

ZOOGRAM

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore



FALL/WINTER 2019

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We are doing our best to make the Zoo a place not only for conservation action but for families, school groups, and tourists alike to walk together, learn together, and have fun together.

As I look ahead to a glorious fall season here at the Zoo, I am optimistic about the future. That optimism springs from the events of this past summer, most notably completing the historic transformation of our elephant, giraffe, and lion habitats in *African Journey*. For all who were here to celebrate with us, it was hard not to smile. Seeing Zuri the lioness assess her admirers at the viewing glass, or Tuffy the bull elephant taking stock of his expansive new habitat, or Willow the giraffe approaching the Giraffe Feeding Station for the first time ever—these are moments that make us proud, that make us smile, and that we are thrilled to share with our members, guests, and supporters. We welcomed visitors from all over the world this summer and we appreciate all the positive feedback we have been getting.

We could not have undertaken this important habitat renovation project without the support and funding provided by the State, corporate sponsors, foundations, and private individuals. This support is heartening for many reasons. It lets us envision a bright future for the Zoo, caring for animals, working for wildlife, providing engaging and unforgettable experiences for guests of all ages, and contributing to the cultural life of the great city of Baltimore. I feel a deep sense of pride not only in the Zoo but in the broader community that supports our longstanding presence in Druid Hill Park, our work, and our mission.

I am proud of the work that we are doing at the Zoo to advance wildlife conservation locally and across the globe. I am proud of the way that we are helping to educate future generations about the natural world and the imperative responsibility we all have to care for it. I am also a proud and lifelong Baltimorean. It's difficult for us all to hear outside voices disparage and denigrate our city. I know, as I'm sure you do, that despite its challenges, Baltimore is a city rich in beauty, diversity, and civic pride. Many Zoo employees live in Baltimore City. They work hard, provide for their families, and are here to make every day a better day for our animals and each and every one of our guests, no matter what job they hold.

We are doing our best to make the Zoo a place not only for conservation action but for families, school groups, and tourists alike to walk together, learn together, and have fun together. So, bring your friends and family. Encourage your out-of-town guests to come to the Zoo. Enjoy your time here, and let your experience help spread the word that good things are happening in Baltimore.

Come see us soon!

Don Hutchinson

Don Hutchinson
President/CEO



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Anuli chews on browse in the new
African Journey giraffe habitat.

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WELCOME, LOLA

On July 5, Bunny, a 29-year-old female chimpanzee in the Zoo's troop, gave birth to a daughter, Lola. Bunny is caring beautifully for her baby and has taken to motherhood with ease. The two have forged a close bond, which will be critically important as mother and daughter interact with the rest of the troop. This birth comes at the recommendation of the Chimpanzee Species Survival Plan (SSP) of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Chimpanzees are classified as endangered by the IUCN, the world's leading conservation organization. One of the greatest threats that they face is loss of habitat, as the forests they inhabit continue to shrink in the face of commercial logging, clearing for agriculture, and fires.



KERRIE KOVALESKI

The Zoo is proud to introduce Kerrie Kovaleski as its new Vice President of Education, Interpretation, and Volunteer Programs. To be fair, though, Kovaleski needs no introduction. She has been a familiar face and a tremendously positive force around the Zoo for the past 16 years as Director of Volunteer Programs. A Baltimore native who studied anthropology and environmental science in college, Kovaleski always planned on a career in wildlife conservation. "What I discovered along the way, though, is that my gift is communicating with people," she says, "bringing people together, building a team, and pursuing a shared vision." She has done that to great effect thus far in support of the Zoo's conservation education mission and will no doubt continue to do so in her new role.

BABY BLUE DUIKER

Perhaps you've been lucky enough while visiting the African Aviary to spot two tiny antelopes intermixed with all those birds. They are blue duikers, one of the world's smallest antelopes, and now they are parents! Two-year-old "Flower" gave birth to her first calf, a daughter, in late July. The baby was about the size and weight of a can of beans at birth. Flower has been a protective and attentive mother behind the scenes, and she and her calf will rejoin 6-year-old "Lucky," the sire, in the aviary next spring.

SWAN CYGNET

Over the summer, a baby trumpeter swan, or *cygnet*, hatched at the Zoo. This fall, it will be released into the wild in Iowa. This young swan is the third from the Zoo to participate in Iowa's trumpeter swan restoration program. "We are very proud to be a part of the effort to bolster the population of this amazing bird so future generations can be inspired by their beauty," says Jen Kottyan, the Zoo's avian collection and conservation manager.



TUFFY AND the water cannon

The ruby-red water cannon that now overlooks the Upper Savanna elephant yard in *African Journey* is a novel form of enrichment for the elephants that also facilitates hydration, skin care, and cooling. However, it was not originally designed for pachyderm pleasure. It was designed for fire-fighting! It is the type of water cannon that you might see on top of a tall fire truck or on a fireboat. It can deliver up to 125 gallons of water per minute at a force that would knock a person off his or her feet.

Tuffy is no person, though; he is an adult male African elephant that stands ten feet tall at the shoulder and weighs more than five tons. When given the chance, and if he's in the mood, Tuffy walks straight into the stream of water and literally grabs a drink. Watch closely and you might see him capture water in his trunk and then put his trunk in his mouth.

This is how elephants normally drink. They suck up water in their trunks and then spray it directly into their mouths. Because of the water cannon, though, Tuffy has invented another way to drink. Sometimes he lifts his trunk high enough to get it out of the way and takes water straight into his mouth from the fast-flowing jet coming his way.

The water cannon can be adjusted to deliver more of a shower, too, which Tuffy also enjoys. He stands in the mist and gets wet all over. Want to see for yourself? Come to a water cannon demo on Wednesday or Saturday afternoon from 1:30 to 1:45, weather permitting.



PLAN

YOUR NEXT VISIT

Morning, noon, and evening, the Zoo is a beautiful place to be in the fall. Join us to enjoy breakfast with your favorite Zoo animals, stroll with your favorite toddler, strike your favorite yoga pose, or create your favorite craft. There's plenty for everyone so come on out to the Zoo!

While planning your next visit, please check the Zoo's website – www.MarylandZoo.org – for timely updates on events, programs, exhibits, and improvements.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Goat Corral: Brush, pet, or just visit the goats in the Farmyard.

Creature Encounters: Start your visit at the Zoo's outdoor education center, where you may encounter Animal Ambassadors.

Education Stations: Stop by for some hands-on learning and fun at stations throughout the Zoo.

Keeper Chats: Keepers share stories and answer questions about Zoo animals and animal care.

Penguin Feedings: Twice a day, a Zoo educator narrates while keepers feed the penguins.

Jones Falls Zephyr: All aboard the Zoo train. Open daily, weather permitting. \$

Carousel: Take a spin on our vintage carousel. \$

Giraffe Feeding Station: Enjoy an up-close moment with the world's tallest animal. \$

\$: fee to participate

SEPTEMBER

Breakfast with Celebrity Creatures

Say good morning to Animal Ambassadors.

September 7
8 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
\$ R

Stroller Safari

Fun for the three-and-under crowd

September 7
11 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
\$ R

Wild About Elephants Day

Check out the new exhibit!

September 8
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Yoga at the Zoo

Can you say downward dog?

September 8
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Breakfast with Bears

A polar and grizzly delight

September 14
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Trucks for Tots

Why? Why not!

September 15
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Musical Petting Zoo

Family fun with the Baltimore Gamers Symphony Orchestra

September 21
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Wild About Rhinos Day

Rare and wondrous mega-fauna

September 22
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Breakfast with Penguins

Sip your juice, sight a penguin.

September 28
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Junior Photo Safari Workshop

Focus of Feathers

September 28
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
\$ R

OCTOBER

Yoga at the Zoo

Vinyasa, then visit.

October 12
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Breakfast with Lions

Stretch, roar, and feast.

October 12
8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

CrossFit at the Zoo

Add in some push-ups.

October 13
8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
\$ R

Wild About Penguins Day

Celebrate our colony and their wild cousins.

October 12
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Stroller Safari

For our youngest animal lovers

October 6
11 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
\$ R



Junior Photo Safari Workshop

Animals in motion

October 20
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.
\$ R

ZooBOOO!

Halloween happenings at the Zoo

October 25-27
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

NOVEMBER

Wild About Bears Day

How well do you know your bears?

November 3
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

DECEMBER

Breakfast with Santa & Friends

Holiday fun on the Mansion House Porch

December 7, 8 & 21
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
\$ R

Brunch with Santa & Friends

For those who like to sleep in

December 7
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
\$ R

\$: fee to participate R: reservation required



LIFE IN THE TREES

By Sarah Evans, Zoogram Editor



In the dense forests of equatorial Africa, eastern black-and-white colobus monkeys wake at dawn with a roar. Their rumbling calls reverberate through the tree canopy and are echoed by other colobus groups farther off in the forest. It is the unmistakable morning chorus of a truly magnificent monkey.

Also called *guereza*, black-and-white colobus have been described as “caped and plume-tailed.” They have glossy black coats with long white mantles that wave as they move. Their dark faces are framed in white and they sport black flat-tops. Their tails are longer by far than their bodies and end in a large white tuft. Their name—colobus—is derived from *kolobos*, the Greek word for “mutilated” or “cut short,” because unlike most other monkeys, they lack thumbs.

FOREST LIFE

Like most of Africa’s primates, black-and-white colobus inhabit a vast sub-Saharan belt of tropical forest that stretches nearly across the continent’s mid-section. They are found in several forest types but are particularly at home in the canopy of mature rainforest. “From a bird’s eye view,” commented primatologist Alison Richard, “the most striking feature of [rainforest canopy] is the horizontally continuous layer... made up of a leaf-covered network of branches of large trees.” The sea of green is occasionally pierced by the crown of a soaring tree.

“Except for birds and rainbows, the color here is green.” – Michael Fay, wildlife ecologist, on the tropical forest of central Africa

On the forest floor far below, it is perpetually hot, humid, and dark. Barely any sunlight filters through the thick canopy to ground level. This creates a state of perpetual gloom in the forest, but a gloom that churns with life. Giant trees support climbing vines, lush ferns, and other shade-tolerant plants. Bird song and insect buzz compete with the hoots and screams of chimpanzees, the calls of colobus, the chatter of other monkeys, and the rustling movements of forest buffalo, leopards, duikers, and dozens of other forest mammals.

*“The things I’ve seen are better by far than the images I have. To convey it all, I would have to give you the smells and the sounds.”
–Mike Nichol, wildlife photographer, on time spent in tropical forests*

HANGING OUT IN THE TREETOPS

Black-and-white colobus rarely descend into the gloom, preferring to live high in the treetops. They move through the canopy with ease, swinging or leaping from branch to branch with arms outstretched. Athletically fearless, they leap up or drop down as much as 50 feet onto branches above and below. They can literally bounce through the treetops but are more inclined to sit, feed, and socialize.

These monkeys live in family groups composed of one dominant male, several females, and their offspring. Each group consists of approximately 10 members. Females remain with their birth groups for life while males eventually leave to find new companions. All-male groups occur but are uncommon.

Within each group, life is harmonious. Plenty of time is devoted each day to sunbathing, feeding, resting, and grooming one another. Females sit near each other, and mothers allow other females to handle their infants within one week of birth. The dominant male tends to hang out nearby without causing much disruption, other than to occasionally displace someone from a favored feeding or resting spot.

However, the dynamic *between* black-and-white colobus groups is a different story. Guereza are highly territorial, and while territories may overlap, it is the dominant male’s job to vigorously defend his group’s core area. He does so by leaping, crying, roaring, and occasionally chasing and fighting intruders.

FENDING OFF PREDATORS

In addition to holding other colobus groups at bay, the dominant male and his female companions are ever watchful for danger from above and below. Years-long observation of this species in Uganda’s Kibale Forest revealed that black-and-white colobus are rarely preyed upon, but that’s not for lack of trying by some predators.

From the forest floor, chimpanzees and leopards scan the canopy looking for colobus and other prey. They might launch an attack but most of the time, black-and-white colobus move so quickly and with such daring leaps that they manage to escape. Their usual strategy is to flee higher and higher into the canopy, where thinner branches can still support their weight but not that of their predators.

The higher they go, though, the easier it is for crowned hawk eagles and other raptors to threaten them. Researchers



in Kibale noticed that black-and-white colobus roar in alarm whenever eagles fly overhead. More than once, they also observed adult males charging eagles that flew too low or perched too close.

MUNCHING ON LEAVES

Nonetheless, high in the canopy is where these leaf-eating monkeys want to be because that is where they find the tender, young leaves that they prefer. They move up, down, and through the canopy in search of other leaves and fruit, and occasionally descend to the forest floor to feed. As for water, they get most of what they need from the plants that they eat but will also sip dew or drink rainwater that collects in tree hollows.

Fascinatingly, black-and-white colobus can digest mature, toxic leaves that other monkeys can't. This is because of their uniquely complex, dual-chambered stomachs. Leaves move into the lower chamber of the stomach first, which serves as a sort of storage tank. From there, they pass into the upper chamber full of bacteria and protozoa that aid with digestion. Saliva provides a protective buffer between the two stomach regions. The digestive process allows black-and-white colobus to tolerate all kinds of leaves, but it literally gives them gas. To expel the methane and carbon dioxide that build up as byproducts to digestion, black-and-white colobus are known to belch in each other's faces. Apparently, this is considered a friendly social gesture.

FOLLOWING THE COLOBUS TRAIL

Who knows whether you will witness this friendliness from the Zoo's black-and-white colobus, but you may soon see them on the move through the trees. This fall, the Zoo is opening Colobus Trail, its first-ever overhead passageway for primates. Inspired by the Zoo360® trail system at the Philadelphia Zoo, Colobus Trail will run from Chimpanzee Forest to Lemur Lane and will link the indoor and outdoor habitats of the black-and-white colobus monkeys, Coquerel's sifaka, ring-tailed lemurs, and red ruffed lemurs. All of these animals will be introduced to the trail in time and will take turns using it. There is no telling yet exactly how they will use it—that is up to them—but one thing is certain: these arboreal primates will have the chance to experience and explore the Zoo in a whole new way, out and about and on the move.

Next time you visit this section of *African Journey*, be sure to look up!



CLOSE-UP MOMENTS

When you zoom in and photograph animals up close, the images may surprise you. Pattern and color come to life to present unique portraits of nature.

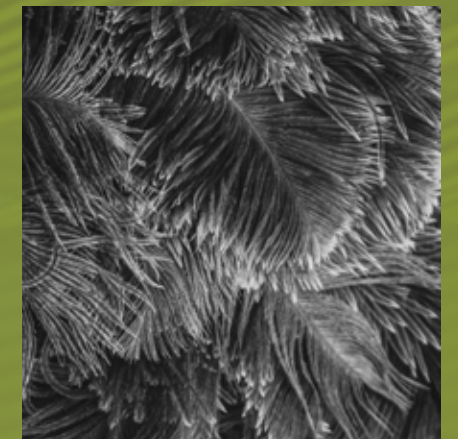
Look closely - really closely! Can you guess who and what I am?



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____

Answers: 1. Flamingo feathers, 2. Alpaca nose, 3. Ostrich eye, 4. Polar bear fur, 5. Macaw eye, 6. Macaw feather



FIGHTING A FUNGAL SUPER VILLAIN

By Sarah Evans

The very first vertebrates to crawl out of the sea and onto land more than 350 million years ago were amphibians. Soft-bodied and slippery-skinned, they have hopped or crawled their way across the planet and now inhabit every continent except Antarctica. They are the frogs, toads, salamanders, newts, and caecilians of the world. (If you've never heard of a caecilian, don't worry, you're not alone. They are the hidden, limbless wonders of the amphibian world, resembling big earthworms that live underground or underwater.)

Despite their long history of survival, amphibians are remarkably vulnerable to environmental change. This is due in large part to their thin, porous skin. They respire, or breathe, not only through lungs but by absorbing water through their skin and drawing oxygen from the water into their bloodstreams. Unfortunately, they also absorb whatever is in the water—including pollutants and pathogens—which makes them particularly susceptible to disease and die-off. As a result, amphibians are considered environmental indicator species, the equivalent of “canaries in the coal mine.” When amphibians start disappearing, it sounds an alarm for the rest of us.

GLOBAL AMPHIBIAN CRISIS

That alarm has been blaring loudly and flashing bright red for almost 40 years now. Since 1980, amphibians have been dying in alarming numbers all over the world. Scientists estimate that at the current rate, one-third to one-half of the approximately 7,500 known species of amphibian could go extinct in our lifetimes. This would represent the greatest mass extinction since that of the dinosaurs.

There are many factors contributing to today's global amphibian crisis, including habitat destruction, pollution, over-collection for the pet trade, and global warming. Yet scientists have identified one culprit that has outpaced all others in directly causing the massive die-offs: a water-borne fungus named *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*. Known simply as *Bd* or *Chytrid*, it is the closest thing to a fungal super villain that the world has ever known.

PANAMA, THE ZOO, AND PROJECT GOLDEN FROG

By the turn of the 21st century, Panama knew that the chytrid fungus was at its doorstep. The Central American country rallied its own resources but also put out a call to the North American zoo community to help preserve its native amphibians, including the rare and beautiful Panamanian golden frog (PGF). The Maryland Zoo answered that call, along with other AZA institutions, and has been on the front lines of the battle to save PGFs ever since.

So what has transpired over the past 20 years and where do things now stand?

In 1999, the Zoo co-founded Project Golden Frog, a multi-institutional, U.S.-Panamanian conservation initiative aimed at preventing the extinction of PGFs. In 2001, 2002, and 2003, the Zoo facilitated the importation to the U.S. of three groups of PGFs collected in the cloud forests of central Panama. Those frogs became the founders of the Zoo's PGF collection and, indeed, of the entire North American population.

Since 2003, Zoo staff has become expert at caring for PGFs and has traveled to Panama several times to collaborate with colleagues *in situ*. Today, we maintain a highly successful and productive breeding and husbandry program for PGFs. We care for our own thriving community of frogs while also acting as legal guardian for the vast majority of PGFs at other AZA institutions. We are also a leading contributor to the Species Survival Plan for Panamanian Golden Frogs, a cooperative breeding, management, and conservation program for participating AZA institutions. Kevin Barrett, the Zoo's Collection and Conservation Manager for Reptiles and Amphibians, serves as its studbook keeper. Dr. Ellen Bronson, Director of Animal Health, Conservation & Research, serves as its veterinary advisor.

The Zoo is also active on the research front. We conduct in-house research to improve husbandry and breeding practices. We collaborate with outside researchers who are studying the chytrid fungus and trying to end its destructive course. And perhaps most importantly, we continue to support local Panamanian biologists and wildlife conservationists in their efforts to bring PGFs back to their home forests.



FIXING UP FROG PODS

This brings us to the story of four very special shipping containers, parked on the grounds of Hotel Campestre in El Valle de Antón in central Panama.

These containers will never be loaded onto a cargo ship or the back of an 18-wheeler. Instead, they will serve as modern-day arks for golden frogs and other endangered local amphibians. They are the new headquarters of the recently created EVACC Foundation, a non-profit organization founded and directed by Edgardo Griffith, a Panamanian biologist and longtime colleague of the Zoo who has dedicated his life and career to saving his country's amphibians.

“The Panamanian forests are in silence,” says Griffith. “The inhabitants, the main performers, were the amphibians. The purpose of this center is to preserve



these forest jewels and to guarantee that the voice of those forests doesn't become extinct."

For the past few years, Griffith and his wife Heidi have been working closely with the SSP—and with the Maryland Zoo and Barrett and Bronson specifically—to get the new facility up and running. What sets it apart from any other amphibian rescue facility in the country is that it is managed and run entirely by local Panamanians. In addition to being frog-ready, the facility will be visitor-ready, with public education central to its overall mission.



"It is unacceptable to think that [the Panamanian golden frog] could disappear," adds Griffith, echoing a sentiment held by most Panamanians. The golden frog is a national icon in Panama, just as the bald eagle is in the United States. Panamanians revere the golden frog as a symbol of good luck and of their country's natural richness and are becoming increasingly aware of the need to protect it.

"We are excited about this collaboration to save Panamanian golden frogs in Panama," says Bronson, "because this is what successful modern-day conservation looks like. It's about supporting local efforts led by local people in their home countries through

capacity-building and shared expertise. The Zoo is in a great position to do this with PGFs, and this focus on supporting local initiatives is true of our other main conservation partnerships as well."

Last February, Barrett traveled to Panama along with Marietta Cox (below), a PGF keeper at the Zoo, to help set up the containers-turned-frog-pods. Today, the containers house hundreds of those forest jewels that Griffith spoke of. For now, the rare amphibians remain inside their arks, not yet safe from the scourge of the chytrid fungus.

BUT THERE IS REASON TO HOPE.

Since 2009, no PGF has been seen in the wild. Recently, however, another local frog began to reappear in the cloud forests in small numbers. It, too, was thought to be extinct. It is not. And it happens to be the Panamanian golden frog's closest relative. This is a hopeful sign, and this is reason for Panamanian conservationists and their North American colleagues to press on.



AFRICAN JOURNEY OPENING WEEKEND

Big changes call for big celebrations, and that's how the Zoo welcomed thousands of members, donors, and visitors to its newly renovated lion, giraffe, and elephant habitats in *African Journey* this past June.

The Zoo kicked off the celebration by hosting a Members' Preview Night. More than 2,000 members were able to attend. "A lot of people said the changes were well worth the wait," noted Allison Lauer, membership sales and marketing manager. "They talked about how beautiful the new habitats were and how close you can get to the animals."

Next, the Zoo hosted a VIP night for donors, exhibit sponsors, and partner businesses. It turned out to be a beautiful evening as guests cruised through the exhibits, enjoyed the new signage and viewing opportunities, and sampled food and drink from stations set up throughout *African Journey*.

The following day, State of Maryland and City of Baltimore officials attended the ribbon cutting ceremony. Maryland Zoo President and CEO Don Hutchinson was joined by Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford and Baltimore Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young. The ribbon-cutting marked the official public opening of the new areas.

That weekend, more than 7,000 guests enjoyed the new pathways, boardwalks, overlooks, and experiences. To add to the festivities, the Zoo offered special keeper chats, training demonstrations, education stations, and face painting.

"We spoke to a lot of visitors who came to the Zoo specifically for the opening of *African Journey*, and they were just amazed," said Sandra McAllister, Visitor Services Manager. "They couldn't believe how close they could get to the elephants. They were really impressed with everything."

A tremendous thank you to all those listed below for making the renovations to the elephant, lion, and giraffe habitats possible:

The State of Maryland	Anne and Jeffrey Donahue	Chadfield B. and
BGE, An Exelon Company	Ellin & Tucker	Mary E. Clapsaddle
T. Rowe Price/T. Rowe Price	Ann and Michael Hankin	David and Diann Churchill
Foundation, Inc.	Jennifer Lowry and Pete	Howard Bank
Committee for Kamenetz	Sutcliffe	Jerry's Toyota
and Jill Kamenetz in honor	The Rhody Family	Gabrielle M. Melka
of her children Karson and	Hugh and Monica Warns	Natalie and Elizabeth
Dylan	Jim and Liz Witty	Zinkham
The Middendorf Foundation	Constellation, An Exelon	Herbert and Harriet Goldman
France-Merrick Foundation	Company	Marta D. Harding
The Coyle-Hardie Families	The Venable Foundation	Jim and Melanie McHugh
BB&T	Fancy Hill Foundation	The Nestico Family
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CLIMBING HIGH

NEW STRUCTURES RAISE THE BAR ON ENRICHMENT

By Claire Aubel

HEADS UP!

You can now find goats overhead and lions perched high thanks to new climbing structures in their exhibit areas. Volunteers from BGE and Hose2Habitat recently joined forces to build a “castle” for the goats, and Zoo staff – with help from Zoo volunteer Kathy Thomas – constructed a three-tiered platform for the lions.

“Keepers and area managers are always looking to provide novel enrichment that elicits natural behaviors and instincts in animals,” notes Ryan Hejduk, Area Manager of the Zoo’s Farmyard. Enrichment can take many forms, including food (such as whole salmon for the grizzly bears), scent (such as cinnamon, oregano, and other spices that elicit natural foraging behaviors), and physical objects.

The climbing structures, like all animal enrichment at the Zoo, came about from a thorough and thoughtful development process involving many people and many departments. Keepers and volunteers observe animal behavior; area managers consult with behavior specialists; animal care staff, including the veterinary team, develops concepts and works out details; administrative staff manages budgeting and donation requests; donors provide financial support; and the operations team purchases materials.

KING (OR QUEEN) OF THE MOUNTAIN

In the case of the goats, Farmyard keepers noted their love for climbing and recognized that the Goat Corral’s tallest climbing structure – a 3-foot-tall wooden industrial spool – was popular but could only accommodate 2 goats at a time. Keepers sketched out a design for a large wooden structure that they dubbed the “goat castle.”

“These goats and their wild counterparts are known for climbing mountains and cliffs,” says Hejduk. “Farmyard keepers approached me with the idea of constructing a goat climbing structure tall enough for them to walk over top of guests’ heads, especially children, so that they can see the natural climbing ability of these animals.”

“All goats love to play King of the Mountain,” adds Erin Cantwell, Mammal Collection and Conservation Manager. “We wanted to provide them with elevation, something to climb, and something that would provide shade and shelter options.”

Idea became reality thanks to the coordinated efforts of BGE and Hose2Habitat. Hose2Habitat organized the build, and BGE donated the supplies and brought 40 volunteers to complete the project. The castle was built in one day and became an immediate hit with the Zoo’s 19 goats.

“Throughout the day, goats are frequently climbing, jumping,



exploring and relaxing on the tiered castle structure,” notes Hejduk. “To the keepers’ surprise, not only are the younger Nigerian dwarf goats using the structure but also the older Nigerian dwarf goats and the African pygmy goats!”

The castle has also garnered attention from many other zoos around the country. After posting photos on its website, the Zoo received more than a dozen requests for the plans.

LION LOOKOUT

Lions also like to climb and to take in their surroundings from up high. In the wild, these big cats frequently sit high on kopjes—large rock formations that rise above the flat grasslands of the African savanna (think Pride Rock from “The Lion King”). They are also adept at climbing trees and lounging on branches.

The Zoo wanted to give 5-year-old Zuri and 11-year-old Hassan a similar vantage point. A generous donation from Zoo volunteer Kathy Thomas made it possible. Using more than 2 dozen thick cedar logs, Zoo staff designed and custom-built a giant-sized “cat tree” that is stable

enough to support a 300-pound lioness and a 400-pound lion. Each bed is approximately 4-by-6 feet, with steps that spread out in a fan pattern. The highest platform is nearly 5 feet high.

“This was a way for us to create an elevated place for Zuri to get up and see,” explains Cantwell. “She got on it immediately and now sleeps on the tallest platform all the time.”

The rough-hewn logs also encourage another natural feline behavior—clawing! “We think Hassan will eventually sleep under the platforms and claw the

logs the same way he does the trees,” says Cantwell.

Thank you, Kathy, and thank you to all the volunteers from BGE and Hose2Habitat, for making these two great climbing structures a reality!

CONTACT THE ZOO

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Administrative offices are open Monday through Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Zoo is open daily during the months of March through December and Friday-Monday during the months of January and February. The Zoo is closed Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

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leap ahead TO THE HOLIDAYS



GIVE THE GIFT OF THE ZOO

The leaves are just beginning to change color, which means that the holiday season is right around the corner. This year, give friends and family something they can really treasure—a Zoo membership! It's the gift that keeps on giving!

Zoo members enjoy:

- FREE Admission to the Zoo year-round
- 25% off guest passes so that you can save big on extra tickets
- Members-only savings on special experiences such as Penguin Encounters
- Discounts on popular events such as OktoBEARfest, our fall beer festival
- Special access to Community Perks, Member Mornings, Zoo Tours, and more

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you at the Zoo!