will have full access to the feeding yard over the winter as long as it is not icy.

Everyone else in the region is doing very well and settling in for the winter months.

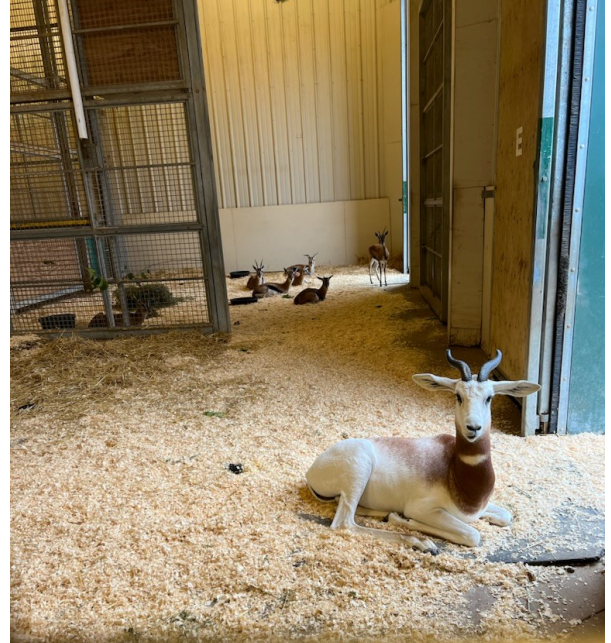


Photo courtesy of Shannon Borders

HAPPY 18TH BIRTHDAY ASALI!

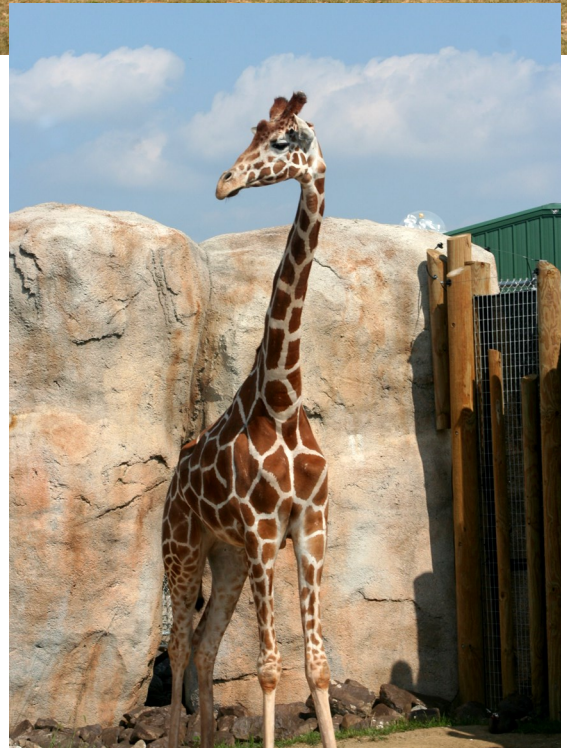
Asali is the oldest cat at the zoo.



Photos courtesy of Julie Williams



REMEMBERING SHAGGY



*Photos courtesy of
Nancy Mulholand*

REGION NEWS—NORTH AMERICA

Swans Sloane and Stella are now at the barn but will soon move to the small pond by the moose yard.

My Barn is all ready for the holidays. With Wildlights starting, the barn is now open late every night. Stop on down and visit the cows, goats and sheep.

Our **Mexican wolves** have been moved to one of the Tiger Hut yards in Asia Quest in preparation of construction starting in the region soon. The transition itself went great and the wolves are getting used to their new digs that include a warm shelter in the yard. The boardwalk will remain closed on their side for the time being to allow them to adjust. Winter underwent a procedure to replace her contraceptive implants as she will not be bred this coming year. Staff may look at trying again once the wolves move to their new habitat in North America.

Everything is status quo with **otters** Paso and Catori as well as our **lynx** girls.

The **eagles** continue to do well and will soon move behind the scenes, if they have not already. Once that transpires, they will not be viewable until construction on their new home is complete. Staff will be doing exams on all three eagles as part of the move – more updates to follow on their overall health.

The **Dr. Bernard Master Aviary** is fairly quiet – just getting ready for winter and to transport some birds inside for the season.



Erin taking a break in Joanie and Stevie's digs!

Black bears Joanie and Stevie should also be getting ready to slow down and stay inside more. In the meantime, they have been quite the busy little bees by taking it upon themselves to dig their own den in the yard. It is located by the dead tree with three logs sticking up. Several keepers have tried it out and report that it is rather comfy! Both bears have been rotating who sleeps in it.

Cougars Goldie, Poppy and Captain Cal are doing great. Keepers have been working hard at training Cal to present his back paws so they can administer soothing medication when his pads start cracking in the colder weather.

Denning season is coming up quickly for our **wolverines**. Alvar was moved around the middle of November. He was a little stubborn and wanted to spend some extra time with Gui, so staff ended up moving him slightly later than originally planned. The move went smoothly though and keepers spruced up his bachelor pad with some cool stuff, including a nice big pine tree, mulch piles and a small pool. He settled in quite quickly. We won't know much in terms of pregnancy or kits from Gui until next year, so keep those fingers crossed until then!

Moose Bert is in the bull moose yard until rut season is over.

The **reindeer** are excited because it's their time to shine. Wildlights is their season and they know it! Our two new reindeer girls arrived from Alaska and just in time – a foot of snow fell shortly after they left! They are still pretty unsure about their new caretakers but lots of browse seems to be helping win them over. Provided that everything goes well, they should join Abby and Sugar in the main habitat sometime around the beginning of December.

The **arctic foxes** are just waiting for some snow as their coats are almost completely white again. Jack recently had a dental procedure where multiple root canals were performed. He is recovering well but will be on softer foods for a short period of time.

Our **brown bear** boys are doing well and snuggling in their cave. As usual, Brutus has begun stealing all of the bedding as winter approaches.

Polar bear Aurora's denning is moving along as hoped, so keep those fingers crossed that we will see babies in the next month! Lee has been active in the yard lately and is enjoying the pool.



New reindeer girls, names coming soon.



Josh and Hilary and Erin taking a break in Joanie and Stevie's digs!



REGION NEWS—SHORES

We have had a total of four **cownose stingrays** born at Stingray Bay.

Our **penguins** will be starting nesting season soon.

The **flamingoes** will continue to go outside as the weather and temperatures allow.

Thank you to everyone who helped with the **manatee** consumption watch!

Our **blacktip reef shark** recently had a routine physical exam.



*Decorating Manatee Coast for Wildlights
with a pretty cute supervisor.
Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney*

REGION NEWS—THE WILDS

Hand raising a baby **greater one-horned rhino** has been the staff's main focus over the past month. The calf continues to do well and now weighs over 220 pounds. She has been trained to go in the stock trailer and has made a couple trips to the rhino barns to meet the rest of the herd. The introductions went well. The next step will be to move her into the barn to stay. Then, work will begin on getting her bonded with one of the young females. Meanwhile, on the other side of the barn, our experienced female Sanya had her seventh calf (a male) on November 25. Mom and calf are doing well together.

We are fully into winter mode now, but there are still plenty of opportunities to come out and visit our newest rhinos on the Winter Wildside Tours. Check *The Wilds'* website for more information.



Photo courtesy of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and The Wilds

REGION NEWS—WILD ENCOUNTERS

If you missed participating in the sold-out Slothvasana yoga classes with Churro and friends, you can still support the conservation cause by purchasing a **sloth** yoga T-shirt for \$20 through Dec. 15 in the Volunteer Management office. Thank you to Mark Lowe, Andy Moir, Kay Rietz, Brenda Baldinger, Joyce Talkowski, Lynn Powell, Cindy Wesney, Ann Karrick and Mary Hiser for helping with the event, which attracted participants from as far away as Maryland and Michigan!

International **Cheetah** Day is Dec. 4 and our animals are great ambassadors for their wild counterparts.

Watch the skies when you're walking on the path from pinnipeds toward Animal Encounters Village. You just might see **macaws** zooming from perch to perch while participating in free flight training.

Flurry of Fun is the last official Enrichment Day of 2023, but the animals of Wild Encounters receive a variety of enrichment and training daily. During the enrichment event in October, **sea lion** Nana devoured a big gelatin "brain" in two bites and the **bat-eared foxes** had a system of Ivy doing all the foraging and Bruce waiting to benefit from all of Ivy's prep work.

Each pinniped is involved in training, including the **harbor seals** now participating in sessions by the acrylic windows. Did you know that the steps leading from the containment area back to the North Pool were modified into half-steps to make it easier for the seals to galumph their way around more easily?

As Dr. Junge mentioned in the final Zoom presentation of this season, though sea lions like Qizai have had cataract surgery, their eye issues developed over time. They began in their previous homes that may not have been equipped with the shade structures, contemporary habitat features and thorough husbandry practices present in our beautiful Adventure Cove. On average, removing a cataract is a 35-minute procedure and, for a sea lion, the lens is not replaced. This poses no issue for Qizai because he can still see his trainers well and won't be driving an Amazon truck or reading bar codes anytime soon.

Being a region leader as well as a liaison between the volunteer community, the trainers and the keepers of the animals we love is a tremendous honor that is definitely augmented by those who devoted their time and talent to share stories about our amazing animals with the public alongside me. Thank you for volunteering in Wild Encounters from 2021 through 2023, and please welcome and offer your support to new region leader Cindy Wesney beginning in 2024!



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Davis