

REGION NEWS—ANIMAL PROGRAMS

The Adventure Cove and Animal Encounters Village (AEV) animals finished the Enrichment Day series in style during Flurry of Fun with treats hidden in boxes, bags and ice blocks to encourage foraging behavior.

Pablo Joury, director of Animal Programs-Pinnipeds, reports that the transport of **sea lions** Toby and Lovell to their new homes at Oceans of Fun went very well despite the long and exhausting journeys. Toby was really comfortable with the two young males he is with now and already has embraced his new “big brother” role. Lovell is adjusting nicely to the two other females she lives with now so, in short, everything seems smooth. Banana, originally scheduled to depart near the same time, will remain in Columbus until later this year.



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Davis

A new pinnipeds supervisor, experienced trainer Shea Eaves, will be joining the department on Feb. 27. AEV has a new full-time associate, Nikki Ewen, a former seasonal employee. There will be an additional associate hired for Animal Programs – Africa area.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Animal contact area training about the logistics of volunteering in the Adventure Cove Deck and Tunnel will be offered via Zoom on Monday, Feb. 20 at 1 p.m. and again on Sunday, Mar. 5 at 9. Both sessions will be led by Conservation Education team members and contain the same information.

To learn more about the animals, please visit the portal to read the updated Pinniped Packet for 2023. It features new photos of the 10 sea lions and 4 **harbor seals**, a name/gender/birthdate roster of animals, seal and sea lion comparisons, facts about their wild counterparts, animal biographies, answers to common guest questions and an overview of the Tunnel and the pools for quick reference. For even more comprehensive information and background about the construction of the habitat as well as the animals’ journey to Columbus, read the original, larger packet also posted on the portal.

Stop by and visit the animals soon!

REGION NEWS—ASIA QUEST



Asia Quest is a great “warm” region to work in during the winter. There are two heated buildings for docents to interpret for guests, the Asia Quest building and the pachyderm building. Like the outdoors? The region also has heated and protected areas by **markhors**, **Pallas’ cats** and **Amur tigers**. Join the fun!

New **Asian elephant** Sabu, our temporary resident from the Cincinnati Zoo, completed his quarantine and can be seen in the pachyderm building at various times. Staff have started his introduction to female elephants Rudi and Sunny. Stop in to see Sabu for yourself!

The Pallas’ cats have been busy this winter. Instead of hiding behind rocks like usual, Tiina and female kittens Odlah and Daod love to just stare at our visitors. Moose and male kitten Rooster are currently behind the scenes as it is breeding season. On a sad note, Pallas’ cat Manda passed away in December.



Unfortunately, **tufted deer**

Dexter was euthanized at the end of December due to health reasons. Male tufted deer Angus is out in the yard and will be getting a friend this spring, her name is Sunflower.

Amur tiger Mara has moved from her boardwalk yard to the AQ Building. She is doing well as are the other animals in the region.

Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

*Remembering Pallas’ cat Manda
and tufted deer Dexter*

REGION NEWS—AUSTRALIA & THE ISLANDS



Photo courtesy of Barb Emmets

It's very quiet in the region right now and head keeper Jessica indicates that all the animals are living their best lives snuggled in their nice, warm buildings. Construction in the Nocturnal Building and its aviary is progressing and, hopefully, will be open sometime in the spring. The front of the building has a totally new look – signage, animal pictures, screens and doors (see picture). All the animals inside have done great during construction. The region has also hired a new curator, Rebecca Kollar, who will start the second week of February.

The **siamangs** and **gibbons** may be visible in the courtyard more often than usual for the winter since their temperature parameters have decreased a little. This will give them a little more space to romp around and enjoy on those warmer winter days.

All the birds are inside for the winter, including **Dalamation pelicans** George and John who are in their winter holding area. The substrate in the **Congo Aviary** has been changed to a mixture of top soil and peat moss for foot comfort. Training keeps the animals in the aviary busy during the winter months.

The five **lorikeet** chicks born this past year are now with the whole flock – 75 birds total!

Tasmanian devil Thyme is adjusting well to single life and the keepers are working on lots of training with her, which she loves.

The **otters** and **kangaroos** are all doing well. Kangaroos will have outside access on warmer days.

Big news: **koala** Katy's joey is a girl! She now weighs 600 grams and is thriving. She's eating eucalyptus leaves but still nurses as well. Her name is Kora, which is a combination of Katy and Thoar to honor their last baby together. Stop by the habitat and see her; you just might catch her riding on her mom's back.

With the start of the new year, we want to thank past region leader Lindsay DeMuth for all her dedicated work in the region these past two years. You are amazing! We would also like to welcome new co-region leaders for the next two years, Marcie Anderson and Barb Emmets.

REGION NEWS—CONGO EXPEDITION

January was a big month for the **colobus monkeys** as Jif celebrated his first birthday on the 15th! Keepers planned a (Jif) peanut-butter-themed birthday party for him to celebrate his big day. He and the other troop members have enjoyed getting outside on the few warmer days we've had. However, staying inside has its perks too; they love the extra enrichment they receive to keep them busy! Some of their favorite items include a blue barrel that is hung as a tunnel, a windchime made of metal serving spoons and the new "jingle jugs" (hanging jugs filled with jingle bells they can shake).

All the **okapis** are doing great! Based off the lack of breeding interest Damisi is receiving from El Jewar, it is suspected that she is pregnant. To check, Damisi recently participated in a voluntary blood draw and an abdominal ultrasound. Unfortunately, the latter was inconclusive, which was likely due to how early in the pregnancy she was. Keep your fingers crossed for a positive result from the blood test! If she is pregnant, she is likely 3-4 months along. The gestation period for okapis is roughly 13-14 months.



Jamani **gorilla** is still the life of the party in Ktembe's group and everyone else is doing well. Mac's group is always busy with the social complexities involved with several growing youngsters. It seems like Kamoli, and JJ especially, are growing like weeds! Recurrent lameness has been noted with Kinyani and she has started some supplements to help with the degenerative changes. Tabibu has gone through periods of not feeling well over the years. Staff have closely monitored the "off bouts" and have tried different medical routes over the years. They are currently trying to ultrasound her abdomen weekly with a wonderful specialist to see if he can get any glimpse into why she experiences these valleys at times. Typically, the episodes consist of Tabibu laying in positions that give staff the impression she feels uncomfortable, and she usually refuses food at such times. Thankfully, the episodes do not normally last longer than a few hours and she goes back to acting like her normal self again.



The **mandrill** troop is getting along just fine. They enjoyed some outdoor time during the stretch of nice weather we had at the beginning of the new year. Bernard is growing bigger and more curious by the day. The team has started working on a plan to start training with him on some basic behaviors and cooperatively feeding with mom, Malaika. Mosi has also done some growing over the past few months. His coloration has gotten much brighter and he has

gained about 10 pounds! The signage by the yard window will soon be updated with recent photos of everyone and one will be made for Bernard.

Photos courtesy of keeper Hannah

The **leopard** boys continue to do well. Tyrion had a minor setback with his tail injury a few weeks ago and reopened the wound. However, he has been an excellent patient and the area is healing phenomenally. The boys enjoyed the snow that fell last month. They can have access to their yard when it is 32 degrees or warmer outside.

The **orangutans** are back into the winter routine of staying inside. They did get a couple of yard days recently thanks to the random warmer weather and were able to play with some snow! A plus side to spending more time inside is increased keeper interactions and training opportunities, which means more treats and rewards! Keepers are hopeful to get voluntary blood collections once again from our female orangutans and for a first collection from Sulango. Stay posted!

Being inside also has some other perks! Some of the enrichment items that are restricted during the warmer months due to escape risk from the yard have been reintroduced to the orangutans, which include larger items like barrels, tires, milk crates and Rubbermaid tubs. Recently, Khali decided to have some fun with the bubble bath that was in a half barrel.



Photo courtesy of keeper Chelsea

Some of you may have noticed lixits (their water sources) being plugged and running in the dayroom. Khali has finally learned how fun it is to have a running water feature. This is a fairly common behavior seen in orangutans at other institutions. Luckily, Khali is very interested in helping keepers unplug them. When they ask her to unplug the lixit, she will go over and remove whatever she used (a stick, mulch, paper, peanut shell, etc.) to plug it – for a reward of course. If you notice a lixit running and it looks like it has been for a long time (there is a large area of wet mulch or a lot of water falling from the high ledge), don't hesitate to give the orangutan keepers a call on the radio to get it unplugged.

We did not have any January **bonobo** birthdays to celebrate but are getting ready for some in February. Ana Neema will be celebrating her 31st on Feb. 15 and Faith will be celebrating her 18th on Feb. 19. In addition to those festivities, keepers have also started to prepare fun enrichment for our bonobos for World Bonobo Day on Feb. 14. Be sure to swing by that day if you can!

Max is continuing to do well and fission/fusion with all of the bonobos. Lastly, keepers are continuing preparations and training for our big bonobo move as we prepare to start renovations for the new bonobo building that will be starting late spring/early summer.

REGION NEWS—HEART OF AFRICA



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

Thank you to those that signed up for the **lion** watches. One of the keepers' goals has been to offer bones to the lions as a group (either the three girls or Imara, Nyasi and Roary) in their habitat and they have now reached it. Having the ability to do so is better for the lions' morning routine and a key part of their wellbeing. Staff want to offer as many "natural" experiences as they can, and this is one of those examples. In regard to weather, as long as we have nice (ice free and not -38 degrees) days, they will continue to have access outside.

All is well with the **vervets**.

The **giraffe** herd is also doing well. Its members enjoyed some of the warmer days we had when they were able to access their holding yards. In other news, the winter tours have been very successful.

The blast of bitter cold weather was not ideal for the **sand cats**, **hoof stock** and **birds**, but everyone did great. Barn temperatures held extremely well and, overall, there were no issues. Staff did have to temporarily keep the **zebras** inside but, once it started to warm up, they moved them back to their winter holding yards and shelters.

On a sad note, we lost **slender-horned gazelle** Veronica Corningstone. 2022 was a tough year for this herd. Just like the males, Veronica had renal failure. As a precaution, staff did bloodwork on Brick and, thankfully, his values are all good – same with little Linda Jackson. They are both doing very well and the team is actively brainstorming other animals that they might live with for the rest of the winter months.

The **camels** had a successful Wildlights Season and moved back to their Wisconsin winter home in January. Plans are still in development but interacting with camels in 2023 is going to be much different as there will no longer be camel rides. The hope is to offer some type of camel encounter (potentially public feeding opportunities like we do with giraffes) but, again, nothing is firm yet.

Finally, the region has filled its open full-time position. Amy Engelbrecht will be moving out of her part-time role to make the transition to a full-time employee. Congratulations Amy!

Remembering slender-horned gazelle Veronica Corningstone

REGION NEWS—NORTH AMERICA

Both Stella and Sloane **trumpeter swans** are doing great. Sloane is very protective and likes to chase the ducks away from his ponds. The pair is bonding well and keepers are working with them again on their various training projects.



Dexter cow calf Russet is getting along famously. At over 100 pounds, he is growing fast! When the extremely cold weather came through, he spent some time with just Mom but, now that everything has settled, he is with his aunties too. Anna and Belle love having him as part of the herd. All of them now have access to the front yard (old cow yard) during the day, so guests (and volunteers!) can stop by to see them. Staff has opened a shift for **My Barn** volunteers from 12-2pm. Please come spend these chilly winter days in the barn and pet some goats and sheep!



As the start of construction in the region draws nearer, staff are looking at sending out the four **Mexican wolf** “pups.” The move is in line with SSP recommendations and follows natural dispersal of the species. Specifics regarding dates and locations cannot be shared just yet.

Hermie **bison** and Banjo **pronghorn** will also be leaving us for other institutions. Regrettably, those species were not included in the North America renovation plans. It will be sad to see them go, especially because they have been staples in the region since its opening. Information concerning where they are headed and when will be shared with us as soon as staff receive the green light.

The **lynx** girls have become quite proficient hunters and have caught a lot of birds recently.

Our **black bears** are sleeping the winter away. Joanie is denning inside the building and Stevie is denned up in the yard.

Much has been happening in **moose** land! Violet is still recovering from her leg injuries but she and Scarlett are doing well. Strawberry and Bert have been introduced and are doing great together. Both groups are rotating yards weekly – one group in the bull yard and the other in the big yard. Here are their current weights in pounds: Strawberry – 738; Bert – 349; Scarlet – 318; Violet – 289.

Both **reindeer** girls loved the snow we had last month and had a blast running around in it. Winter is unquestionably their season.

Winter is made for the **Arctic foxes** and they are living it up!

Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

The **brown bear** boys are doing what we all wish we could do in the winter: stay in bed all day. They are slightly active on warmer days but the emphasis is definitely on “slightly.”

Aurora **polar bear** has had access into the yard since early January and is loving the fresh air. The artificial insemination procedure from last year did not result in a cub. So far, she is handling life by herself well but staff are watching her closely to make sure she doesn’t start showing any signs of stress by being alone. This is the first time she will be in the habitat without cubs or Anana.

Both **otter** girls are getting up there in age at almost 19 years old! Like most “seasoned” ladies, they don’t enjoy cold weather, so they have access during the day to their indoor holding area. On warmer days, they have been seen swimming in their pool.



Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

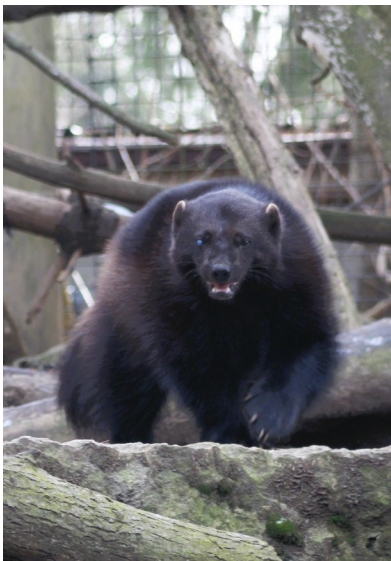


Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney

All the **cougars** are doing well and are still growing. Cal can be tender on his feet during some of the really cold weather, so keepers are keeping a close eye on him and doing what they can to make his paths through the snow and cold more comfortable.

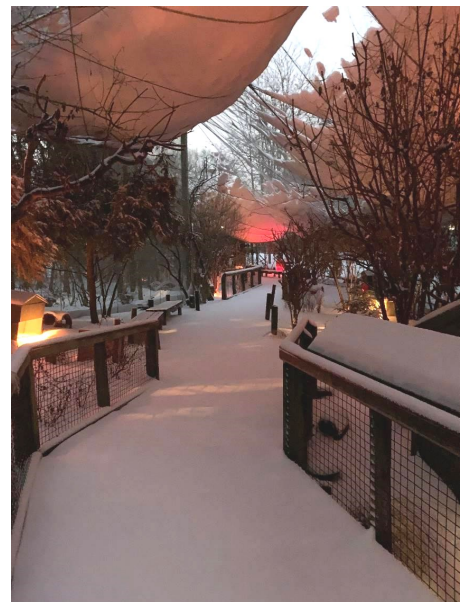
Wolverine Alvar is doing wonderfully in his new digs! Keepers modified the bobcat yard (Montana’s old yard) and were able to move Alvar there for the denning season. He still has olfactory and visual access to Guillotine and, sometimes, will spend time just watching Gui as she moves through the back holding area. Alvar is a pretty keeper-focused wolverine and enjoys being so close to the hustle and bustle of the bear kitchen. Wolverine birthing season is now upon us. Just like our polar bears, wolverines exhibit delayed implantation.

Therefore, we won’t know when/if Gui is pregnant until she either gives birth or it becomes obvious that she is beyond the birthing window. How much fun is that?! The

window opened around the middle of January – fingers crossed for a successful season!

The **aviary** is all prepped for the winter months and will most likely be closed if it is below 32 degrees. Doing so enables the birds to hunker down and stay warm without worrying about moving around. If you get a chance to be in the aviary after a recent snow, it is quite a sight – like a winter wonderland!

Eagle girls are doing well. Keepers even witnessed them using their lower shelter during the super cold weather. The shelter has been up for close to 10 years, so it’s about time!



REGION NEWS—SHORES

First, a HUGE thank you to everyone who helped decorate Shores for the holiday season and to those who assisted with cleaning in preparation for the AZA inspection.

The **penguins** have started their nesting season. During this time, they may choose to be inside with their nest boxes. There are no plans to raise chicks this year.

Our **flamingoes** have a new sand box inside this winter and really seem to be enjoying it!

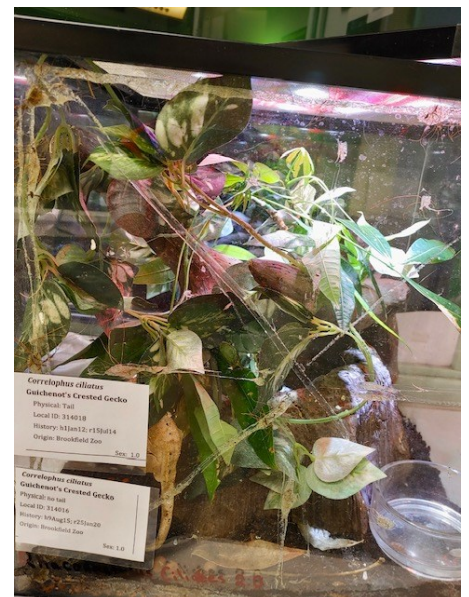


Komodo dragon Ursula laid several eggs in December. They are currently in an incubator but it is not yet known if they are fertile.

In the **Reptile Building**, the Halmahera geckos and Guichenot's crested geckos that used to reside in the Australia region now live in the reptile experience area.

There have been a lot of questions about **alligator** "Girl," so this is just a reminder that she left for a new home late last year.

We have three baby **cownose stingrays** at Stingray Bay. They will be in a fenced off area for a while as doing so allows staff to closely monitor their intake apart from the adults.



REGION NEWS—THE WILDS

Winter is usually a quiet time down at The Wilds. The new **white rhino** calf and his mother were introduced to the main herd in late December and are doing fine. Staff are working to get the second set of white rhinos trained for the AIRS's data collection project.



Photo courtesy of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Animal Management and Conservation

Medicine staff worked together to complete annual exams on the **Pere David's deer** herd. This Year, two zookeepers from the Oklahoma City Zoo and a veterinarian from the Buffalo Zoo came out to witness staff in action and learn how they use the hydraulic restraint chute to work the entire herd through in one day.

American burying beetle breeding is underway to provide a new group for release later this summer.

Outside of the animal areas, construction has been completed on the first phase of the RV campground project. Work will start up again in the spring when the weather allows.

WINTER AT THE WILDS

From November through April, see your favorite animals from a truly unique perspective on this one-of-a-kind safari!

