

Animal Tracks



The Eastern Indigo Snake: A Species Reborn

Learn the importance of the Zoo's eastern indigo snake conservation partnership.

+ ALL ABOUT BEARS

Volunteer at the Zoo!



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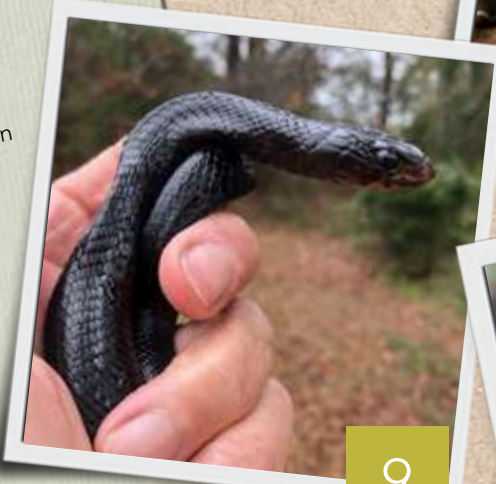
See the expert care the Zoo's veterinarian team has given to one of our tortoises.



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PHOTO CREDITS: Francesca Erickson, Scott Kayser, Clark Maxwell, Amanda Polsen, Evan Smith, Carson Jones

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Birmingham Zoo Mission: Inspiring Passion to Conserve the Natural World.

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The Birmingham Zoo is an independent, not for profit, 501 (c) (3) organization and is the only AZA accredited zoo in the state of Alabama.



LETTER FROM The President

Dear Valued Members,

Your Birmingham Zoo has a rich history devoted to wildlife and wild places. We are a staple in the lives of many people spanning multiple generations. Open 363 days of the year, your Zoo has a unique setting where people can spend quality time and make lasting memories.

In this issue of *Animal Tracks*, we will be adding new stories to our legacy. Your Zoo is proactive in many conservation initiatives that aim to protect and care for animals in our own backyard and around the globe.

The Birmingham Zoo is an incredible organization because we are supported by a significant group of phenomenal people—our dedicated staff and volunteers, Board of Directors, donors, and valued Members. That's why more than ever, your Zoo needs the support of you, our Members.

On March 17, 2020, we decided to temporarily close the Zoo to the public to flatten the curve of the novel coronavirus in our community. Our top priority is to ensure the safety and well-being of staff and volunteers, guests, and the animals in our care. Open or closed, we are committed to ensuring our animals receive the nutrition, veterinary care, and enrichment they deserve.

As a Member of the Birmingham Zoo, we are grateful for your unwavering support during this critical time. The Zoo has set up an Emergency Animal Fund to assist with the costs to feed, house, and provide vital care to our animal family.

We're all in this together. Rest assured that your Zoo will continue the important work that we do every day. When the time comes to reopen, I want you to visit and enjoy your Zoo. Bring your energizing excitement and eagerness to see all the animals you've missed. Stay safe and I look forward to seeing you all at your Zoo soon!

Sincerely,

Chris Pfefferkorn
President & CEO

Support **Your** Zoo by donating to the Emergency Animal Fund at www.birminghamzoo.com/donate. Gifts of all sizes are important and make a tremendous difference!



ALL ABOUT Bears

BY: AMANDA POLSEN, CHILDREN'S ZOO ANIMAL CARE PROFESSIONAL II AND AMY HAYCOX, CHILDREN'S ZOO ANIMAL CARE PROFESSIONAL II



At the Birmingham Zoo, we have two 7-year-old American black bears, Betula (Bety) and Sassafra (Sassy). Bety and Sassy are wild rescues from Big Sky Montana where, after being fed by well-meaning but poorly informed people, they became habituated to human interaction and were found continuously begging for food. They have called the Birmingham Zoo their home for six years and reside in the Barbara Ingalls Shook Black Bear Trail in Alabama Wilds,

just past the Children's Zoo Barn. The Animal Care Professionals (ACPs) have received several questions about the bears during the winter season. Spring may have already sprung, but now you will know what happens when winter comes back around at the end of the year!

Why can't I see Bety and Sassy in the winter?

Although bears are not true hibernators, they do slow down in the winter. Hibernators experience a decrease in body temperature, respiration, heart rate, and appetite. Bears experience torpor, which is a less extreme version of hibernation. While a hibernating animal's body temperature decreases to ambient temperature, that of an animal in torpor only drops a few degrees. A similar difference can be seen in respiration and heart rates. The biggest difference between hibernation and torpor is that an animal in hibernation is less likely to wake up than an animal in torpor. Have you ever heard the saying, "don't poke a sleeping bear"?

Do they still eat?

The short answer is yes! During the summer/fall months, the bears consume a diet of 3,800 calories per day. This diet includes vegetables, fruits, lettuce, nuts, fish, and dry chow. During

torpor, they consume a diet of 500 calories per week. That's a big difference!

While the bears are not active, what do the ACPs do?

The ACPs you see working with the bears are the same ACPs that work with all of the animals in the Children's Zoo Barn and Alabama Wilds Trail! We use the time when the bears are in torpor to build new enrichment items and develop training plans for the upcoming year.

What does torpor mean for a guest's visit to the Zoo?

During the months of December-February, Bety and Sassy spend their time inside in an artificial den. They are given different substrates like straw, shredded newspaper, and leaves to build their beds to fit their comfort level. ACPs check on the bears multiple times throughout the day to offer them food, add more substrate, and clean, as needed (or as the bears allow).

When do the bears go back to their outside habitat?

Usually, Bety and Sassy come out of their dens and are back out on habitat in early March. The spring/summer seasons are the best times of year to come and see them! After resting for a couple of months, they can usually be seen running around the habitats, wrestling with each other, climbing trees, and swimming in the pool!

Be sure to stop by and visit Bety and Sassy on your next visit to the Zoo!



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2020 UPCOMING EVENTS

For an updated list
of 2020 events,
check out the Zoo's
Facebook page or visit
www.birminghamzoo.com/events



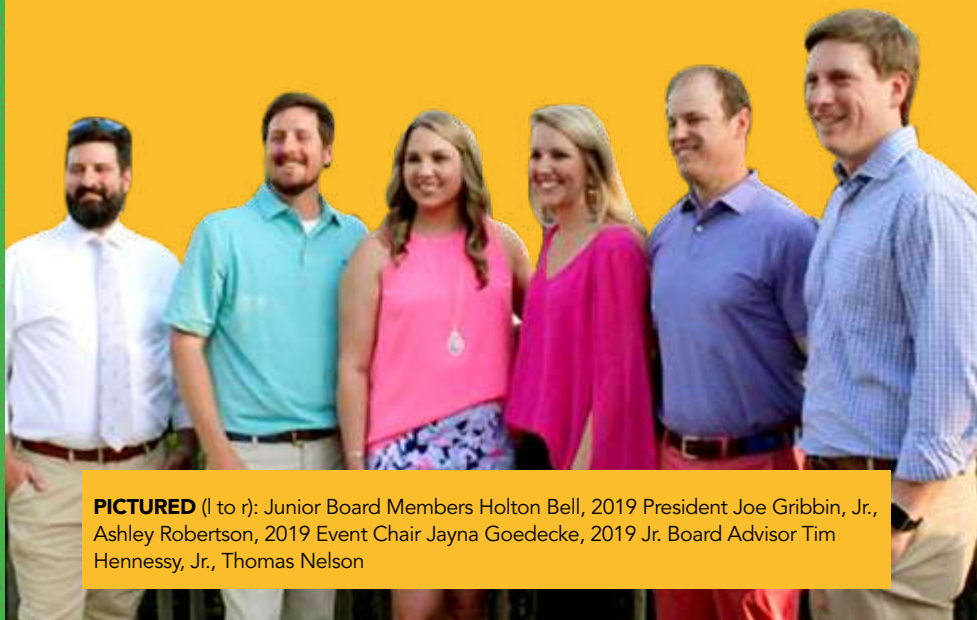
HUNDREDS 'FLOCKED' TO 9TH ANNUAL 'TAILS IN THE TRAILS

BY: LEIGH LASER COLLINS, CORPORATE RELATIONS DIRECTOR

On May 31, 2019, your Zoo's Junior Board of Directors welcomed a flamboyance (a group of flamingos) of partygoers to 'Tails in the Trails, presented by Blair Exteriors & Commercial Roofing, along with featured sponsors BB&T and Raymond James. Over 600 guests were treated to an outdoor tropical celebration and contributed over \$100,000 in support of the newly-opened Flamingo Habitat.

Highlights included free hors d'oeuvres from 12 area restaurants and "foodie favorites," cash bars featuring a signature Tito's Handmade Vodka "Pink Flamingo" cocktail, festive Altos Margaritas, "Naturdays" strawberry lemonade light lager, wine courtesy of Piggly Wiggly, and beer generously provided by Fairhope Brewing Company. The StyleBlueprint photo booth and the unveiling of the Zoo's signature "ZooBrew" added to the enjoyable surprises.

Be on the lookout for the 2020 'Tails in the Trails date! This year's event promises to be bigger, better, and fabulously festive as your Junior Board embarks on its goal to provide the funding needed to build new habitats for Bob the Bobcat and a new Cougar!



PICTURED (l to r): Junior Board Members Holton Bell, 2019 President Joe Gribbin, Jr., Ashley Robertson, 2019 Event Chair Jayna Goedecke, 2019 Jr. Board Advisor Tim Hennessy, Jr., Thomas Nelson

IBERIABANK • ZOO GALA *Sizzled* WITH RECORD - BREAKING EVENT!

BY: LEIGH LASER COLLINS, CORPORATE RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Your 2019 IBERIABANK ZooGala Volunteers orchestrated the largest fundraising event in Birmingham Zoo history! ZooGala 2019: South American Sizzle 'n Samba raised over \$480,000 to benefit the Zoo's animal care and education programs. Presented by IBERIABANK, the celebration was hosted by Honorary Chairs Phyllis and Larry Wojciechowski, Co-Chairs Jayna Goedecke, Amanda Hawkins, and Stewart Jones, ZooGala Advisor Amanda Davis, and members of the ZooGala Committee. Also, greeting guests was IBERIABANK Birmingham Market President, Alex Morton. Held for the first time on the Birmingham Zoo's spectacular, new Hugh Kaul Plaza, stunning South-American décor and vibrant colors created an over-the-top, festive "South American Market," complete with Brazilian-inspired street performers and dancers.



PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: Jayna Goedecke, Co-Chair, Larry and Phyllis Wojciechowski, Honorary Chairs, Stewart Jones and Amanda Hawkins, Co-Chairs



(Pictured left to right: Amanda Hawkins, Jayna Goedecke, 2019 ZooGala Co-Chairs; Larry and Phyllis Wojciechowski, 2019 ZooGala Honorary Chairs; Alex Morton, IberiaBank Birmingham Market President; Monica Drake, IberiaBank Birmingham Public Relations Coordinator; Leigh Laser Collins, Birmingham Zoo Corporate Relations Director

Phyllis and Larry Wojciechowski both surprised and thrilled attendees with the announcement of an additional \$50,000 ZooGala gift as well as \$25,000 in support of the PiCA (Passion into Conservation Action©) Grant Program. In addition, IBERIABANK was honored for having served as Presenting Sponsor for the 10th consecutive year, contributing over \$300,000 in support of ZooGala. Mr. Wojciechowski emphasized, "The animals entrusted to our care deserve the best and the funds raised by ZooGala are critical to meeting their needs. It is our privilege to support and help further our Birmingham Zoo's mission of *Inspiring Passion to Conserve the Natural World.*"

ZooGala is being re-envisioned into an even bigger, more festive celebration this year, recognizing the Zoo's 65th anniversary with the fabulous ZooRendezvous Hawaiian luau on Thursday, September 10, 2020. **Mark your calendars and plan to party!**



EVERYONE NEEDS A PLACE TO CALL HOME

The BIG THREE

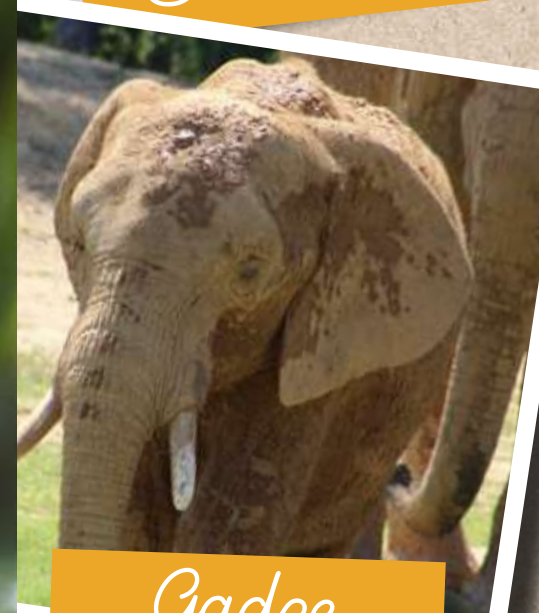
BY: EVAN SMITH, ELEPHANT ANIMAL CARE PROFESSIONAL I

Last year, the Birmingham Zoo welcomed two new arrivals to our bachelor herd of African elephants. Lutsandvo and Ingadze, or Luti and Gadze for short, arrived in June of 2019 from the San Diego Safari Park in California, and have settled nicely into their new home. They join Bulwagi to bring our herd to three members. How might you be able to tell our elephants apart during your next visit to the Zoo? Bulwagi is the easiest. At 39 years old, he is full grown and twice the size of Luti and Gadze. Look for the biggest elephant, as well as a missing right tusk, and you have your sights set on Bulwagi. Bulwagi's left tusk is distinctive due to having a metal bolt in it to try and manage a crack in the tusk. Elephants use their tusks as tools and can sometimes cause them to break. Luti and Gadze are a little harder to differentiate, as they are half-brothers and only a year apart in age. Gadze is 11 years old with long and symmetrical tusks, and is the smallest member of our herd. Luti is 10 years old with shorter, uneven tusks. Luti is notorious for tucking hay under his left tusk to carry around the yard. See if you can spot him on your next visit!

A unique part of our elephant program is that all three of our elephants can be seen out on the main habitat together – it is relatively new in the elephant world to house a bachelor herd. So, how did we get to the point where all three males are able to share the same space together? Introductions between animals are a complicated process requiring many steps, and are especially complex with large and powerful animals, like elephants. We decided to let Bulwagi, Luti, and Gadze tell us when they were ready. After several “howdys” (where animals can see and touch each other but do not share the same space), we were comfortable enough with their behavior to fully introduce them. Our newcomers went out onto the main habitat first and then Bulwagi joined them. Everything following was very uneventful, which is what we like to see. Luti and Gadze took their time, and eventually, each approached Bulwagi on his own, although very hesitantly. Approaching an animal twice your size can be intimidating! They have been developing their relationships ever since their first encounters with one another. To truly see their comfort level with each other, stop by the elephant habitat on your next visit to the Zoo!



Bulwagi



Gadze



Luti



All three elephants!

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2020 PASSION INTO CONSERVATION ACTION© (PICA)



Passion into Conservation Action© (PiCA) grants are awarded to Zoo employees to facilitate their participation in projects that support the conservation of species at the local, regional, national, or international level. Since the PiCA program began in 2012, 44 Birmingham Zoo employees have participated in 54 conservation projects in 18 countries on 6 continents, with over \$200,000 in cash and in-kind contributions to support conservation of species and their habitats.

Katherine Abell
Zoo Educator, Education
Asia / Malaysia

The Malayan Tiger: From Ecological Implications to Community Education and Engagement

Katherine will travel to Yu River Ecological Corridor, Pahang, Malaysia, to participate in research for the critically endangered Malayan tiger. She will work with the Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT), an organization comprising multiple local and international governmental and environmental organizations dedicated to Malayan tiger conservation.

Kelly Burleson

Animal Care Professional, Children's Zoo
United States / Alabama & Michigan

Great Lakes Piping Plover Project

Kelly will travel to Pellston, Michigan, and Dauphin Island, Alabama, to participate in piping plover research. In Michigan, she will work at the University of Michigan Biological Station in the Great Lakes area to help hatch and rear piping plover chicks for eventual release into the wild. In Alabama, she will conduct piping plover surveys at Dauphin Island, which is a wintering ground for these endangered birds.

Jesse Daniel

Interpretation & Onsite Programs
Manager, Education
United States / Florida

Propagation and Outplanting of Atlantic Acropora Coral - an AZA SAFE Species

Jesse will travel to Tampa, Key Largo and Summerland Key, Florida, to participate in the propagation and outplanting of coral on the Florida Reef Tract. Atlantic Acropora coral is a new addition to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums SAFE species list and is an important indicator of how global climate change is affecting our oceans.

Kate Davis

School Programs Manager, Education
Africa / Zimbabwe

Bulawayo to Birmingham: Global Education Initiative Africa

Kate will travel to the Chipangali Wildlife Orphanage in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, to participate in the Zoo's joint conservation education venture with Chipangali students and staff. The students of the Birmingham region will benefit not only from learning more about the EPIC Program (Environmental Programs Involving Children) but also hearing from this educator who will return with first-hand Zimbabwe experience.

Robin Helser

Animal Care Professional II, Nights
Africa / South Africa

Vulture Conservation in South Africa

Robin will travel to Hartbeespoort, South Africa, to work with Vulture Conservation Programme (VulPro), which is a leading organization that contributes not only to vulture conservation, but also to the conservation of entire ecosystems through rehabilitation, education and research. Robin will expand on previous PiCA grant research by participating in vulture monitoring, and nest / power line surveys for multiple African vulture species.

Rebekah Lane

Lead Animal Care Professional III,
Ambassador Animals
United States / Wyoming

Yellowstone Wolf and Ecosystem Recovery Project

Rebekah will travel to Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming to participate in the Yellowstone Wolf Project. She will participate with the Park's wolf project leader, Doug Smith, and his team of researchers as they conduct winter surveys for a status assessment, collecting data on wolf population numbers, den sites, offspring, deaths, overall health, and prey consumed.

Anna Kate Timothy

Animal Care Professional II, Trails of Africa
Africa / Uganda

Rhino Fund Uganda

Anna Kate will travel to Nakasongola District, Uganda, where she will work alongside rangers and guides at the Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary. While on location, she will participate in rhinoceros monitoring, aiding in the care of animals rescued from the bushmeat trade and accompanying RFU staff members to local schools, where they speak with local students on the importance of conserving wildlife.



THE EASTERN INDIGO SNAKE: *A Species Reborn*

BY: TERRA MANASCO, CONSERVATION MANAGER

In late January, an extraordinary discovery was made regarding Alabama's recovery efforts for the federally listed endangered eastern indigo snake. Biologists working on the Eastern Indigo Snake Reintroduction Project were conducting routine surveys for this majestic snake in the Conecuh National Forest and found the first wild hatched snake documented in Alabama in over 60 years!

Biologists were surveying for the presence of released eastern indigo snakes in the effort to reestablish them into the longleaf pine ecosystems in southern Alabama. These researchers knew immediately that they had discovered a wild snake due to its size. Measuring only two feet in length, this hatchling was much smaller than the 5-foot or longer snakes that have been reintroduced. The juvenile snake is estimated to be about 7 months old.

The eastern indigo snake is an apex predator and plays an important role in the longleaf pine ecosystem found in the southeastern United States. A beautiful, glossy black snake, it can reach more than 8 feet in length and is the largest indigenous snake in the United States. It is non-venomous and its prey includes small birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. People are often surprised to learn one of its most significant prey

items are venomous snakes, including copperheads, rattlesnakes, and water moccasins.

Before reintroduction in 2010, the eastern indigo snake was last documented occurring wild in Alabama in the 1950s. The Alabama Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, other state and federal entities, as well as universities, zoos, and other

conservation organizations have been working for more than a decade to reintroduce the snake to Alabama, where it once had a stronghold in longleaf pine habitats. After years of intense effort hatching and rearing young indigos until they were mature enough to release back into the wild, this exciting discovery of the first wild snake is proof that these reintroduction efforts are working! The

project started in 2006, and to date 170 adult snakes have been released in the Conecuh National Forest. The goal of the project is to release 300 snakes, a number that biologists estimate will improve chances of establishing a viable population.

The Birmingham Zoo is a proud partner of Alabama Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division on conservation efforts of several key species native to Alabama, including golden eagles, gopher tortoises, and eastern indigo snakes. As a partner in the Eastern Indigo Reintroduction Project, the Birmingham Zoo has participated with our state and federal partners in releasing eastern indigo snakes into the wild as well as joint educational efforts, both on grounds at the Zoo and at the yearly Eastern Indigo Snake and Wildlife Festival. The Zoo also contributes to the recovery effort financially in several significant ways, including covering costs for disease testing and purchasing trail cameras to monitor burrows that eastern indigo snakes share with another important reptile species native to Alabama, the gopher tortoise.

People are known to have superstitions and fears about snakes, but the eastern indigo snake is a great ambassador, because it's nonvenomous, helpful to humans through its diet in the wild, and it even has a uniquely beautiful skin pattern. Sometimes it takes an understanding of the bigger picture to remove the fear of the unknown.

To learn more about the eastern indigo snake, visit

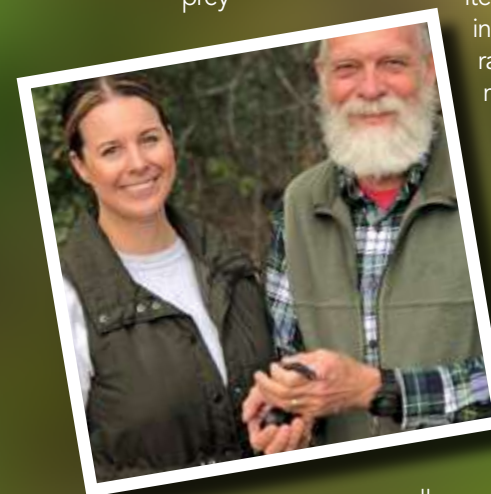
www.outdooralabama.com/non-venomous-snakes/eastern-indigo-snake

www.fs.usda.gov/inside-fs/delivering-mission/sustain/eastern-indigo-snake-makes-comeback-alabama

References:

January 24, 2020, Outdoor Alabama Weekly, First Wild Eastern Indigo Snake Found in Alabama in 60 Years, David Rainer, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Special thanks to Francesca Erickson for the wonderful photos!



VISUALLY INCLUSIVE PROGRAM AT THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO

The Birmingham Zoo has been a national leader in making zoos accessible to individuals with disabilities and exceptional needs. Working with exceptional learners- or individuals who learn, move, or act differently than neuro-typical individuals- has long been an interest of Zoo Educator, Katherine Abell. In pursuing this passion, Katherine has worked to create a learning program dedicated to enhancing experiences for the Birmingham Zoo's guests who are blind or have low vision. "The work that Katherine has done on this project is just one example of how the Birmingham Zoo is continually moving forward to *Inspire Passion to Conserve the Natural World* in all of our guests," says Roger Torbert, Vice President of Education.

The Visually Inclusive Program (or VIP) was designed with school-aged students in mind, though is available to any visitor with vision needs. The Education team consulted with teachers and caregivers to determine which resources might be most beneficial to their child with visual limitations. This input helped to shape the VIP Bag- a rolling backpack filled with items to touch, smell, and hear, each corresponding to habitats in the Zoo. A tactile map is also included to help non-sighted individuals navigate the grounds.

In order to assist the sighted individual with the student, a guide is included, who explains items in the VIP Bag in-depth, and includes background information as well as reflection questions. In addition to this, the guide also contains information pertinent to those working with students with visual impairments, such as locations of family restrooms, quiet zones, and sensory bag check out stations.

Seven-year-old Ella Rose Corley took the VIP bag for a test run this past January. Ella Rose has lived with visual impairments for most of her life, and was excited to provide her feedback on this new program. As she moved through the Alabama Barn and Alabama Wilds, Ella Rose was able to touch a black bear claw, feel the backbone in a turtle shell, and smell anise extract and leaves. According to Ella Rose, "The map and the objects in the backpack helped me experience the Zoo! I liked feeling the sheep's wool and other objects in the bag. It was fun!" Lara Hawkins, Ella Rose's teacher and a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist remarked that "this will open so many doors to accessibility for people with visual impairments."

Feedback from parents has been positive as well. Anne Martha Corley, Ella Rose's mother, had this to say: "The boxes and maps make the Zoo more than a carousel and train ride for kids/people with vision impairments! They get to really explore and experience more."

While this is an ongoing project that we are continuing to improve, this program has already allowed the Birmingham Zoo to serve a community of learners that presently do not have many accommodations provided at most zoos and aquariums. This is just one more way the Birmingham Zoo is continuing to be a leader in inclusivity and accessibility for all!

AN INCLUSIVE ZOO *For All*

BY: ROGER TORBERT, VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION

In 2014, I was invited to have lunch with an old friend along with his colleague, Dr. Julian Maha. When he found out that I worked at the Zoo, Dr. Maha exclaimed, "My son LOVES the Zoo, but unfortunately he is not able to come." Little did we know at the time that this one comment was the spark that ignited an international movement. Dr. Maha's son, Abram, was diagnosed with autism at the age of two. The sensory sensitivities associated with autism resulted in Abram becoming very over-sensitized when he visited the Birmingham Zoo or other large public venues. There were many other families like the Mahas who were not able to bring their children to the Zoo, due to their sensory needs. Families with typical children are able to take their children to these places anytime they choose. Unfortunately, in order to protect them from sensory overload, parents simply kept them from situations. The Birmingham Zoo worked with Dr. Maha and his organization, KultureCity, to change that.

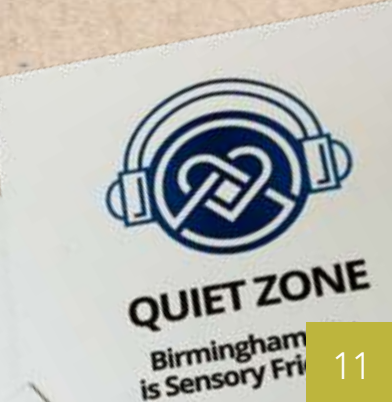
Over the next year, they worked with a focus group of 200 families with children who have sensory sensitivities.

This focus group involved a scientific study that determined specific ways to assure that the Zoo offered an accessible and inclusive environment. Through initial surveys, follow up questions, and trial and error,

the Sensory Inclusive Zoo Initiative was developed and the Birmingham Zoo was recognized as the first sensory inclusive zoo in the nation. The Zoo started providing resources and accommodations that allowed individuals with sensory needs to visit on any day they wished. In addition, every member of the Zoo's Staff from the Animal Care Professionals to the Maintenance Staff participated in training to help them have a deeper understanding of sensory needs. Staff also learned what they could do in their day to day work to ensure the Zoo was more inclusive to individuals who have sensory sensitivities.

Soon, other institutions learned of the work done by KultureCity and the Birmingham Zoo. Venues throughout Birmingham began to work to become sensory inclusive – McWane Science Center, Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Alys Stephens Center, and many others. Over the next few years, venues in other states and around the world began to work with KultureCity to obtain Sensory Inclusive Certification – zoos, aquariums, science museums, sports arenas, and even a cruise line. Today there are 55 zoos and aquariums across the nation and almost 500 total venues worldwide that have been certified as Sensory Inclusive by KultureCity.

As an inclusive organization for all, the Birmingham Zoo prides itself on the advanced initiatives taken to help people in all walks of life. We are constantly working toward improving the Zoo and our offerings. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you notice any ways that we can become more inclusive. We'll see you on your next visit to the Zoo!





ZOO CAMP

AT THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO SUMMER ZOO CAMP 2020 REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

All of our camps are educational, encourage active learning and provide special encounters with a variety of our resident animals. Rich in STEM-based explorations, these camps engage the natural curiosity of campers and allow ample opportunity to practice critical emerging science skills. Learning has never been so much FUN! Camps are available for 4K-12th grade.

SUMMER CAMP DESCRIPTIONS/ SCHEDULE

Grade	Week 1 June 1-June 5	Week 2 June 8-12	Week 3 June 15-19	Week 4 June 22-26	Week 5 June 29-July 2
4K-2nd	Creature Features	Creature Features	Habitat Happenings	Habitat Happenings	Naturally Gross!**
3rd-5th	Creature Features	Creature Features	Habitat Happenings	Habitat Happenings	Creature Feature
	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger	N/A
	Wild About Art	Wild About Art	Wild About Art	Wild About Art	N/A
6th-8th	Wildlife Researchers	ZSI	Wildlife Researchers	ZSI	Zoo Keeper
	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	N/A
9th-12th	N/A	Animal Wellness	N/A	Worldly Connections	N/A
Grade	Week 6 July 6-10	Week 7 July 13-July 17	Week 8 July 20-24	Week 9 July 27-31	Week 10 August 3-7
4K-2nd	Habitat Happenings	Habitat Happenings	Creature Features	Creature Features	Naturally Gross**
3rd-5th	Habitat Happenings	Habitat Happenings	Creature Features	Creature Features	Creature Feature
	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger	Zoo Ranger
	Wild About Art	Wild About Art	Wild About Art	Wild About Art	N/A
6th-8th	Wildlife Researchers	ZSI	Wildlife Researchers	ZSI	Wild About Art
	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper	Zoo Keeper
9th-12th	N/A	Animal Wellness	N/A	Worldly Connections	N/A

*ZOO KEEPER CAMP (6th-8th Grade - Monday begins at 8:30am; Tuesday through Friday, begins at 7:30am
**NATURALLY GROSS - Fee includes one camper and one adult.

FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE SEE THE CAMP PLANNING GUIDE AT
www.birminghamzoo.com/education/zoo-camps



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THE DESERT TORTOISE

BY: DR. ANNIE RIVAS, DVM, ASSOCIATE VETERINARIAN

If you have visited the Birmingham Zoo's Reptile Building recently, you may have noticed that there is only one desert tortoise in the desert habitat, Sahara. The other tortoise, Gobi, has been undergoing care at the Animal Health Center for bladder stones diagnosed last June. Bladder stones are a fairly common medical problem in tortoises, especially desert tortoises, due to the unique water conservation physiology employed by these animals. Tortoises can reabsorb water from their bladders, which is a useful survival adaptation for animals living in desert ecosystems with limited water supplies. Unfortunately, this can also lead to supersaturation of the wastes and minerals in urine, predisposing tortoises to bladder stone formation.

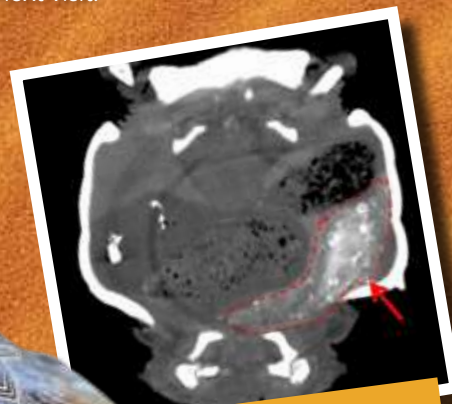
When Reptile Department Animal Care Professionals noticed that Gobi seemed to be slower than normal and not eating with his normal gusto, he was presented to the veterinary team for a diagnostic exam. As part of the diagnostic work-up, endoscopy was performed – a small sterile camera was surgically inserted through the skin by one of Gobi's rear legs so that his internal organs could be inspected. During the endoscopy, stones were discovered in the bladder. Interestingly, these stones did not show up on standard x-ray radiographs, making it difficult to know their exact size.

As a result, the veterinary team transported Gobi to an off-site clinic in order to perform a CT scan, which

showed a single large stone filling about half the bladder.

Due to their hard, bony shells, surgery on tortoises can be difficult. The veterinary team decided to attempt to dissolve the stone in the hopes of avoiding surgery. Over the next 6 months, Gobi received medical treatment to change the pH of his urine. At the initial recheck CT scan in September, the stone had decreased in size, but a third CT scan in December showed the stone had grown again. Surgery was thus performed in January to remove the stone. Due to the months of medical therapy, the stone was smaller in size than when originally diagnosed. This made it possible to perform surgery through a small skin incision by the rear leg rather than making a larger incision through the bone of the shell. The stone was also softer due to the months of medical therapy, and could be broken up into small pieces for removal.

Post-operatively, Gobi has been doing great and is back in the Reptile Building. Keep an eye out for him during your next visit!



Gobi's CT Scan



Gobi's Bladder Stones



Gobi's X-ray Radiograph



Wildlife

TRAFFICKING

BY: KRISTIN MARTIN, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, illegal wildlife trade runs the gamut from illegal logging of protected forests, to poaching elephants and rhinos, to capturing infant primates for sale as pets. Illegal wildlife trade is also unsustainable, harming wild populations of animals and plants and pushing endangered species toward extinction. Endangered animals are the frequent target of wildlife crime because of their rarity, which results in increased economic value. Furthermore, illegal trade negatively impacts a country's natural resources and local communities that might benefit from a sustainable trade in these unique resources.

TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, a nonprofit that focuses on wild animal trade in an effort to aid conservation and sustainable development, reported in 2018 that there were significant changes and trends between 2006 and 2015 in the illegal wildlife trade. In recent years, there has been much focus on the plight of African elephants and rhinoceros due to poaching. However, this study showed that there were exports of 975 different taxa listed as endangered or at risk without close monitoring of trade.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

When traveling abroad be sure to consider the following:

- **Be a conscious shopper when abroad.** When traveling, think about what you are buying and where that item may have come from. Does the item contain wildlife or parts/products? Is the wildlife endangered or threatened? Was the item produced legally? If you don't know, don't buy.
- **Be an eco-tourist and travel green.** Eco-tourists experience species in their natural habitats, exhibiting their natural behaviors. National Geographic suggests asking these questions when visiting animal encounter facilities: What do the animals' facilities look like? Is there enough room? Do the animals appear well fed and cared for? Are the animals exhibiting natural behaviors as they would in the wild? How are the species treated by their handlers? Research how these parks and facilities are certified.
- **Buy local products and support the local economy.** Tourism is a major source of income for many communities abroad, especially in developing countries. Support the livelihoods of the residents by purchasing local, handcrafted items that do not contain animal products.

EASY WAYS TO BE ENERGY EFFICIENT

BY: LINDSEY HERRON, ZOO REGISTRAR

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

As we head into spring, it's the perfect time to look at your energy use and evaluate your energy efficiency. Energy efficiency is using less power to accomplish a task than you normally would, resulting in a smaller environmental impact. It's one of the easiest ways to reduce your impact, since small actions can produce big results. When less energy is used by consumers, power plants generate less energy, reducing greenhouse gases and other emissions. This reduction not only helps lessen climate change, but can positively impact public health due to reduced air pollution.

So, how can you increase your energy efficiency? Around the house, it can be as simple as opening a window on a spring day instead of running the air conditioning or even installing double-paned windows to minimize heat loss through the glass. Other actions you can take to improve your home energy efficiency include using cold water to wash clothing instead of hot, sealing drafts around doors and windows, and using natural light instead of lightbulbs. Unplugging appliances is another great way to save energy, since most appliances use a small amount of energy while plugged in, waiting to be used.

Here at the Birmingham Zoo, we use motion sensing light switches to minimize the amount of time lights are left on in unoccupied rooms. We also focus on turning computers off at night, and any other time they're not in use, to save the power they use in standby mode. Next time you're in the Children's Zoo, take a look up – the shade you rest in near the Splash Pads is actually solar panels! Installed in partnership with Alabama Power, they help us mitigate our energy footprint and make hot summer afternoons more enjoyable.

Remember: every little bit counts!



LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY? VOLUNTEER AT THE ZOO!

BY: CASEY HOBBS, VOLUNTEER MANAGER

The volunteers at the Zoo are off to an incredible start in 2020 - engaging guests on grounds during our Winter Wake Up and Brunch with the Bachelors events, our Golden Eagle and Flamingo habitat openings and more. Our dedicated volunteers have engaged over 20,000 guests and logged nearly 5,000 hours in the first quarter of the year. We are so thankful for the donation of their time to make each visit to the Zoo an unforgettable memory.

One area our guests and members may be surprised to know is assisted by volunteers is our elephant department. Every day of the week, volunteers are working behind the scenes to help our Animal Care Professionals clean stalls, prepare enrichment, and learn what it takes to raise a couple of "boys" that weigh in excess of 5,000 pounds! Dedicated volunteers can be found behind the scenes in the middle of winter or in the heat of summer lending a hand to our elephant team!

Of course, the majority of our volunteers can be found in public areas, focused on educating our guests about our resident animals and our Zoo's conservation work. Our docent program trains and manages our interpretation efforts and we are pleased to announce two new docents this quarter. Betsy Postlethwait and Beth Ballock both became docents within a year of joining our volunteer team. Both Betsy and Beth have shown a strong ability to ask interesting questions, connect with guests of all ages and connect to the mission of our Zoo - *Inspiring Passion to Conserve the Natural World*. We are so excited to have them out on grounds, especially as the weather warms up!

We have also introduced a unique junior docent program, which our Zoofari teens are eligible to enter. Junior docents are required to go through the same training as our adult docents and we are very excited to announce the first two Junior Docents in the Birmingham Zoo's history. Mary Kaitlyn Johnson and Lee Moore have each been stand-out teens since joining us and we could not have picked two better teens to begin this program!

If you want to join our dynamic volunteer program, apply online or send us a message with any questions at volunteers@birminghamzoo.com.



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WELLS FARGO AND THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO A BELOVED PARTNERSHIP

One of Wells Fargo's guiding corporate principles is building better communities every day, a goal the company has put into action through its philanthropic giving. Since 2002, Wells Fargo has generously contributed to several important initiatives to help make the Birmingham Zoo as enjoyable as ever. These include the Children's Zoo, Trails of Africa (home to our bachelor elephant herd), Alabama Wilds (with its wooded habitat for native species), and the dramatic new Front Entrance and Plaza, which opened in June 2019. Moreover, the company has supported the Zoo's educational scholarships to benefit dozens of qualified students who might not otherwise be able to enjoy Zoo Camps. Wells Fargo has also supported the Spire ZooSchool, a hands-on, experiential STEM-based program that expands Birmingham City School seventh graders' thinking about water usage and pollution, and engages them in community conservation activities. For nearly 10 years, Wells Fargo has also been the Presenting Partner for Boo at the Zoo and ZooLight Safari, holiday festivals that have become family traditions.

Birmingham Zoo President and CEO Chris Pfefferkorn said, "Wells Fargo has had a long-standing partnership with the Birmingham Zoo that helps promote our mission to provide educational opportunities and encourage sustainability efforts to improve our community. We are grateful for the company's involvement at the Zoo and in our city."

Zoo Board Member and Wells Fargo's Central Alabama Region Bank President Leigh Collier said, "The Birmingham Zoo does outstanding work around education and conservation. Their focused efforts on continuing to find new ways to engage our community are something Wells Fargo is pleased to support. We are delighted to play a role in growing the Zoo and creating access for underserved communities through educational programming, such as Spire ZooSchool and scholarships for children needing financial assistance."

**WELLS
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WHAT'S THE Purpose?

BY: DANIELLE WILLIAMS, ZOOLOGICAL MANAGER SOUTH AMERICA/PRIMATES

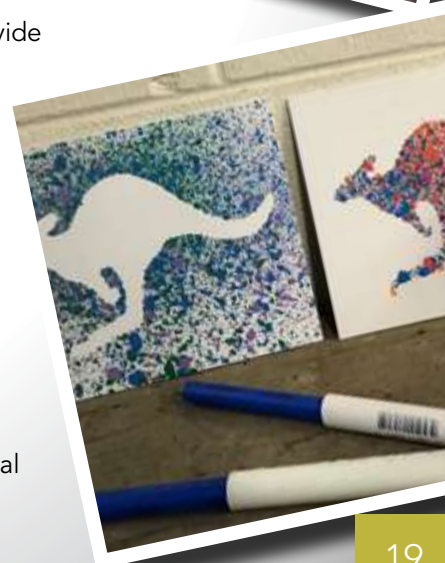
Have you ever seen a painting made by an animal at the Zoo? Have you ever observed a training demonstration where an animal performed a cool behavior? Have you ever stopped to wonder whether there was a deeper reason for those things?

Perhaps you have seen a blow painting from our male Sumatran orangutan, Oliver. Does Oliver paint to express his artistic side? Not quite. While Oliver occasionally draws with sidewalk chalk, paint has never been his media of choice. Staff incorporated blow painting into training sessions to work with Oliver on a behavior that could help with his own health care in the future. Male orangutans have large air sacs that allow them to project their calls more than half a mile, but these air sacs also make them more prone to respiratory illnesses. At an annual orangutan conference where zoo colleagues were exchanging ideas about this topic, Birmingham Zoo staff were inspired to try new approaches with the orangutans in our care. The South America/Primate staff now utilizes blow painting, as well as a recorder and birthday party blowers, to create more variety in a "blow on request" behavior for Oliver. This behavior could be transferred to a machine made to measure lung capacity, if needed.

Maybe you have seen an elephant training demonstration where one of the elephants flaps his ears or the North American river otter spins in a circle when requested by one of the Animal Care Professionals (ACPs) – isn't that cool? While they

are fun behaviors to witness, each of these also serves an important purpose for the animal's care. Elephants, particularly young ones, are susceptible to a virus called Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpesvirus (EEHV). Blood samples allow our veterinary staff to monitor for this virus, as well as evaluate overall health. The elephants learn to flap their ears out and allow staff to draw blood from a vein in the back of their ear! The otters, on the other hand, have been taught to enter a transport carrier in the event that they need to be taken to the Animal Health Center or moved from the building in an emergency. While learning this behavior, the ACPs noticed that the otters were unable to fit comfortably the way they were originally situated. The Children's Zoo ACPs taught the otters to spin in order to tuck their tail into the carrier. This behavior is a new element for the otters to learn and a functional addition for their health care.

One of our core objectives at the Birmingham Zoo is to provide exemplary animal care and well-being, and this is built into all the decisions we make for training, enrichment, housing, and more. While our guests get sneak peaks into the "how" of that care daily, they don't always get the "why." When you're visiting and see something, don't be afraid to ask an Animal Care Professional why we do it that way!



Kids KORN

Conservation Word Search

T N E M N O R I V N E C R R N P O O U A
W V L O E C U D E R O T E E L A J S V N
A K C S X K S E T N M E R A S J E G N I
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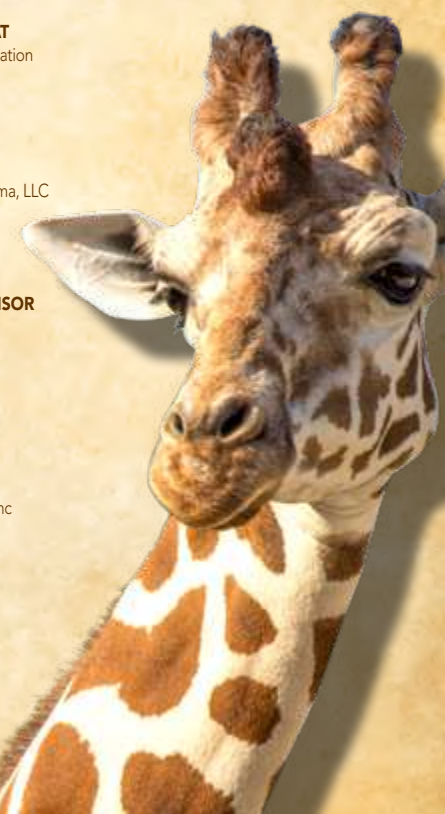
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JOIN US ON A *Passage* TO ASIA!

Your Birmingham Zoo is creating a habitat featuring animal species from Asia. Become immersed in the landscape of several regions, from the rainforests of Indonesia to the central highlands of the Himalayas. During your journey, you will see species that live in those regions and learn about the challenges that these animals face. Our goal is to show visitors why conservation efforts are important and share how you can make a difference.

You will enter the Asian Passage through a traditional Japanese Torii gate. Literally meaning "bird perch," Torii gates represent a passage from the mundane to the sacred, and this iconic entryway will welcome you into a peaceful sanctuary featuring beautiful Asian pheasants. You will encounter Asia's only great ape, the critically endangered Sumatran orangutan and largest arboreal (tree-dwelling) animal in the world. Orangutans provide an opportunity for connection – from the playful youngsters to the huge, dreadlocked adult males and the nurturing females; we recognize a kinship with these apes, which face serious challenges in their native Indonesia and Malaysia through habitat loss. This new indoor-outdoor habitat will allow the Birmingham Zoo's resident orangutan family to spend time outdoors for the first time, choosing where to spend their time in their engaging environment. An interactive wall will allow you to observe voluntary training sessions as Animal Care Professionals engage with the apes to stimulate the animals' minds, enrich their lives and enhance their bonds with their caregivers. Entering the Asian Passage's indoor space, you will see the unique red panda. This endangered Himalayan native is about the size of a housecat with thick, ruddy coats suited for the harsh Himalayan climate. Their Asian Passage habitat will include an outdoor area that can be used in even the coldest temperatures.

Nearby, visitors will see one of Asia's most famous and fearsome species – the Komodo dragon, the world's largest living lizard. Its tremendous size, surprising speed, and ability to rapidly consume as much as 80% of its body weight in a single feeding have earned it the distinction of being the world's only dragon! Your journey through Asia will conclude with one of the world's most beloved, beautiful, and threatened species: the Malayan tiger. These stunning cats face an uncertain future as their population numbers continue to decline. A training wall where Animal Care Professionals will demonstrate positive reinforcement training techniques will allow you to connect more strongly with tigers, fostering compassion and commitment to their conservation and protection. Your Birmingham Zoo will be thrilled to welcome tigers back into the family and to share their important story with you.

A NEW COUGAR / BOBCAT HABITAT IS COMING TO YOUR ZOO!

We invite you to meet your neighbors... the wild ones in your backyard and in your woods! Alabama is one of the nation's top five most ecologically diverse states. Your Zoo *Inspires Passion to Conserve the Natural World* by engaging children and visitors with face-to-face encounters with the mammals, birds and insects that are unique to Alabama. Donor contributions have allowed us to create habitats and destinations that make your Zoo stand out, including the Junior League of Birmingham-Hugh Kaul Children's Zoo, Trails of Africa, Barbara Ingalls Shook Black Bear Trail, Henley Park, new Front Entrance and Hugh Kaul Plaza. These capital campaign projects were collaborative efforts by our community that have added to Birmingham's cultural offerings. And we're not finished; there is a lot more to come! We'll soon begin transforming the Predator Building into the Asian Passage experience and, as we do, several native Alabama species will be moved to beautiful, new homes in Alabama Wilds. The Zoo will add a habitat for a cougar, where you will learn about the importance of species preservation and be introduced to the largest cat in North America. The Alabama Wilds will have new side-by-side habitats with indoor and outdoor areas for our bobcat and a cougar.



FEATHERED FRIENDS!

The new flamingo habitat (near the train station) and the golden eagle habitat (Alabama Wilds) are now open! On your next visit to the Zoo, make sure to visit these areas to see some of your favorite feathered friends. You can also stop by and "show your wings" at a photo opportunity behind the Zoo's Wildlife Stage.

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