



ZOOGRAM

The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Fall/Winter 2020



Our staff is dedicated not only to the animals but also to our members and guests who have been coming to the Zoo and following the protocols we have put in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

After months of eager anticipation and preparation, I began my tenure as President and CEO of the Maryland Zoo in July of this year. I expected my learning curve to be steep and felt ready for the challenge, but never did I imagine the curve ball that a global pandemic would throw. It has been a frightening yet fascinating few months, to say the least—a time when zoos and aquariums, and much of our economy, were forced to close as a way of preventing the spread of COVID-19, but also a time of deep exploration and new opportunity.

In the most recent issue of *Connect*, the magazine of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Mary Ellen Collins wrote that “all ecosystems—including institutions—go through an adaptive cycle during any time of significant disruption.” I think that is a fair and compelling way to frame what our institution is going through now. It goes without saying that COVID-19 has upended our worlds in all respects, including adverse personal and organizational impacts.

From the organizational perspective, the Zoo lost approximately \$2.3 million in revenue leading up to the end of our fiscal year, June 30. Despite being able to reopen the Zoo on June 24th, our most optimistic assumptions project a \$1.6 million loss in the current fiscal year. We expect the total impact of the restrictions caused by COVID-19 to be nearly \$4 million through June of next year, a loss representing at least 25% of our funding.

Our staff has worked diligently to identify new and creative ways to raise revenue and reduce expenses. We have been offering virtual programming since May. We recently presented the first-ever drive-thru safari, Brew Thru, and are looking to produce new events to bring in much-needed dollars. On the expense side, we have cut budgets relating to travel, staff events, publications, and marketing. Most unfortunately, we have made the difficult decision not to bring back all of the staff let go in April, ultimately cutting our workforce by 21%.

Despite all of these changes, we are still here and still providing top-notch animal care and supporting conservation programs throughout the world. Our staff is dedicated not only to the animals but also to our members and guests who have been coming to the Zoo and following the protocols we have put in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We love having people back in the Zoo!

We would not be here today without our loyal Zoo members who have stuck with us during such uncertain times. I am ever thankful for your support, and I cannot overstate your importance to this organization. Your patience throughout the closure, your generous donations, and your positive messages to us have buoyed our spirits. We are very grateful.

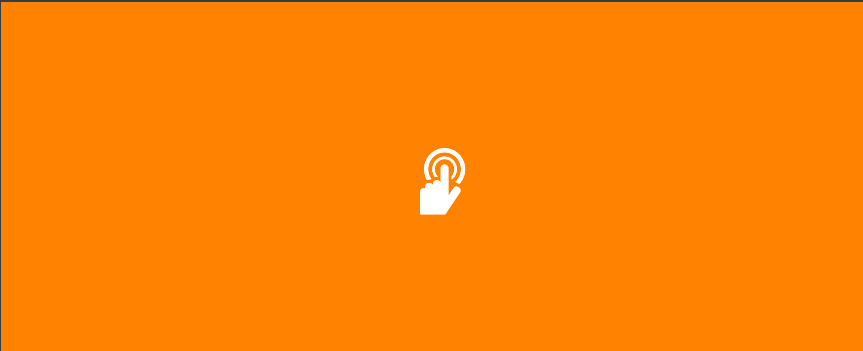
Please enjoy this issue of Zoogram and know that, while this winter will be different for families working and schooling from home, the great outdoors will still be here. Please, bundle up and come on out for a Zoo visit. We welcome you all.

Sincerely,

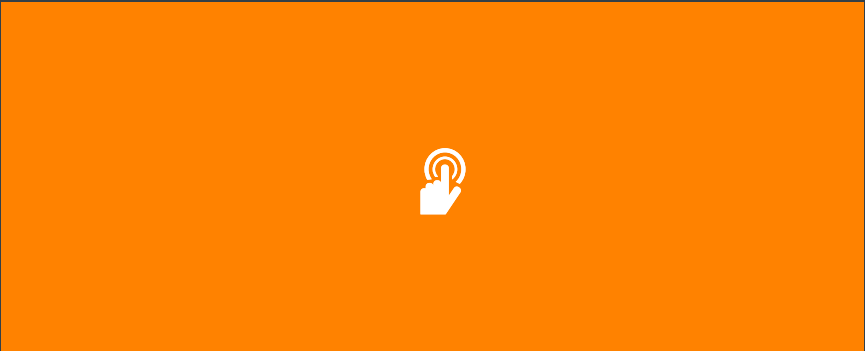
J. Kirby Fowler, Jr.
President & CEO



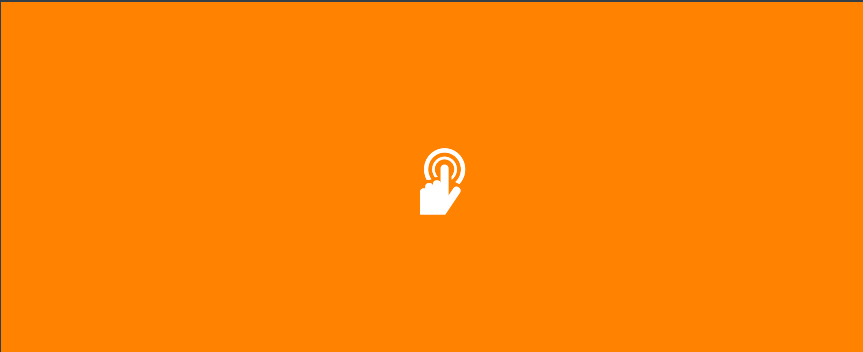
ZOO SPOTLIGHT



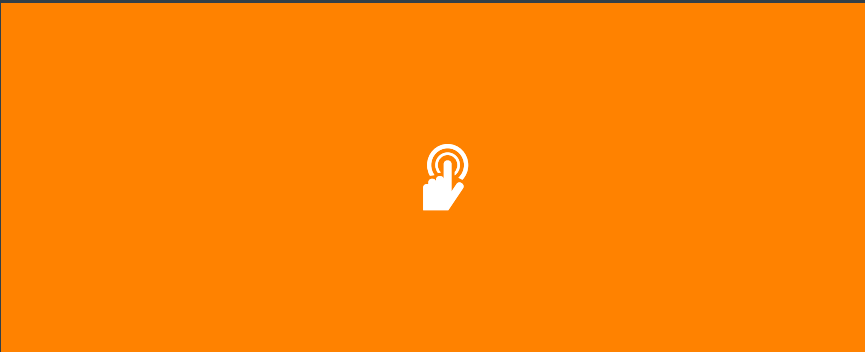
PLAN YOUR NEXT VISIT



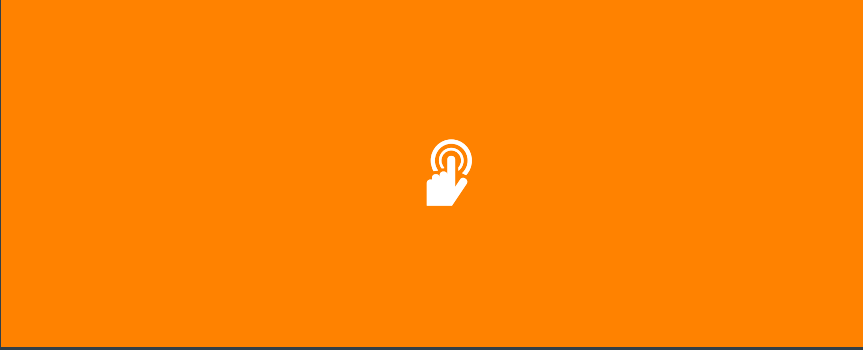
NEWS FROM THE ZOO



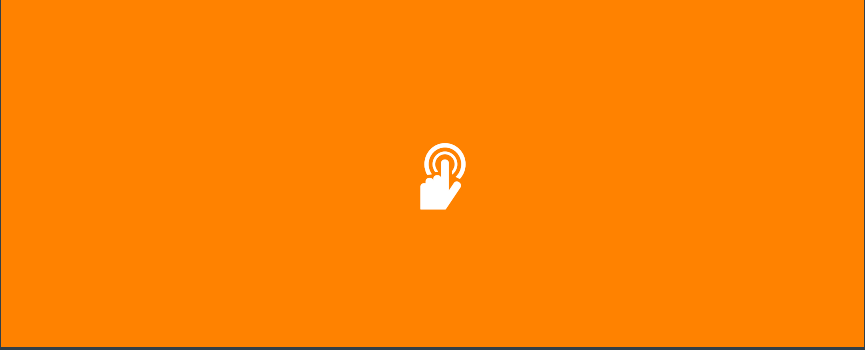
IN MEMORIAM



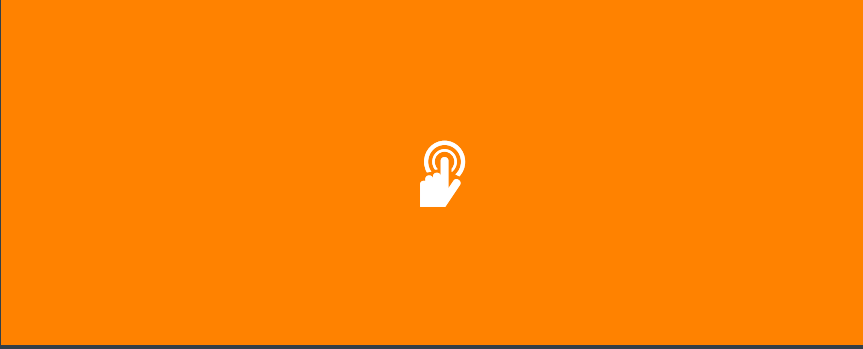
CONSERVATION CORNER



FEATURE STORY



KIDS SECTION



SUPPORT THE ZOO



A Prescription for happiness

By Sarah Evans

“And for all I know he is sitting there still, under his favorite cork tree, smelling the flowers just quietly. He is very happy.” – referring to Ferdinand the Bull, from The Story of Ferdinand by Munro Leaf

us for a while. Our lives have been disrupted, and we face an uncertain future. And as we all know, uncertainty does not sit well. Uncertainty breeds anxiety.

If you Google “ways to deal with anxiety” or something similar, you will find all sorts of prescriptions. Focus on the present. Make a plan. Be grateful for friends and family. These are all valid words of advice, but you may notice—if you try this Googling exercise—that one prescription makes every list without fail. And that is to get outside and experience nature.

But what does that mean, exactly? What “nature”? We’ve all been stuck at home for months on end, and home for many is smack dab in the middle of an asphalt-paved city, not in the shadow of snow-capped mountains or on the shore of a pristine lake. That’s okay, though. Just step outside for a few minutes and feel the sun on your face or take a walk in the rain. It will help.

Better yet, come to the Zoo and bring your family, too!

LEAVE YOUR WORRIES ASIDE

For more than 140 years, the Maryland Zoo has been giving the citizens of Baltimore and surrounding regions great reason to get outside and enjoy trees, grass, flowers, water, sunshine, snow, ice, and most of all—best of all—animals in all of their preening, prowling, squawking, towering, slumbering, and playful glory. The Zoo is a wonderful place to leave worries aside and enjoy the company of those you’re with.

The Zoo also happens to be a uniquely beautiful and enchanting outdoor learning environment. If your kids or grandkids—or you!—could use a day away from the Zoom classroom, this is your place! Each year, hundreds of thousands of people learn together at the Zoo about wildlife and wild places, science, conservation, and so much more. Here, though, learning is informal and interactive and depends on conversation, observation, and a process of shared discovery. It is an experience better had in person, which is one of many reasons that we are thrilled to welcome visitors back to our campus in Druid Hill Park.

PLAN A VISIT

After 15 unprecedented weeks of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Zoo re-opened to the public on June 24. It is a milestone worth celebrating, but the goal that remains top of mind, then and now, is keeping visitors, staff, and animals safe and healthy. We planned our re-opening carefully over many months, following local and state public health guidance and taking every necessary precaution to limit the spread of COVID-19. We want you to visit, and we want your visit to be worry-free.

The Zoo is currently operating at reduced visitor capacity, requiring timed entries, and encouraging online ticketing and cashless transactions. We have added custodial staff and intensified our cleaning protocols. Guests are asked to wear masks while on grounds and are encouraged by signage, one-way traffic flows, and friendly staff reminders to practice social distancing. To prevent close encounters between guests, the Zoo has temporarily shuttered most indoor facilities, paused animal encounter experiences, closed the playground and carousel, and stopped train rides and shuttle service.

SPEND A DAY AT THE ZOO

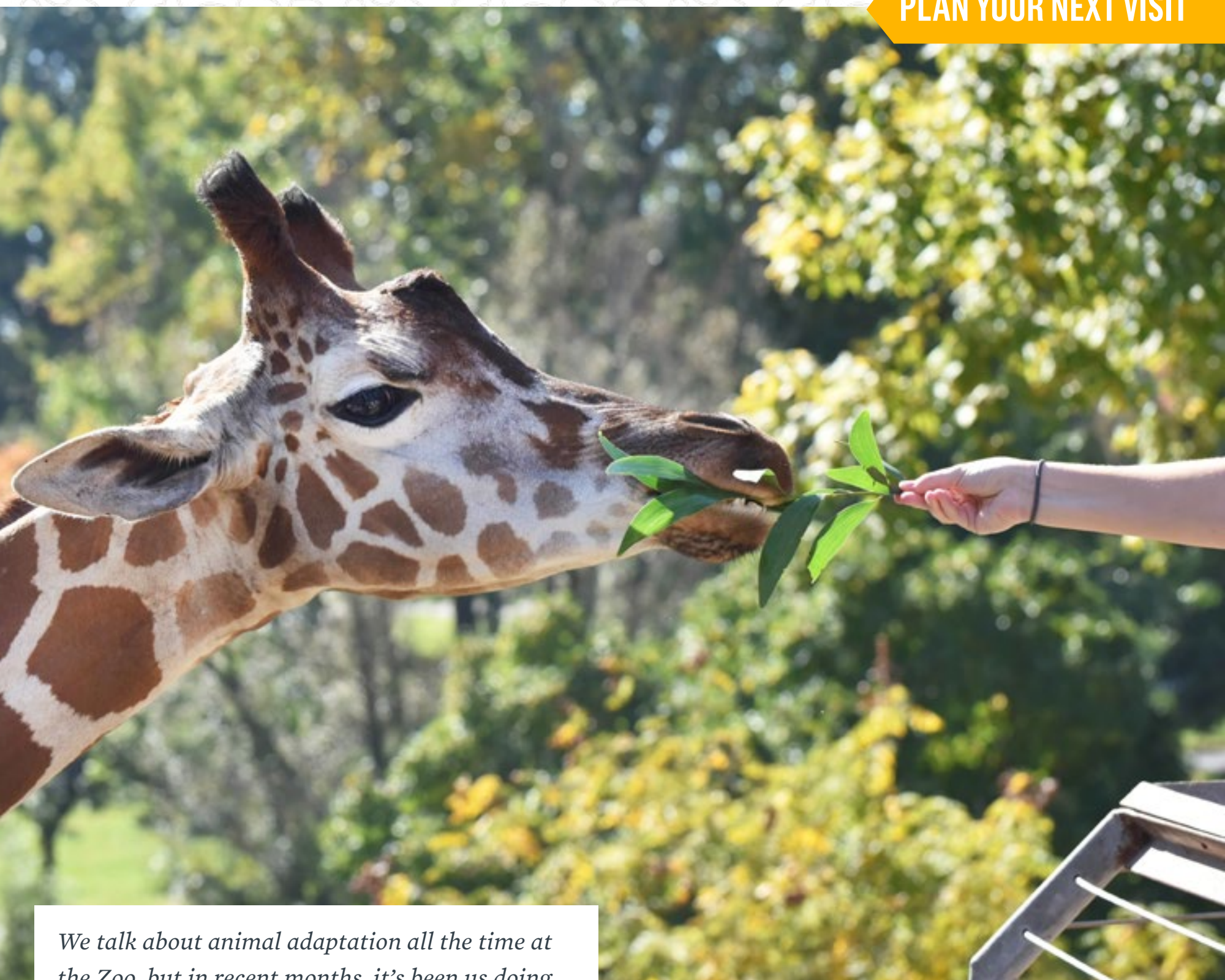
Admittedly, a Zoo visit looks and feels a bit different right now, but there is still plenty of fun to be had. You can check out the penguins chasing each other underwater, the leopard exploring her revamped yard, and not to be missed, of course, are Violet and Lola, the baby chimpanzees. You may spend half your visit watching them play, but if you ever tire of that (which you won’t), then head to Lemur Lane and look up to see who’s resting or rambling overhead. Make your way all around the Zoo and visit with the animals. We promise it will be time well spent. It’s been a tough several months for all of us, and we hope that a visit to the Zoo can raise your spirits and stir your sense of wonder. Meanwhile, we appreciate your support and need it now more than ever. There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has hit zoos and aquariums hard, and the Maryland Zoo is no exception. Our forced closure this spring and summer, combined with ongoing operating restrictions, have taken a huge financial toll. We are projecting a \$4 million loss in revenue by the end of this fiscal year, which represents at least 25% of our annual funding. It’s a big hole to dig out of, but we’ll get there, and we have some very determined diggers at the Zoo.

Your visit will help us get there, too, so step outside, spend a day with us, and let elephants and porcupines and lemurs and lions put a smile on your face. You deserve it, and we will be glad to see you back at the Zoo!

Who could use a mental health break right about now? All of us, that’s who. The coronavirus pandemic that has brought the world to its knees is still with



PLAN YOUR NEXT VISIT



We talk about animal adaptation all the time at the Zoo, but in recent months, it's been us doing the adapting—to new challenges and to newly creative ways to welcome you back. We are so excited to see you again!

As you plan your next visit to the Zoo, please reserve your timed entry in advance and review modifications designed to keep you, our staff, and the animals safe and healthy.

And remember, there's more than one way to enjoy the Zoo! Join us for any or all of this fall's special experiences. Your participation helps support our mission to care for the animals and to promote wildlife conservation at home and around the world.



ZOO BOOO! Presented by Chase | October 30 & 31 [Free with Zoo Admission](#)

Calling all friendly monsters! Halloween is still happening at the Zoo this year, even if socially distanced. Put on your costume, bring a goody bag, and trick-or-treat at spooky stations throughout the Zoo.



ZOO ZOOM: HOME HABITAT 8K Presented by Chase | November 23

[Click Here for Tickets](#)

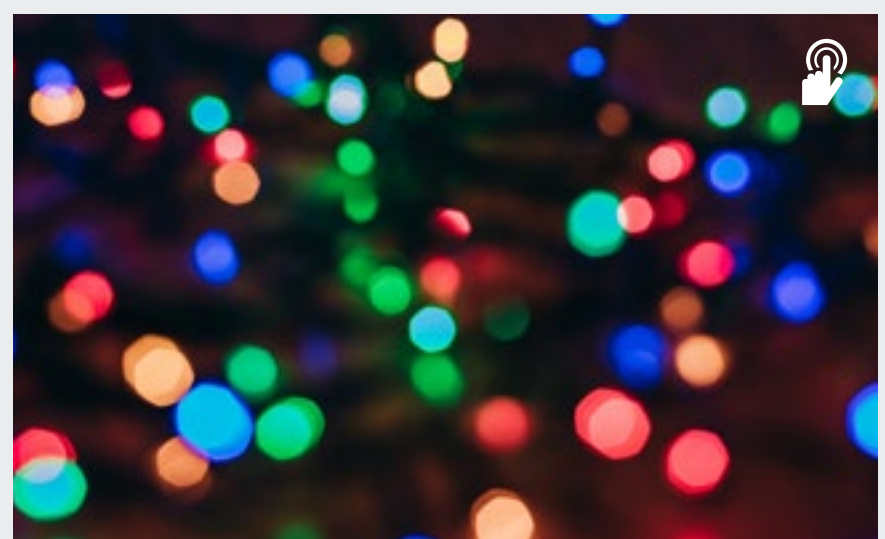
During this year's Zoo Zoom event, we're encouraging you to get outside and discover the wonders of your home habitat! Choose from the 8K race or the Kid's Fun Run and run wild at home at your own pace.



BIRTHDAY PARTIES

[Click Here for more info and to reserve](#)

Tired of Zoom birthday parties? Well, good news—we're hosting at the Zoo again! We've put careful thought into keeping everyone safe and comfortable so that you can enjoy your child's celebration with friends and family.



Weis Markets presents ZOO LIGHTS | Nov. 20 - Jan. 3

[Click Here for Tickets](#)

See the Zoo in a whole new light this holiday season. Join us for Zoo Lights, which we have revived this year. See the Zoo sparkle after dark as you support its wildlife conservation mission. Choose the drive-thru option or the walk-thru option—or try both!



ZOO ELOPEMENT PACKAGES

[Click Here for more info and to reserve](#)

Life is complicated, especially now, but planning your wedding doesn't have to be, even now. Run away to the Zoo and elope! We'll take care of the details so that you can focus on a dream come true.

[CLICK HERE](#)

to take a look at all of the Zoo's upcoming events and programs.



LEOPARD LAIR UNDER RENOVATION

Leopard Lair first opened along the *African Journey* boardwalk a full quarter century ago, in 1995. Over the past several months, with funding provided by the State of Maryland, it underwent a complete renovation. Sofiya the Amur leopard will soon move back in. Even while the Zoo was closed to the public this past spring and early summer in response to the coronavirus pandemic, essential work continued. The renovation of the Leopard Lair (which began before the Zoo closed) was deemed essential because let's face it, one should only dislodge a large carnivore like Sofiya for as long as is absolutely necessary.

While she was prowling and sleeping elsewhere, Sofiya's outdoor yard and indoor holding space were transformed. Outdoors, she now has new climbing structures to enjoy, a small cave to lounge in, and modified rock work that provides interesting new vantage points. Indoors, the building that houses Sofiya received a new roof, fresh paint, skylights, a new heating and ventilation system, and numerous other improvements that make it easier and safer for keepers and veterinary staff to manage resident leopards and provide husbandry, medical care, and enrichment.

Last but not least, a second outdoor yard was added to the Leopard Lair off exhibit, making it possible for the Zoo to manage a pair of leopards in the future...and cubs!



BABY CHIMPS

If you follow the Zoo on social media, you've probably been keeping an eye on Lola and Violet, the two tiny tots of the Chimpanzee Forest. Born almost exactly 6 months apart, they are now celebrating their first birthdays. Lola turned 1 on July 5 and Violet will do the same on December 29. They get along great and are now interacting with all members of the troop. They spend their days playing together and with anyone else who comes along, grooming other chimps, foraging for food and enrichment, and climbing all over everything, including their mothers, Bunny and Raven. They are busy, busy, busy, right up until they fall asleep! Stop by soon and let them put a smile on your face.

[CLICK HERE to see baby chimp videos!](#)



OUT AND ABOUT

Since the completion of Colobus Trail about one year ago, all of the Zoo's lemurs and black-and-white colobus monkeys have been getting in on the action. All four species—the ring-tailed lemurs, red ruffed lemurs, Coquerel's sifaka, and black-and-white colobus monkeys—like to get out and about and explore in the overhead passageway, and the ring-tails and red-ruffeds also enjoy sunning themselves up there. "They all took to the trails immediately," says Pam Carter, Area Manager of Chimpanzee Forest—so much so that sometimes they don't want to leave! "We're working on that," she says diplomatically. "They do really well, but don't always move out in a timely fashion."

Remembering Mary

In a year that has seen far too many lives lost, the Zoo remembers one of its own with fondness, admiration, and deep sorrow. Mary J. Wilson worked at the Zoo from 1961 to 1999, caring for gorillas, elephants, big cats, and other mammals. She was the first African American senior zookeeper at the Zoo and one of the first women to be hired into the job. In late May, she died of COVID-19 at the age of 83 at Northwest Hospital in Randallstown.



Wilson grew up in west Baltimore. She came to the Zoo with only a high school diploma and no particular training, but her unshakable love for animals and innate sense of how to treat them would make her an extraordinary zookeeper.

"She was a no-nonsense lady," recalls Wilson's daughter, Sharron Jackson. She stood 6-feet-tall and could stare down a jaguar, chimpanzee, or in one brief instance, an escaped Kodiak bear without fear. She earned every animal's trust, though, and was fully committed to them.

Wilson shared a particularly close bond with "Sylvia," a wild-caught female gorilla that came to the Zoo as an infant in 1964. "Never in my wildest dreams did I expect an animal like Sylvia," said Wilson years later. "When she came, it was like love at first sight." Wilson effectively raised Sylvia, and because they spent so much time together, they could communicate through special sounds and expressions. After Sylvia and a male gorilla named "Hercules" moved to the National Zoo in 1981, Wilson spent months traveling to D.C. on her day off just to visit them. When Sylvia was transferred to the Columbus Zoo in 1986, Wilson accompanied her. She returned years later to see Sylvia and to meet her adopted daughter, "Nia."

"We sat there for a long time, Sylvia and me, just looking into each other's eyes," recalled Wilson. "She was making contentment sounds and I was calling her some of the names I used to call her when she was young. And for a while there, I think we were both back in the Mammal House. She just looked at me as if to say 'I remember.'"

There are many at The Maryland Zoo and across the country who will remember Mary J. Wilson for her barrier-breaking career, her extraordinary way with animals, and her generous mentorship of those who followed her into zookeeping. She lived a remarkable life, and the Zoo will be forever grateful for her service and her legacy.

WOOD TURTLE RESCUE



Photo credit: Maryland DNR

While people across the world took a global time-out this spring and summer, nature continued to stir and animal care staff at the Zoo continued to care. One pint-sized beneficiary of this care was a wild female wood turtle struck by a car in Allegany County in June. Fortunately, she survived and was rescued. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) referred her to the Zoo's Veterinary Hospital. [The Zoo collaborates often with the DNR](#) on wildlife conservation work, including caring for wildlife in distress.

This injured turtle presented as a special case because she was gravid—in other words, full of eggs. Upon arrival at the Zoo Hospital, she was treated with hormones to induce her to lay the eggs, and she did. In late August, after several weeks of incubation, one

hatched! Out came a tiny turtle no larger than a quarter. It will be the first participant in the Zoo's wood turtle head-start program, our newest conservation initiative with the DNR and Susquehannock Wildlife Society.

The hatchling will be raised pathogen-free at the Zoo Hospital for the next few years before being returned to the wild, where hopefully it will produce offspring of its own to bolster local populations. [Wood turtles](#) are native to Maryland, but populations are declining in many parts of the state and across the broader northeastern range.

Meanwhile, the mother turtle is already back where she came from. She has healed fully and was released in early September in western Maryland close to where she was found.



STOCK, CHOP, DELIVER

BY SARAH EVANS

It may seem like an eternity ago, but try to think back to springtime of this year. The City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland were in shutdown mode due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. Most likely, you were stuck at home, working or going to school or reevaluating your future from your kitchen table. Rain or shine, though, the animals at the Zoo woke up every morning ready to eat.

And rain or shine, pandemic or no pandemic, the Commissary team was up early, taking care of business as always. Every day without fail, this small yet critical team procures, prepares, and delivers ready-to-serve diets all around the Zoo for approximately 2,000 individual animals representing more than 200 species. Their work is physically taxing. It demands heavy lifting, constant loading and unloading, dexterous knife-wielding, and bone-numbing chill inside a walk-in freezer. It requires tenacity under any circumstances and even more so in recent months.

QUARANTINE SHIFTS

Normally, the Commissary team is six-people strong, composed of five full-time keepers and one manager. From mid-March through June, though, while the Zoo was closed to the public, all animal care teams at the Zoo followed “quarantine” schedules. The Commissary team split in two and worked non-overlapping shifts in order to minimize risk of exposure should anyone come down with COVID-19. This meant that for weeks on end, three people were consistently doing the hard, physical work of six. They did so while also limiting interaction with others, socially distancing, wearing personal protective equipment, doubling up on cleaning protocols, and missing the support of steadfast volunteers.

“Probably a few months into quarantine, you could tell that these challenges were taking a toll,” admits Commissary Manager Andrew Young. “There were a lot of uncertainties about how long this would last.” However, while he may have worried for his team, he never questioned their commitment. “We have an obligation to continue to care for our collection—which includes feeding every day – regardless of what is happening in the world,” he says. “It is one of the reasons that people in this field are so dedicated to their work. Our animals do not take weekends or holidays off, so many people in this field do not either.”

A DAY IN THE LIFE

A typical day for the Commissary team begins at 6:30 a.m., hours before most Zoo staff report to work. After a brief morning meeting, keepers divide and conquer. Some travel through the Zoo emptying manure bins while others stay behind in the kitchen to prepare that day’s diets for carnivores and live invertebrate feeders (that’s right—crickets, mealworms, and other moving delicacies). These diets get delivered around the Zoo by 8:30 a.m. when animal keepers are starting their shifts.



Then it’s back to the Commissary to wash bins and bowls, prep and deliver produce diets for the next day, meet delivery trucks, ready meat for overnight thawing, and restock the kitchen’s grain supply. Young works alongside his keepers for much of the day but also finds time to place orders, track inventory, touch base with vendors, negotiate prices, and attend meetings. Clean-up is the last order of business and includes putting supplies away and sanitizing everything that has been touched.

MAKING GROCERIES

Operation central for Commissary—the place where it all happens—is a large yellow warehouse located behind the Elephant Barn. It contains an industrial kitchen, a walk-in refrigerator and freezer, and office space. Dry goods are stored in the adjacent Grain Barn. Down the road slightly is another large and equally crucial building: the Hay Barn. Through these three buildings moves an enormous quantity of food daily and annually. To give you some idea of just how much, let’s run through the Zoo’s “grocery list.”

On an annual basis, the Zoo purchases approximately 78,000 pounds of produce, 23,000 pounds of meat, 31,000 pounds of fish, and 64,000 pounds of grain and hay. In addition to these dietary staples, the Zoo supplies nutritionally specialized chow to most species, prey items for carnivores, live invertebrates for many birds and other animals, and food enrichment items that run the gamut from Gatorade, popcorn, marshmallow fluff, Craisins, and honey to pretzels, pickles, peanut butter, and seltzer water. It costs about half a million dollars per year to feed the animals, and that bill will be paid no matter what state of emergency the Zoo or the world may be in.

In other words, during the Zoo’s weeks-long shutdown this spring and summer, the crowned cranes never missed their share of crickets; the elephants never skimped on hay, carrots, or sweet potatoes; and the penguins still crowded their island for daily feedings, oblivious to any supply chain disruption. And while the Zoo—like every other family, business, and institution in America and around the world—will continue to suffer the ramifications of the coronavirus pandemic for months to come, the animals will not. This is how it should be, and this is how it will be, because the Zoo’s commitment to animal care and wellbeing is unflinching.

PLANNING FOR A PANDEMIC

Fortunately, while the Zoo was closed to the public this spring and summer, there was little disruption to food deliveries for the animals. Young and his supervisor, Dr. Ellen Bronson, Director of Animal Health, Conservation & Research at the Zoo, helped make sure of that starting in January. That is when Dr. Bronson first became aware of the novel coronavirus, and that is when she advised Young to start stockpiling supplies of meat, fish, and other dietary staples. Meanwhile, because the agricultural and animal feed sectors are deemed essential, production and delivery of hay, cereals, grains, and specialized chow continued uninterrupted.

The biggest impact was felt with produce, not because it was unavailable but because deliveries were cut back from six to three times per week. “I think that is mostly because the wholesale vendor does not have enough business yet to justify daily deliveries,” speculates Young. “Many of the small businesses and restaurants that they service are still not using normal volumes of produce.” In response, Young has been stocking produce with a longer shelf life, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, apples, and kale.

Finding cleaning supplies has been its own unique challenge in recent months, as every American family knows. The Zoo has felt the pinch, too. Commissary stocked up on enough cleaning products to last through the shutdown, but it is still difficult to find and purchase an adequate quantity of disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, and latex gloves.

CREATING A PATH FORWARD

For Young, all of the recent challenges add an interesting twist to a job that he loves. Growing up, he dreamed of becoming a zoo keeper, and when he took a job in the Zoo’s Commissary six years ago, he viewed it as a career stepping stone. He surprised himself, though, by developing a genuine interest in animal nutrition. “A lot of people get their start in commissaries,” he notes, “but I decided, ‘No, I really like it here!’ My plans are to stay on this side—on the animal nutrition side—and build my path here.”

Everyone at the Zoo is now focused on building a path forward, even as we all continue to assess the economic and emotional fallout of the ongoing pandemic. The path forward will not be easy for the Zoo, but being able to reopen on June 24 was definitely a step in the right direction. It is great to see people enjoying the Zoo again, and their support is much needed and appreciated. “Each day that went by with our front gates closed was another day of lost revenue,” says Young, “and that income is the lifeline for our zoo.”

For the Commissary team and many other teams at the Zoo, returning to somewhat normal operations in late June also meant reuniting for the first time in months. That, too, has been encouraging. “Being able to see and say hello to somebody really goes a long way,” comments Young. “Everyone coming back together provided us all with a great boost. I would say that right now, morale is good.”



Teenage Mutant Ninja TURTLETRACKERS

This past spring and summer, even while the Zoo was closed to the public, a core group of committed animal conservationists roamed the woods of Druid Hill Park, tracking eastern box turtles. They moved nimbly through the forest undergrowth with radio receivers and antennae in hand, searching out their well-camouflaged targets. Maybe it was hot and muggy, maybe the mosquitoes were biting, maybe the turtles were hard to find. None of that deterred these turtle trackers! They are Zoo Teens, after all.

Every year, high school students interested in the Zoo Teen service learning program undergo a rigorous selection and training process in early spring so that they can volunteer around amazing animals and

knowledgeable Zoo staff. In a normal year, Zoo Teens educate guests on grounds using themed activities, participate in field trips and overnights, and plan and implement conservation and sustainability projects. They are an important and enthusiastic volunteer force for the Zoo. But what happens when a global pandemic closes the Zoo and drives everyone into quarantine?

This spring, Volunteer Managers wrestled with plans for the teen program. We had 30 long-term participants looking forward to a busy summer and a stack of applicants for the new training class. The Zoo was closed and the state was under a stay-at-home order, but the kids were counting on us! In the end, we knew we had to find ways to keep them engaged.

Our Teen Leadership Council stepped up to lead virtual interviews, and 35 new ZooTeens joined the program. We held training online and offered service opportunities that could be done remotely. Notably, teen volunteers oversaw the Maryland Zoo's participation in Plastic Free July, a national contest to raise awareness about consumption and conservation. (Our zoo won by a landslide, by the way.) When the Zoo reopened, teens served alongside adult volunteers as Social Distance Ambassadors. They also embraced projects to advance our conservation mission, such as planning and maintaining a Browse Garden, which produces food on grounds for animal diets and thereby lessens the Zoo's carbon footprint.

Meanwhile, tracking turtles proved to be an ideal project for bringing Zoo Teens together during a socially distanced summer. This study, which has existed in some form for over 20 years, charts the movements of wild eastern box turtles living within and around the Zoo. Since the data is collected outside in open spaces where participants can easily spread out, small groups of Zoo Teens could work together and enjoy each other's company even while safely socially distanced.

[CLICK to learn more with Zoo Naturalist Peter Martin about eastern box turtles, their habitat, and a few of their favorite foods!](#)

The Zoo greatly appreciates all that its teen volunteers have done since the start of the pandemic and all that they do year-round to advance the Zoo's mission. Their enthusiasm is inspiring, and best captured in their own words:

"The Zoo is important to me because of the resources they give to children about the importance of conservation and the work the Zoo does to help maintain healthy ecosystems."
-El Fuhrman, volunteer since 2019

"The Zoo needs to be healthy not just within the next few months, but for as long as it is open. Keeping the areas clean and organized will benefit the visitors and the animals' environment."
-Nicole DeAtley, volunteer since 2018

"I wanted to get an opportunity to learn a little bit more about how the zoo works outside of a guest perspective! I also am considering a career in a zoo, and I wanted to see if it was something that I would enjoy before I go to college and fully commit to it. Luckily, I've loved it so far so I won't be changing my life plans quite yet!"
-Kalina Sloot, volunteer since 2020

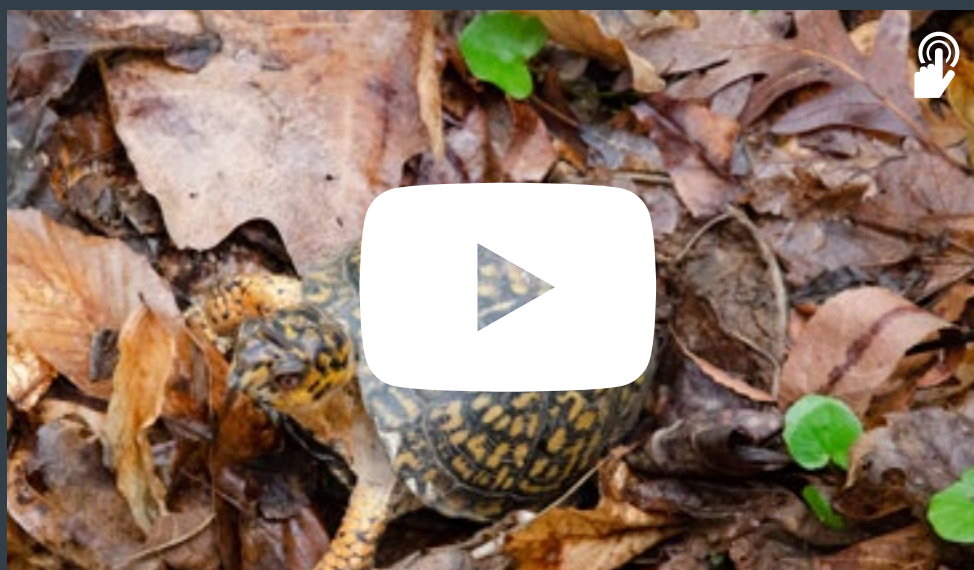
"I am so glad to be returning to the Zoo! I love being a part of the community and helping in any way I can to help conserve and protect animals. The Zoo provides me with opportunities that I couldn't get from anywhere else. My future is going to be with animals so the Zoo is able to provide me with the experience and knowledge I need to get to my goals."
-Darien Hauf, volunteer since 2019



Kids' activity

AT HOME IN THE WOODS

Hey kids, let's go turtle tracking with Peter Martin, the Zoo's naturalist! He'll tell you what eastern box turtles like to eat, where they like to sleep, and what it means to brumate. Click the image on the right to watch.



Mansion House Undergoes ADA Improvements

This year marks a significant design milestone for the Mansion House, a centuries-old building at the center of Druid Hill Park that serves as the Zoo's administrative headquarters. It is now easily and safely accessible to all, regardless of physical disability. The Zoo recently installed a well-lit path around the southwest corner of the building that is ADA compliant, along with a canopy at the ground-floor entrance that provides shelter from snow and rain.

"We knew that getting guests with disabilities into the Mansion House was problematic and have been wanting to make changes for quite some time," says Karl Kranz, the Zoo's Chief Operations Officer. "We applied and thankfully received money from the City of Baltimore to see the project through to completion."

The Mansion House was built in 1801 as a private home and sold to the City of Baltimore in 1860. Over the years, it has served as a public pavilion; a viewing stand for bicycle races, parades, and other spectacles; a restaurant offering "leisurely dining on broad porches under gaily colored umbrellas;" an exhibit hall for birds and other animals; and currently an office building. In addition to those who work or volunteer in the Mansion House, hundreds more visit each year to attend Zoo-sponsored or private events on its expansive wrap-around porch.

The Zoo needs your support more than ever. COVID-19 delivered a devastating blow to our operations, forcing us to downsize our workforce by 21% and causing a critical financial loss of over \$4 million. While we are not alone in our need for support, we are unique in the fact that our work, simply put, keeps over 1,500 animals alive and well. Please consider making a donation to support the continued care of our animals.

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ZOO LIGHTS



NOV. 20 - JAN. 3

Drive-Thru

Wednesdays & Thursdays
5:00 – 7:00 PM

Fridays & Sundays
5:00 – 9:00 PM

Walk-Thru

Saturdays
4:30 – 7:30 PM



PURCHASE TICKETS



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Before you visit, please review our important health and safety measures [here](#).

To purchase tickets and reserve your entry time, [click here](#).

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.

To all of our friends and members, thank you for your support and well wishes over these past several months. We are glad to welcome you back on grounds and look forward to seeing you soon. While planning your next visit, please check the Zoo's website—www.MarylandZoo.org—for timely updates on events, programs, exhibits, and improvements. Follow the tabs on the website to reach any Zoo department, including Group Sales, Membership, and Education.

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Visit MarylandZoo.org for a full listing of the Zoo's leadership, including the [Board of Directors](#) of the Maryland Zoological Society, Inc.

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