

REGION NEWS—ASIA QUEST

Brrrrrr! It's cold outside, but Asia Quest has two warm buildings and a few outside areas with heaters. Even though attendance is lower during this time of year, those who brave the elements enjoy talking about our animals. Please consider coming out to share your knowledge and stories with them.

If you have been working in the region this winter, you may have noticed that **Reeves' muntjac** Peanut is missing. Peanut was euthanized in December due to serious coughing and general health issues.

The **Mexican wolves**, which were moved from North America due to ongoing construction, seem to be doing well in the south boardwalk yard. You can expect the closed off areas around the habitat to remain so in order to provide the wolves with more privacy.

New **Amur tigers** Diesel and Vera are still reluctant to go into the outdoor habitat. Vera has been outside on rare occasions but Diesel has not ventured out yet. It is hoped that photos will be available once both tigers move into the yard. In the meantime, there is a very easy way to identify them. Vera has no stripes on her front legs (just like tiger Mara) and Amur tiger Diesel has stripes on his front legs.

The tour hours for the **Red Panda** Experience in Asia Quest have been modified. The tour will start at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. When the tour started at the same time each day, the pandas were pacing in anticipation of being fed. The time change is expected to reduce that.

The **Asian elephants** are doing well. Sabu will likely remain at the Zoo at least through the females' next cycle period in the spring. Meanwhile, the St. Louis Zoo has announced that they will be sending male elephant Raja to the Columbus Zoo at the end of 2024 or beginning of 2025. Raja is an important member of the St. Louis Zoo animal family as he has spent all of his 31 years of life there. Please remember that a lot can happen in one year, so it's possible that plans will change.

Sloth bear Heiderose has been spending time in the outdoor habitat and does not appear to be pregnant. We can keep hoping though!



REMEMBERING REEVES' MUNTJAC PEANUT

Photo courtesy of Jane Cirigliano

REGION NEWS—AUSTRALIA & THE ISLANDS

Wildlights has come and gone and the region has now entered into the quiet winter season. Some of the animals who moved inside for the season are in new habitats this year; Animal Care staff report that they are all doing amazingly well.

The **siamangs** are spending the winter in a holding area in the Nocturnal Building, which allows the **gibbons** extra indoor space.

Paco **binturong** is enjoying some relaxing time behind the scenes.

When you visit the **Nocturnal Building Aviary**, you will see how very happy Saffron **porcupine** is in his new winter digs.

On warmer days, some animals in the region have access outside. However, there are always the indoor animals who are ready to greet you, so come and work “down under” as we get 2024 under way.



Photos courtesy of Jessica Linek and Barb Emmets

REGION NEWS—CONGO EXPEDITION

Gorillas Kamoli and JJ are doing great in Atlanta and with their training. The keepers love them! Back in Columbus, Kwame is still cute and getting braver. She is climbing higher and, at times, up and away from Mom. Kwame now weighs 13 pounds.

Most of the gorillas have been trained to present their forehead at the mesh and hold it there to allow keepers to take their temperatures. Mac and Ktembe completed awake cardiac ultrasounds last year and, this year, staff are focusing on awake cardiac ultrasounds with Tabibu since she is due for a cardiac exam this year. Jamani's current weight is 65 pounds and Zahra weighs 111 pounds. As a reminder, now that the stanchions are down, please don't congregate in front of Mac. Also, please try to stay away from the glass as much as possible.

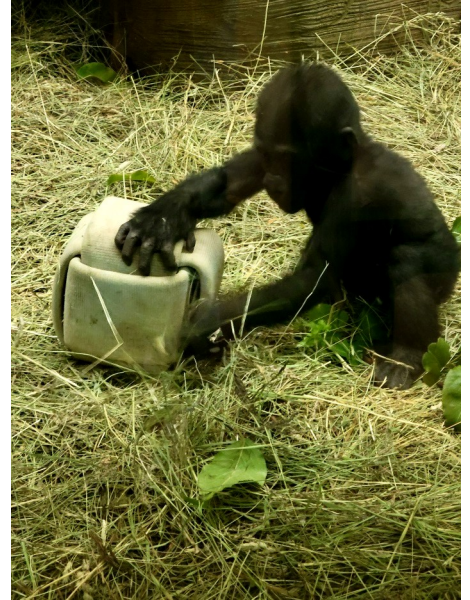


Photo courtesy of Pam Hancock



Photo courtesy of Chelsea Massaroni

If you haven't heard, our baby girl **orangutan** has a name, Clementine!

The name was picked and voted on by staff; after all, she is a little orange. Khali continues to be an amazing mother and Sulango and Dumplin are being very respectful. Both have interacted with Clementine. At one point, Sulango gently held her foot and sniffed it. Meanwhile, Clementine is becoming more aware of her surroundings and recently discovered her hands! She can often be seen with her fingers in her mouth.

Sulango participated in an awake echocardiogram in December. It was submitted to be reviewed by the Great Ape Heart Project and was the Zoo's first orangutan submission (awake

bonobo and gorilla scans have been sent in for review previously). It is difficult to get a complete exam on orangutans due to their large air sacs. Staff came close to achieving that feat with Sulango and are hopeful that the views they managed to get are a good representation of his heart functionality.

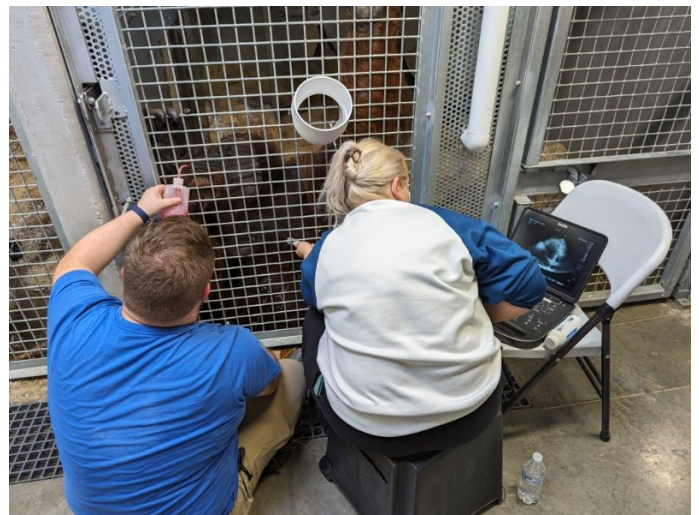


Photo courtesy of Chelsea Massaroni

Now that the **colobus monkeys** are inside for the winter, they are enjoying extra enrichment and training time to help keep them occupied and mentally stimulated. In baby colobus news, they are growing like weeds! Jif is up to 11.2 pounds and Maramalade is up to 5.3 pounds!

Soon, **okapi** Damisi is going to be bred with Matoke. In other okapi news, keepers are training El Jewar to allow them to take X-rays of his legs as he has had periodic lameness in one of his rear legs.

The **bonobos** are still doing well behind the scenes at gorillas while construction progresses at their new building. The team is very excited for when they can all finally move into the beautiful new space!

Three-month-old Bob grows cuter by the day and he's very interested in the keepers as well as watching the world around him, especially while Faith is participating in behavioral training. Recently, he even spent some time crawling around on his own next to Faith as she was relaxing. Faith also loves spending time playing with Bila Isia and some of the younger bonobos, and Bob is along for the ride!



We haven't had very many snow days but, when it did snow enough to collect some snowballs, keepers presented them to the bonobos for some added enrichment. As you can see in the picture of Faith munching on a snowball, they really enjoyed the little icy treats.

Birthdays were celebrated in December for Jimmy, Donnie, Gander, Wilber and Bertie. Ana Neema and Faith will be celebrating their birthdays this month, and we look forward to giving all the bonobos extra fun enrichment for World Bonobo Day on February 14th!

Photos courtesy of Jen Wiles

REGION NEWS—HEART OF AFRICA

This winter, the **Thomson's gazelles** are being housed with **dama** Kabili. They are all doing great and can often be found resting together. Kabili may just think he is a giant Tommie.

The **donkey** girls are currently living in the **giraffe** holding yards and, when the team is cleaning, they will have access inside. Check out the photo for some added cuteness.

At the last region meeting, Shannon touched on a program called Experiential Enrichment that the team was hoping to implement. The premise of Experiential Enrichment is to change the environment in which the animals live (i.e., small changes that, over time, create “events” or habitat changes similar to what they might encounter in their native ranges). Since that meeting, the team has created the following “experiences” for our animals:



Photo courtesy of Shannon Borders

- Thomson's gazelles and Kabili:
 - ♦ Added a grass wall. Each day staff placed a new bundle of grasses at the front of their holding area to eventually create a screen of natural vegetation.
 - ♦ Changed how they can come across water by offering it in shallow pans in addition to their normal drinking sources.
 - ♦ Next will be leaves falling from trees.
- Saddle-billed storks:
 - ♦ Dry and wet seasons. Thus far, team members have created a dry season where the water level in their pool gets lower and lower while rocks and logs are simultaneously added to provide them with the “feeling” of a stream bottom.
 - ♦ Wind – a fan was placed at the front of their holding area.
 - ♦ Next, staff will focus on the wet season. For starters, they plan to raise water levels and create “rain” by using a mister system.
- Dama gazelles and **cranes**:
 - ♦ Keepers are also working on similar ideas.

All very exciting! Otherwise, everything is pretty normal for this time of year, and no one is complaining!

REGION NEWS—NORTH AMERICA

Staff are working on finishing up the **swans'** temporary habitat by the moose yard. The cold weather delayed them but they hope to have the swans moved by the end of January.

Mexican wolves Storm and Winter are settling into their temporary home as well. They don't seem to mind the extra traffic and have enjoyed the snowfall we have had.

The goats and sheep in **My Barn** liked having extra time with guests during Wildlights. The projection on the face of the barn was a nice addition this year.

Otters Paso and Catori can be hit or miss when it comes to the cold weather. They enjoy the occasional romp outside but, for the most part, they spend their days cuddled up inside.

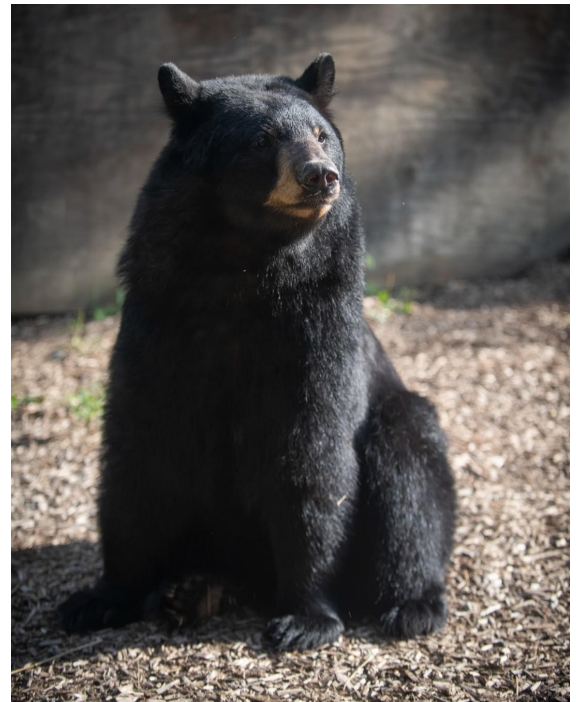
After sustaining a fractured humerus (upper part of the wing) in November, **eagle** Sioux was receiving specialized care that included having her fracture repaired with pins. Unfortunately, her health recently deteriorated rapidly due to additional health challenges and she was humanely euthanized. Sioux will be missed by everyone who loved and cared for her.

Cheyenne is experiencing some medical issues and is being monitored closely..

Some birds in the **Dr. Bernard Master Aviary** have been transported inside for the winter.

All is well with the **lynx** girls and the **Arctic foxes**.

Approximately three weeks ago, it was discovered that Joanie **black bear** was unable to use her hind legs. Due to her size, she was not a candidate for spinal surgery. Therefore, Animal Care and Animal Health teams provided supportive care and diligently monitored her for any sign of improvement. Despite their efforts, she did not show significant progress and, with growing concerns surrounding her quality of life, the difficult decision was made to humanely euthanize her. Joanie left an indelible mark on the region and in our hearts; her presence will be missed.



REMEMBERING BLACK BEAR JOANIE

Photo courtesy of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium



Captain Cal loves snuggling with the girls

Staff began a new medical treatment with **cougar** Cal to see if they can give him more relief for his paws during the cold weather. So far, it seems to be doing the trick! He appears to be much more mobile this winter, even with the colder temps.

Denning season is in full swing for the **wolverines** and Guillotine is being watched closely for any signs of pregnancy. Alvar is enjoying the bachelor life and has been a big fan of the snow. For those who don't know, Valentine's Day is the unofficial birthday of all wolverines because it falls directly in the middle of the birthing season. Make sure to send Alvar and Guillotine some valentines this month!

Everything is status quo in **moose** land. Bert is still separated from the girls and last weighed in at 647 pounds. He will most likely remain apart from them until March or April to make sure breeding season has passed. The girls are doing well and have been getting along great.

The **reindeer** are doing fantastic! New additions Figgy Pudding (ear tag 540) and Candy Cane (ear tag 538) are settling in nicely with their "aunt" Abby. They can usually be found all laying together in their straw piles. However, the rambunctious "teenagers" can be a bit much for Abby sometimes, so you might see her laying down as the girls run around the yard.

Our **brown bears** are in full torpor and are only getting up about once a day. They are doing what we all wish we could do in the winter – sleep!



Bert and one-year antlers

Unfortunately, **polar bear** Aurora did not have any babies this year. She was reintroduced to Lee and he is very glad to have his girlfriend back. They will be monitored closely for breeding in the coming weeks.

Cougar and Moose photos courtesy of Joy Remley



REMEMBERING BALD EAGLE SIOUX

Photo courtesy of Jane Cirigliano



REMEMBERING REINDEER SUGARPLUM

Photo courtesy of Graham S. Jones and Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

REGION NEWS—SHORES

Shores held the first volunteer diver open house on Jan. 13. Thank you to everyone who came out!

The **zebra sharks** had their accelerometers placed and removed.

Unfortunately, one of the baby **stingrays** at Stingray Bay was found to have some irregular swimming patterns and declined rapidly. Thus, the difficult choice was made to proceed with euthanasia. It was ultimately discovered that the stingray had congenital issues, which likely lead to its decline.

Exams and barb trims were recently completed on the Stingray Bay stingrays. We currently have 26 southern stingrays and 54 cownose rays – 80 total!

Thank you to everyone who helped with the employee Shores open house! About 50 people from around the Zoo stopped by for tours; it was a big hit!

Penguin nesting season has begun.

The gift shop at the end of the **manatee** building is under construction at this time.



Photos courtesy of Cindy Wesney

REGION NEWS—THE WILDS

There has been a lot of action at the **rhino** barns this winter. The baby greater one-horned rhino calf that is being hand-raised made the move to rhino barns full-time. This calf, now named Stella, is still on three very large bottles of milk each day. The facilities crew fabricated a rhino-proof howdy door that was placed between her new stall and one housing our two juvenile females, 2-year-old Neeli and 4-year-old Rohini, which enables them to have nose-to-nose access to get to know one another better. When staff think they are ready, they can remove the lower part of the barrier to give Stella safe access into the next stall for physical introductions.

Things have also been busy across the way in the white rhino herd barn. Ten-year-old Agnes had her third calf, a male, on December 16. Just about one month later, 10-year-old Boots had her first calf, a female. The big barn allows staff to separate a female from the herd to give her some privacy to give birth and bond with the calf, much like what would occur if they were out on pasture. Agnes and her calf have already been reintroduced to the main herd. The addition of her little one makes three white rhino calves in the white rhino barn this winter, and there are two greater one-horned kids next door. There is still time to come meet all of the new arrivals on one of the Winter Wildside tours.



Photo courtesy of The Wilds

REGION NEWS—WILD ENCOUNTERS

Although the temperatures have been pretty chilly lately, the pinnipeds seem to be enjoying the cold weather and are very active. Adorable Lennie had a great time trying to catch snowflakes a few weeks ago.

Attendance at the Zoo is generally relatively low during the winter months, but the guests who stop by Adventure Cove really enjoy watching the pinniped training sessions and are often very interested in asking questions about our **sea lions** and **harbor seals**.

Recently, a volunteer who was working the Tunnel mentioned that a sea lion was swimming with one eye closed and questioned if that is normal. The response from the pinniped team is that it is common to see our pinnipeds holding one eye closed while swimming. Sometimes, they'll do it when they're resting but wish to continue swimming. Other times, there could be a glare or reflection from the sun, so they'll close an eye if a specific area in the habitat is particularly bright. While the reasoning is not always understood or definable, the pinniped team looks closely at our animals' eyes throughout the day. If they notice something that looks abnormal or different, they notify the Animal Health team so they can come down for a veterinary check.

Now that the shade coverings for the pools have been removed for the winter, you may see more instances of the animals holding their eyes closed since there is no longer anything to mitigate the reflection of the sun on the water. If anyone asks why the shade coverings don't stay up year-round, it is because they are not strong enough to support any accumulated snow.

As mentioned in the November region news, a sea lion may occasionally use the north edge of the North Pool as a balance beam and, sometimes, fall over in between the two walls. On a recent Sunday morning, it appeared that Lennie was practicing for the next Olympics by jumping on the wall several times. Although it can be somewhat nerve racking the first time you see a sea lion straddle the wall, rest assured that all is well. They can get back to the pool with assistance from staff so, if you do see an animal fall, please contact the pinniped team as soon as possible.

Sunshine continues to be inquisitive and playful (and it's okay to play and interact with her). Perhaps unsurprisingly, she has quite a fan base. Guests often come through the Tunnel with balls and other toys in tow asking for her by name. Lately, some of the other sea lions and a few of the harbor seals have been following Sunshine's lead by also playing with guests.

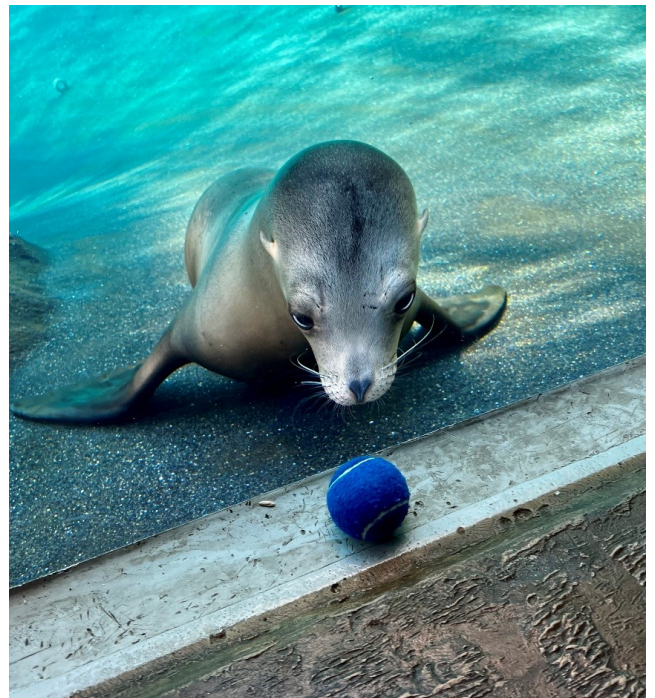


Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney



As always, if you ever have a question or concern about an animal while you are working in the Tunnel or on the Deck when it reopens, you are welcome and encouraged to radio the team on Channel 5.

A new **skunk** has recently been added to our brood. Her name is Fern and she can be found rotating habitat to habitat with her new, adopted sisters Pistil and Zinnia. They get along quite nicely and can usually be seen lying together in a pile!

Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesney



REMEMBERING WARTHOG RANDALL

Photo courtesy of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium



*REMEMBERING RED RUFFED
LEMUR MAURICE*

Photo courtesy of Bev Larson