

Animal Tracks

A Day in the Life of an Animal Care Professional

+ ZOOSCHOOL —
LEARNING GONE WILD!

**EXCITING ADDITIONS
COMING TO THE
BIRMINGHAM ZOO!**

Endoscopy Helps to Reveal the
Mystery Inside Animals



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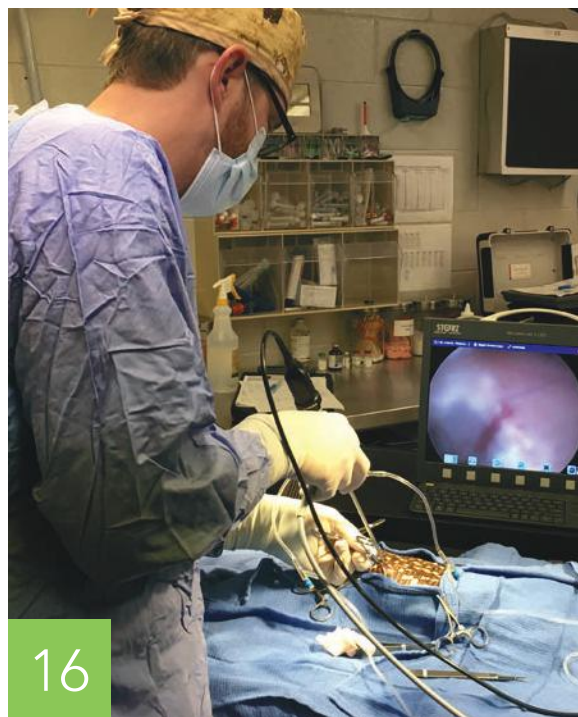
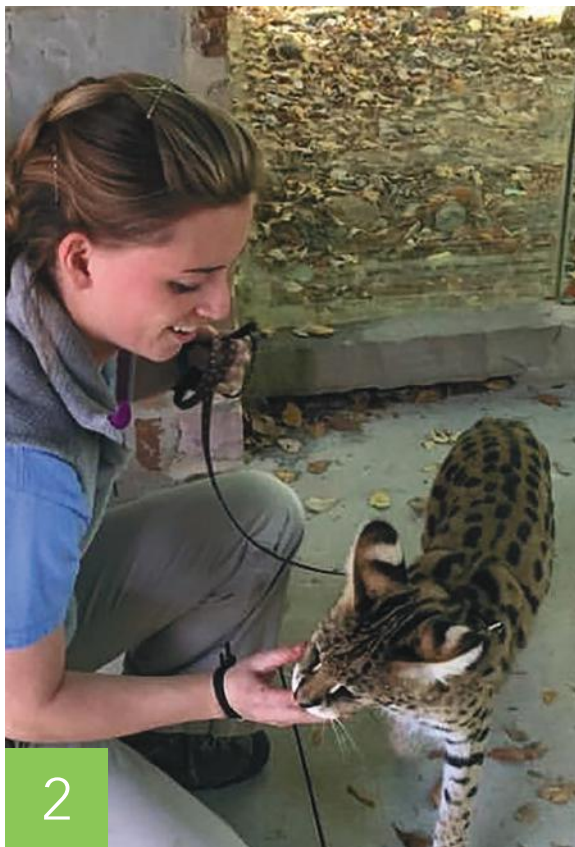


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Birmingham Zoo Mission: Inspiring Passion for the Natural World... through emphasizing Conservation, Education, Scientific Study and Recreation in all aspects of the Birmingham Zoo's exhibits, programs, facilities and activities.

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Birmingham, Alabama 35223
www.birminghamzoo.com

The Birmingham Zoo is the only AZA accredited zoo in the state of Alabama.

ZOO HOURS:

Open daily, Monday through Sunday:
9am–5pm



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Members,

As we prepare for an exciting and fun-filled spring at the Birmingham Zoo, I would like to reflect on several highlights from the beginning of 2017.

We are pleased to announce the Zoo set an attendance record of 644,667 guests in 2016. This was the highest recorded attendance the Zoo has ever seen in its 62 years of history. Thank you for helping us achieve such a tremendous goal.

You have probably noticed that each time you visit the Zoo it has changed. As we continue the construction on the new event lawn, front entrance, and soon, Asian Passage, we would like to thank you for your support and patience. These new additions are sure to make your Birmingham Zoo an even greater asset to the Birmingham Community.

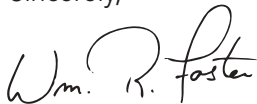
I am excited to say that jaguars have returned to the Birmingham Zoo. This month, Khan, the Zoo's jaguar has been introduced to his new exhibit. We hope you will stop by and pay him a visit and learn about these amazing animals.

Just in time for summer break, we will be invaded by animatronic pirates into the Zoo! These pirates will be taking over the Zoo train to offer a fun and exciting ride as you learn about water conservation. We hope that through this interactive and fun activity, you and your family will be immersed into the important role we all play in the Natural World. We will have several new events, including Pirate Movie Night, Pirates and Parrots, and more that we hope you will join us for.

I would like to invite you all to also join us through two easy avenues for supporting the Zoo. Through Amazon Smile and Planet Fundraiser, you can choose the Birmingham Zoo as your institution and a portion of all proceeds will go directly towards conservation. This is an easy way for you to show your support through your everyday purchases.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Zoo staff, volunteers and the hundreds of animals that enrich the lives of our guests every day, thank you for your support. We look forward to seeing you soon and often.

Sincerely,



William R. Foster, D.V.M.
President & CEO



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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ANIMAL CARE PROFESSIONAL

BY: REBEKAH DANIELS

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be an Animal Care Professional at the Birmingham Zoo? We are responsible for the daily care, as well as making sure all the animals' needs are met. There is one animal area at the Zoo that is completely behind-the-scenes. This area is referred to as the Programs Department which houses the Zoo's ambassador animals. It includes over 40 different species ranging from reptiles, small mammals, amphibians, parrots, birds of prey and many more. These animals participate in educational events, off ground programs and even the summer wildlife shows at the Schaeffer Eye Center Wildlife Stage, which help people learn more about animals through up close encounters. Like every other animal department, the Programs keepers spend every day helping ensure the animals have the best treatment possible.

The day starts with the morning check. We walk the area checking on every animal, and giving them fresh water. This check is primarily to see if anything out of the ordinary happened overnight while we were gone. During this time we administer medications to the animals that are currently on morning medical treatments. Just like humans, animals receive regular medical checkups to make sure they are healthy. All animals at the Birmingham

Zoo visit the onsite veterinarian, and are able to receive any medical treatment they may need.

The next part of the day is the cleaning portion. We spend a few hours making sure that every single holding space and enclosure is cleaned and scrubbed. The rest of the morning routine consists of weighing the animals that are scheduled for the day, preparing their daily food diets and giving out enrichment. Enrichment is something that improves or changes up the day for that animal, and can be in the form of tree browse, hidden food, or anything else that is different from the previous day. Since our days are always changing, we strive to ensure that the animals in our care have different things to do every day as well. Enrichment is one of the most important things an Animal Care Professional can do for the animals in the Zoo.

Training happens throughout the day in the Programs Department. Every animal within the department is on some sort of training plan, whether it is working on sitting calmly in the arms of the Animal Care Professional, or learning a complex stage routine. We have multiple training sessions throughout the day with the animals. Husbandry behaviors are the most important behaviors that we train. These behaviors help us take better care of the animal, such as learning to sit still for an x-ray, ultrasound, or voluntarily participating in blood draws during veterinary procedures. This helps create a less stressful environment for the animals, the veterinary staff and the Animal Care Professionals.

Before heading out for the day, we check again and make sure the animals have enough food and water for the evening. We check to see that all animals are safe and secure in their homes for the evening. Administering evening medications is the last thing that is done before we turn the lights out. Just like humans, animals need to have a night time, so we turn the lights off overnight. The Animal Care Professionals at the Birmingham Zoo have a passion for taking care of these animals, and can't wait to return to the Zoo to do everything over again the next day.





You make our state roar.

Whether it walks, slithers or flies – we believe it's important to support the things that make our great state a better place to live. That's why we're proud to support the Birmingham Zoo, an attraction that has done an amazing job of helping protect animals and creatures of all kinds, for so many years.



SAVING ANIMALS FROM EXTINCTION AT THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO

BY: KIKI NOLEN-SCHMIDT

The Birmingham Zoo is an accredited Zoo by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and has joined with the 233 AZA accredited zoos throughout the world to form AZA Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE) Programs.

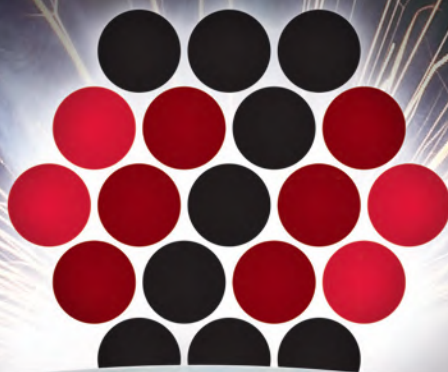
Through this program, 10 SAFE Signature Species were identified, and with the participation, support and expertise within the accredited zoo and aquarium community, the current population threats and conservation actions needed to help revive these species are being addressed. With these plans in place, over 36 conservation projects have been started to help raise awareness for these species, encourage hands-on action in the field and increase their population numbers.

The Birmingham Zoo's mission to Inspire Passion for the Natural World directly corresponds with the SAFE Program. We hope through your visits to the Birmingham Zoo that you are able to see the conservation work being done here and around the world, and understand that you play an important role in the care and conservation of animals. For more information on the conservation work being done at the Birmingham Zoo, be sure to visit the Conservation section on the Birmingham Zoo's website, www.birminghamzoo.com.

By downloading the TailsUp! App, you and your children can enjoy fun and interactive games where you can learn about wild animals, including where to see them and how to help them. By playing TailsUp! and learning about these animals, you can take the first step in helping save animals from extinction.

Looking to get involved? You're invited to join us on Saturday, May 20 for SAFE Day at the Birmingham Zoo where you can learn more about the 10 keystone species, their relatives that reside at the Birmingham Zoo and why helping these animals is so important.



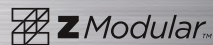


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All of us at Zekelman Industries are proud to support the Birmingham Zoo's mission of inspiring passion for the natural world. Thanks for all that you do to educate, advance and entertain!

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PASSION INTO CONSERVATION ACTION

The Birmingham Zoo's Passion into Conservation Action (PiCA) Program allows Zoo employees to submit project proposals supporting the Zoo's conservation initiatives that the Zoo will fund. After the applications were reviewed and narrowed down through a selection process, the following individuals were awarded 2017-2018 grants for the following projects:

Bobbie Cavanaugh – Zoological Manager, Predators/Sea Lions
Red Panda & Asian Ecosystem Conservation in Nepal

- Hands on field research in red panda conservation to enhance the new Asian Passage
- Help Red Panda Network by promoting them and their needs
- Assist in sending future PiCA recipients to Nepal for further help in the field and with workshops

Tyler Eads - Zoological Manager, Children's Zoo/Alabama Wilds
North American River Otter Latrine Survey in Alabama

- Survey and study the portion of the Cahaba River located inside the Cahaba River National Wildlife Refuge for North American River Latrine sites
- Highlight the abundance of the North American Rivers Otters within Alabama

Kelli Grigg - Animal Care Professional, Predators
Red-Cockaded Woodpecker Translocation in Florida

- Work with Sarah Lauerman to ensure the Red-cockaded Woodpecker will not become the sixth bird species to become extinct in the last 100 years
- Assist in monitoring nests and banding chicks for two weeks during spring nesting season
- Return in the fall for capture night to identify banded birds' roosting cavities and assist in netting birds to be moved

Scott Kayser - Animal Care Professional, Predators
Pallas' cat Research & Conservation in Mongolia

- Will work with Dr. Bariusha Munkhtsog, a leading Pallas' cat researcher, and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences
- Main focus of research will be on distribution and genetic diversity of Pallas' cats in Mongolia by using trail cameras and collaring Pallas' cats with satellite trackers
- Conducting studies on the distribution of Pallas' Cats throughout Mongolia, to be able to target specific sites for preservation and conservation

Emily Layman - Animal Care Professional, Programs

Rainforest Wildlife Conservation – Toucan Rescue Ranch in Costa Rica

- Work with the Toucan Rescue Ranch (TRR) to assist veterinary procedures and learn medical practices and protocols for rescue cases
- Focus on breeding and research programs to learn how they pair un-releasable birds for mating, conditions required for successful breeding and the release process for parent-reared toucan and owl species
- Assist with data collection and see how it is applied toward successful sloth re-release into the wild

Erin Miller - Animal Care Professional, Predators

Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage Training in Zimbabwe

- Share enrichment and training ideas with Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage to better the welfare of their animals
- Assist the Chipangali staff with training techniques, planning and execution
- Remain as a contact for their staff to assist as needed moving forward

Kiki Nolen-Schmidt - Marketing Coordinator

Conservation through Digital Creation

- Secure proper video and audio equipment for recipients to take on their PiCA Grant programs to better document their experiences
- Train each of the recipients on how to use the equipment
- Compile yearlong synopsis of the program and the conservation work being done by Zoo staff

Travis Coty - Animal Care Professional, Predators

Black-footed Cat Working Group (BFCWG) in South Africa

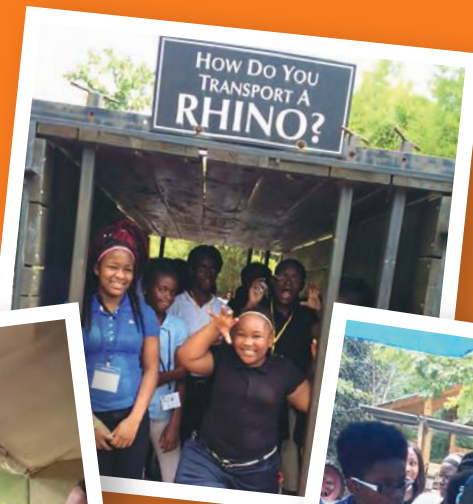
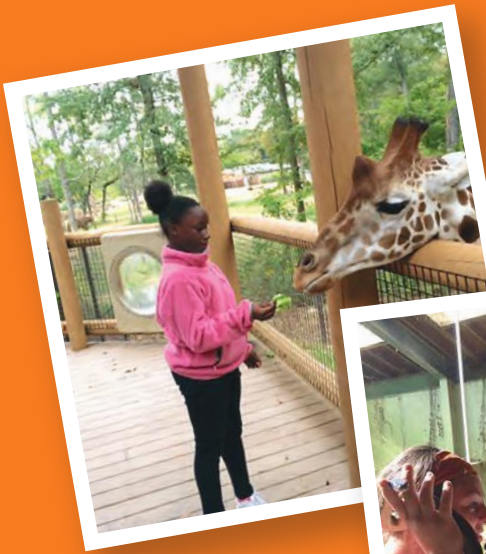
- Explore options for a better quality trail camera image and design, setup, and run a trail camera marked with different scents to attract and thereby test better methods of identifying black-footed cats
- Aid in research work by helping to trap small rodents, survey birds and track previously radio-collared BFC's in the Benfontein Nature Reserve
- Assist in the current black-footed cat research while developing trail camera techniques

Amy Toman – Lead Animal Care Professional, Africa West

Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) in Namibia

- Work with the long term ecological study on giraffe, focused on the Angolan subspecies
- Assist with DNA analysis from skin biopsy samples to more accurately project genetic diversity and population size
- Assist with GPS collaring to gather data that helps show the giraffes' range across the desert and understand Angolan giraffe habits
- Help collect and organize information for the photographic library of the Angolan giraffe in Namibia for future assessments





ZOO SCHOOL— LEARNING GONE WILD!

BY: KATHY FOURNIER

Spending a week of school at the Zoo may seem like a dream to many students, but for seventh graders in Birmingham City Schools it is a reality. Now in its seventh year, ZooSchool is a week-long program focusing on conservation, the environment and the Zoo. This partnership with Birmingham City Schools serves over 700 seventh graders each year and provides a rich learning experience, aligned with state education standards, to a population of students who may not have frequent access to the Zoo.

During a week at ZooSchool, students meet several of the Zoo's animal ambassadors and interact with animal care professionals to learn what it takes to care for animals, among many other learning opportunities. Our hope is to not only inform but to inspire. We want students to learn about the important jobs that are required to keep the Zoo running successfully. Kaylin Roscoe, a senior at Holy Family Cristo Rey High School, attended ZooSchool and had this to say about her experience, "...going to ZooSchool was exciting and has inspired me in deciding my future career goal, to become a Wildlife Biologist." Kaylin is currently serving as an intern in the Education Department at the Zoo.

By midweek, we begin to see students' curiosity and excitement emerge. They start to comprehend their role in conservation and look at the animals,

and themselves, in a new light. While observing the elephants, one student said, "I have never really been interested in elephants until now!" One of the most exciting changes we see from the first day to the last is their attitudes toward snakes! This shift in attitude is an important outcome for ZooSchool. In evaluations, when asked "Is it my responsibility to help protect nature and the environment?," we saw a significant increase in students whose attitudes toward this question shifted from "no" to "yes." Helping these students see themselves as part of nature and understanding that their actions have an impact, both positive and negative, is an exciting accomplishment for ZooSchool.

This year, we have added a new initiative that allows the students to see conservation on a global scale. A partnership with Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage in Zimbabwe, Africa allows us to video conference with their staff each week. Chipangali is not a zoo, but rather a haven for wild animals which have little hope for survival in the wild. This experience shows the students that conservation not only happens locally here at the Birmingham Zoo but is a global effort.

The Zoo is very proud of this program and the students we are privileged to work with. Watching their attitudes change, their curiosity emerge and their worldview expand inspires us and gives us hope for the future.



MAY 2017

MOST PIRATES SET SAIL, BUT THIS SPRING YOU'RE INVITED TO SET RAIL ON THE RED DIAMOND EXPRESS TRAIN RIDE AT THE ZOO! THE ZOO'S NEWEST ATTRACTION PROMISES TO BE BOTH ENTERTAINING AS WELL AS INSPIRING AND IS DESIGNED TO SEND AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT WATER CONSERVATION. GUESTS OF ALL AGES WILL ENJOY THE DOZENS OF LIFE-SIZE, ANIMATRONIC SWASHBUCKLERS WHO ARE TAKING OVER THE ZOO TRAINS THIS MAY.

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WHAT'S NEW AT THE ZOO?

KHAN THE JAGUAR!

BY: DANIELLE WILLIAMS

This spring the Birmingham Zoo welcomed a three year old, male jaguar named Khan. While there is a lot of excitement about this new addition, have you ever wondered what it takes to relocate a jaguar?

First, you need to have the right space. When staff learned that there would be a habitat opening up, they researched to see what animals might be a proper fit. Based on the layout of the habitat and the information in the Animal Care Manual provided by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, it was determined that with some modifications, such as overhead netting, the open habitat would be suitable for a jaguar.

Next, the animal has to be available. Many species within the Zoo belong to special groups called Species Survival Plans (SSP). These groups consist of professionals dedicated to a particular species and its future, and at regular intervals they make recommendations on where individuals should move and recommendations for breeding. In this case, the Jaguar SSP was getting ready to make these recommendations around the same time the Zoo was

planning its new habitat. Better still; the Jaguar SSP was looking for new zoos to house jaguars.

Then, you need to learn all about your new animal. Khan's former zoo shared medical and behavioral information with Birmingham Zoo staff to help us become familiar with his history. The lead Animal Care Professional of the area also took a trip to the Jacksonville Zoo to meet Khan before he moved. He got to work alongside Khan's keepers in Jacksonville to experience the daily routine, including feeding and training. Learning about a typical day at a former zoo helps the Birmingham Zoo staff make big transitions, like moving to a different home, more comfortable for new animals.

As Khan continues to settle in, the Birmingham Zoo is excited to be a new face for the Jaguar SSP. Jaguars are the only big cat of the Americas, and they are currently listed as "Near Threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Birmingham Zoo already supports jaguar conservation efforts in Belize (www.birminghamzoo.com/conservation/), and is happy to actively support the SSP population as well.

BE A PART OF THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

As part of the new Arrival Experience, the Birmingham Zoo is designing a beautiful donor wall inside the Hugh Kaul Plaza to honor and thank the many friends of the Zoo who have graciously given their support to the Capital Campaign. This donor appreciation wall will be more than 50 feet wide and 6 feet high. For a limited time, you have a unique opportunity to see your name, your family's or a friend's name permanently recognized near the front entrance with a capital campaign gift of \$1,000 or more. A gift to the Capital Campaign is one that has benefits that last a lifetime by helping to build a home for Asian species, a new entrance, plaza and green space area. The donor wall is a unique way to honor someone special for all Zoo visitors to see. For more information about donating to the Capital Campaign, visit the Zoo's website at www.birminghamzoo.com/get-involved/donate or use the enclosed envelope to make your gift.



A CAMPAIGN FOR
THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO



REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMP 2017

Summer is right around the corner, and the Zoo has exciting camps for your children! Summer campers will enjoy hands-on learning with exciting themes, experience up-close animal encounters, Red Diamond Train and Protective Life Carousel rides, splash fountains, Jane H. Brock Soaring Safari Zipline Adventure, Full Moon Bar-B-Que Wild Slide, guided tours, animal demonstrations and so much more. The best place for summer fun is at Birmingham Zoo Camp!

Grade	Week 1 (4 day week) May 30 – June 2	Week 2 June 5 – June 9	Week 3 June 12 – June 16	Week 4 June 19 – June 23	Week 5 June 26 – June 30
4K	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean
5K-5th	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean
	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives
	Art Safari	Art Safari	Art Safari	Art Safari	Art Safari
3rd-5th	N/A	Jr. Zoo Keeper	Jr. Zoo Keeper	Jr. Zoo Keeper	Jr. Zoo Keeper
6th-8th		Behind-the-Scenes	Behind-the-Scenes	Behind-the-Scenes	Behind-the-Scenes
		Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper
9th-12th		N/A	N/A	Animal Wellness	Conservation Connections
Grade	Week 6 (3 day week) July 5 – July 7	Week 7 July 10 – July 14	Week 8 July 17 – July 21	Week 9 July 24 – July 28	Week 10 July 31 – August 4
4K	Freestylin'	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives
5K-5th	Freestylin'	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives
	Freestylin'	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean	Nature Detectives	Pirates of the Zooribbean
	Freestylin'	Art Safari	Art Safari	Art Safari	Art Safari
3rd-5th	Freestylin'	Jr. Zoo Keeper	Jr. Zoo Keeper	Jr. Zoo Keeper	N/A
6th-8th	N/A	Behind-the-Scenes	Behind-the-Scenes	Behind-the-Scenes	Cat Week
		Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	N/A
9th-12th		Animal Wellness	Animal Wellness	N/A	N/A

Visit birminghamzoo.com to register today!



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: REALTYSOUTH

RealtySouth is a proud supporter of The Birmingham Zoo and our combined efforts to build a stronger community by demonstrating a passion for those we serve.

A staple in Alabama for more than 60 years, RealtySouth has partnered with many events and initiatives at the Zoo. From family-based events such as Boo at the Zoo and ZooLight Safari to everything in between, the company has found great benefit from the varied partnerships.

"Everything we do is about the happiness of those we serve. Helping others find a home in a community they envision themselves in long-term provides a tremendous sense of purpose. Birmingham is a wealth of opportunity just outside those front doors. More often than not, the Zoo is a natural part of our conversation with families moving to Birmingham," said RealtySouth CEO Richard Grimes. "It is exciting to know we have been a part of something responsible for providing families with so much enjoyment."

"As Alabama's leading real estate services company, we possess a heightened sense of responsibility, an elevated sense of purpose and an unwavering goal to provide our clients with nothing less than five-star service," Grimes shared.

Our business is far more than a real estate transaction. It is relational. We work with people often anxious about what will most likely be the largest investment of their lifetime. Whether searching for a home, helping someone secure a mortgage or insurance, simply providing a level of comfort during this time is extremely important to us. At RealtySouth, we work to do business right, every time.

For more information, please visit www.realtysouth.com.

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VOLUNTEER AT THE ZOO!

Calling all Teen Volunteers

With the Teen Volunteer Application Deadline rapidly approaching on April 1, it is time to turn in your application. The Zoo's Camp Crew Teen Volunteer Program is comprised of 13-17 year olds who are passionate about education and the natural world. The Teen Volunteer Program is a competitive program and a great opportunity for teens to gain summer service work, network with other awesome teens, and expand their knowledge during a summer of fun. Remember, it is not too late!

Adult Volunteers needed for exciting new Jaguar Habitat at the Birmingham Zoo

The Birmingham Zoo is looking for a team of passionate Adult Volunteers to help with the launch of the new Jaguar Habitat beginning this spring and going year round. Adult Volunteers must be 18 years or older and not in high school. We offer Adult Volunteer Orientations monthly, and are always actively seeking new members to add to the Zoo team. Outside of helping with the new Jaguar Habitat, entry level Adult Volunteers also have opportunities to serve as Information Ambassadors, help with Nightlife Programs and donate their time at the Giraffe Encounter Station along with many other opportunities. Over time, through training and experience, Adult Volunteers also have the opportunity to advance and help with barn crew, bear crew and eventually work up to the Animal Ambassador Program. The first step is to go to birminghamzoo.com and visit the Get Involved page!



◀ ZOO BREW ▶



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UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL

- 1 Kori Bustard Day
- 8 Farm Day
- 8 Gopher Tortoise Day
- 15 Breakfast with the Bunny
- 15 Easter Egg Hunt
- 22 Party for the Planet
- 28 Tails in the Trails
- 29 Butterfly Habitat Opens

MAY

13



- 13-14 Mother's Day Weekend
- 20 Zoo Run
- 20 SAFE Day
- 27-29 Memorial Day Weekend

JUNE

17



- 17-18 Father's Day Weekend
- 24 Pink Flamingo Day
- 24 World Giraffe Day

JULY

- 1-4 Free Admission for Military
- 8-9 Fun Days
- 15-16 Fun Days
- 15 Pirate Movie Night
- 22-23 Fun Days
- 29-30 Fun Days
- 30-Aug 5 Cat Week





MURDOCK THE COATIMUNDI

BY NIKKI PARTAIN

What climbs like a squirrel, looks like an anteater, but is really a cousin to raccoons? A white-nosed coatiundi of course! Meet Murdock the coatiundi, one of over 40 ambassador animals that live behind-the-scenes in our Animal Interpretation Programs Department. These animals help connect people to the natural world through Wildlife Shows at the Schaeffer Eye Center Wildlife Stage, education classes, community events and much more!

White-nosed coatis, like Murdock, are found throughout the southwestern United States through northern South America. Coatis are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on fruits and vegetables, small mammals, lizards, crabs, nuts and almost anything else they can find. They can be found in a variety of habitats, from forests to grasslands to coastal areas and even deserts. Long claws on their front feet make coatis excellent climbers. They even have double jointed wrists that allow them to climb head first down trees, an unusual feat for an animal of their size! Males like Murdock are solitary in the wild, but females and juveniles live in bands of up to 20 or more. While foraging in tall grasses, coatis in the band will pause

occasionally to stand on their back legs and look for the tails of the other members of their group to make sure there is no danger around. After spending a day foraging, coatis take shelter in the tree tops at night to avoid predators like pumas, eagles and crocodiles while they sleep.


Many coati populations are stable in the wild, but pockets within their range are beginning to suffer. In fact, these unique creatures are considered an endangered species in New Mexico. Their primary threat is habitat loss, especially in forested areas. While much of what we hear about our world sounds like gloom and doom, Murdock and the other Programs animals help Zoo visitors realize that things can easily change with our help! By simply recycling your paper and purchasing products made from recycled material, you have a direct, positive impact on coatis and other animals that call subtropical and tropical forests home.

Make sure to come see Murdock and the other ambassador animals demonstrate natural behaviors at the Wildlife Shows at the Schaeffer Eye Center Wildlife Stage this summer to learn more about them and the easy ways we can all make a difference for the wild!

“GO GREEN” WITH THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO

BY LINDSEY HERRON

Looking for more ways to “go green”? The Birmingham Zoo Green Team is here to help!



When you are thinking about ways to “green” your life, don’t forget to think about your office! From tall office buildings downtown to home offices around the country, the average United States office worker uses 10,000 sheets of paper a year, which adds up to a whopping 4 million tons annually. When you add up office usage, packaging, mail and all other paper usage in the country, 26 million tons of paper enters U.S. landfills each year. That’s a lot of paper!

Our paper use directly impacts a

lot of trees. More than 300 million tons of paper are created per year, all over the world, which translates to over 18 million acres of trees lost every year. This habitat loss affects thousands of species of animals worldwide, including some that call the Birmingham Zoo home. Red pandas, Malayan tigers and Sumatran orangutans are all losing their habitats due to massive deforestation efforts in their home ranges.

So how do we tackle our paper problem? The easiest way to reduce your personal paper usage is to use less of it, of course. Don’t print something unless it is an absolute necessity. Whenever possible, print on both sides of your paper instead of just one side. You’ll be surprised at how much these two simple changes can drastically reduce your paper usage! Other easy ways you can reduce your paper usage include using electronic billing and banking to reduce the amount of paper that’s sent to you each year, reusing your scrap paper for to-do lists or other handwritten notes, and buying products that use less paper packaging. Finally, remember to recycle what you can’t use anymore. Recycling helps extend the life of your paper and keeps it out of landfills, while also ensuring a few less trees are cut down.

Remember, every little bit counts!

ENDOSCOPY HELPS TO REVEAL THE MYSTERY INSIDE ANIMALS

BY: STEPHANIE MCCAIN, DVM, DIPL ACZM,
DIRECTOR OF ANIMAL HEALTH

Endoscopic exam in a Mexican beaded lizard

Veterinary medicine is a challenging field and taking care of zoo animals can make it even more challenging. Oftentimes when a zoo animal is sick, they display very subtle signs. We must rely on our trained Animal Care Professionals to detect these signs. It may be that a bird is spending less time flying or that a fox is not as eager to train as usual. Once we know something is wrong, figuring out why is the next challenge. In December, the Animal Health Center was able to purchase a new piece of equipment to help with that challenge: a portable endoscopy unit with both a flexible and a rigid endoscope.

In veterinary medicine, the flexible endoscope is normally used for looking into the esophagus or stomach of animals. Here at the Zoo, however, we rarely deal with normal. So far, monitoring the inside of one of our bull elephant's tusk has been a primary use of the new endoscope. Bulwagi's tusk was trimmed short last May due to an infection. We are able to monitor the health of the tissue on the inside of the tusk by passing the endoscope into the canal of the tusk, which goes largely unnoticed by Bulwagi. Because the endoscopy unit allows us to take pictures, we can document changes over time, and take biopsies of the tissue to ensure that there are healthy cells to match what we are seeing.

Our main focus with the rigid endoscope is to be able to look inside the animal itself - the human equivalent would be laparoscopy. This is especially helpful in evaluating the health of birds and reptiles at the Zoo. Being so small, we are able to evaluate

almost every internal organ of these animals through one small incision in their skin. It is a minimally invasive way to identify unhealthy looking organs, and to take biopsy samples, if necessary. This extra information about their tissue health adds to our understanding of what is affecting an animal and can enable better treatment choices.

In December, one of the Zoo's Eastern screech owls, a small owl weighing less than 1/3 pound, was eating less. After we completed a physical exam, blood work, x-rays and ultrasound, we determined that she had liver disease. We did an endoscopic procedure to evaluate all of her internal organs and were able to obtain a biopsy of the liver to better direct our treatment. That owl is back to normal behavior now.

Most recently, a male Mexican beaded lizard was not eating. The skin of this species has a boney component, making x-rays largely unusable. Through endoscopy we were able to find an abnormal liver and take biopsies. We are waiting on the results to identify the underlying cause and treat this patient appropriately.

Being able to evaluate the health of animals from only the outside is like having half of the puzzle. The endoscopy unit gives us the option to look at the other half in a minimally invasive way, improves our diagnostic capabilities and maximizes our ability to direct therapies to heal our animals. Advanced medical equipment helps us continue toward our goal of providing the best medical care to these animals that we can.



Endoscopic view of the liver
in a Mexican beaded lizard

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