

The Pride



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White Tigers Arrive

You'll wonder where the yellow went this December 4th, when Metrozoo's white tiger display will officially open, simultaneously with the unveiling of the new 25-acre African Plains area. An agreement with the Cincinnati Zoo brought three young tigers—two pure white and one cross-bred yellow cat with recessive white genes—to Miami. The cats arrived on September 16th, and are now being acclimated to their new home.

White tigers were creatures of legend, rarely seen in the wild, until 1951, when a nine-month-old male white cub, later named Mohan, was captured in the province of Rewa in central India. Through intensive breeding efforts at the forest estate of the Maharajah of Rewa and in zoos, there are now some 50 white tigers in captivity throughout the world. The first ever to come to the United States was Mohini, who was given to the National Zoo in 1960.

The second white tiger to come to this country came to Miami through the efforts of Zoological Society of Florida member Ralph Scott. That was Princess, who arrived at the Crandon Park Zoo in 1968, when she was two years old, and lived there until December of 1970, when she died from a viral infection. She was a great favorite at the old zoo and was very much missed after she died.

Looking more like a tiger's ghost than a real tiger, a white tiger is not an albino but a genetic variation of an orange tiger. The color of the coat varies from chalky white to cream-colored, and the stripes are chocolate-

Photo by Kate Zwerin

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African Plains To Open Dec. 4th

This December 4th the next phase of Metrozoo's continued development will be unveiled with the opening of the African Plains. Five exhibits make up the 25-acre area, with one very special multi-species exhibit as the focus.

This central exhibit consists of a huge, two-acre grassy island on which giraffe, Grevy's zebra and ostrich will roam together, and another paddock in the back—physically separated by a moat, but visually one with the front paddock—for our herd of eland. These species all live together in the wild in the grasslands of Africa.

Four companion exhibits will display other African antelopes: dik-dik, bontebok, impala and the very rare bongo. Some African birds will be sharing paddocks with these antelopes: Stanley cranes will be with bontebok and kori bustards with impala.

A major feature of the design of the new area will be an 850-square-foot plaza and fountain in the middle of the walkway right in front of the multi-species exhibit. This will consist of a 10-foot tower, faced over on two sides with ceramic tiles and on the other two with a high-relief ceramic frieze depicting plains animals in their natural African habitats. Water will trickle down from the top of this high tower, across the face of the frieze, into a pool contained by a series of benches and low walls bearing graphic representations of African art and culture. Tall shade trees will make this a beautiful place to stop and take a good long look at the African Plains displays. The structure was conceived and designed by *Bonita Dewiliby* and *Mike Weeks*.

The African Plains will be a spectacular addition to the zoo in the size and scope of the multi-species exhibit, the rarity of the new display animals and the unique feature of a fountain oasis. But that's not all that's new this December 4th. The monorail will begin operating that weekend as well, and our white tigers will make their official public debut then, too. It promises to be another grand opening for Metrozoo.



Rick Barongi and **Bill Zeigler** keep Colleen company as the giraffe procession makes its way down U.S. 1. Colleen was the second of the five giraffes to make the journey from the old zoo to the new.

Giraffe Journey

The first recorded move of a giraffe from one zoo to another occurred in 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar brought one from the zoo in Alexandria to Rome. Before it arrived, the giraffe was billed as a "cameleopard," because it was reported to be as big as a camel, with spots like a leopard. The Romans, expecting a huge, fierce and frightening animal, were disappointed with the real thing. The historian Pliny wrote drily of the giraffe's arrival: "It was as quiet as a sheep."

A more recent giraffe move occurred this September 7th and 8th, when five giraffes from the old Crandon Park Zoo made the journey, complete with police escort, down South Dixie Highway to their new quarters at Metrozoo. They were the last mammals to leave the old zoo.

Moving wild animals is never easy, but a giraffe presents some unusual logistical problems in that every traffic light and underpass along the way is a potential obstacle. Special precautions were taken, including a "low-

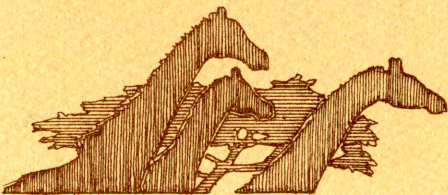
boy" truck that is about 13 inches closer to the ground than a regular flatbed truck, and tall plastic poles attached to the front of the truck to help in judging the clearance distances along the way. The giraffe's head and neck protruded from the top of the crate, and every time an obstacle was reached, the procession slowed down to allow the animal to duck its head.

Aside from a minor traffic accident caused by a gaping motorist, the move went like clockwork, with all the giraffes cooperative and relatively undisturbed by the commotion they were causing.

The five giraffes (Lyndon, Sexta, Sara, Colleen and Connie) will be on display after the December 4th opening of their new exhibit in the African Plains area of the zoo.

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brown, grey, or, in some rare instances, so faint as to be almost invisible. White tigers have bright blue eyes.

With the number of all tigers in the wild reduced from 40,000 to less than 3,000 in 30 years, the predicament of the species is clear. The white tiger has been a rarity throughout history, and, though it has occurred naturally, it owes its continuation to man. The beauty of these ghostly cats makes them perfect ambassadors for their species—unique examples of the rich variety as well as the fragility of the natural world.

Metrozoo's spectacular tiger temple, which has become the showcase exhibit since the zoo's grand opening, was originally designed for white tigers. "With this acquisition," says Zoo Director *Bob Yokel*, "we're fulfilling a promise. I can't imagine a better setting for these stunningly beautiful animals than our tiger temple."

By the agreement just completed, the Cincinnati Zoo commits to send to Miami a breeding pair of white tigers as soon as an appropriate male and female pair are available. Until that time (a year at the most), the three tigers here now will be at Metrozoo on exhibit loan. They are three male cats: one white, born September 5, 1981, and two brothers born July 6, 1981—one white and one orange with recessive white genes. The orange male, named Benzoo, was the mascot for the Cincinnati Bengals football team last year. The father of all these cats is six-year-old Bhim, the Cincinnati Zoo's prize white tiger who has sired 22 cubs.

Nikolai and Natasha, the two orange Bengal tigers who have graced the tiger temple display since our Preview Center opened in the summer of 1980, will be moved to the paddock originally intended for Bengals, in the Asian forest plain section of the zoo.

"We'll be giving our white tigers time to get acclimated to their new surroundings," said Yokel when announcing the acquisition. "Though some lucky visitors may get to see them on occasional days this fall, they won't be on permanent display until after December 4th."

Concluded Park and Recreation Department Director *Bill Bird*: "The way a zoo grows and changes is what makes it so very special for the community to which it belongs. It's clear that the citizens of Dade County have embraced their new zoo, and I'm sure they'll make these tigers feel very much at home here."

Current Exhibit Changes

In addition to readying paddocks and introducing animals to the new exhibits in the African Plains section, Animal Science is busy with several changes in the part of the zoo that is already open. A good portion of the current displays will have different animals on them come December, and some new exhibits within the Eurasian Lobe are now in the design stage. Here are some of the changes you'll be seeing over the next few months:

<u>CURRENT EXHIBIT</u>	<u>WILL BE:</u>
Blackbuck	Dama gazelle
Grant's zebra & wildebeest	Addax
Ibex	Markhor
Aoudad (front)	Chamois
Aoudad (back)	Scimitar-horned oryx
Fallow deer	Persian gazelle
Waterbuck (back)	Sitatunga
Grevy's zebra	Maribou stork

New mini-park animal exhibits are being planned throughout the zoo and will include clouded leopard, Demoiselle crane, Liliford crane, black-necked stork, eclectus parrot and more. These displays will be built and opened one by one over the next six months or so. By rounding out the Eurasian Lobe, these new mini-exhibits will greatly enhance the zoo experience.

Curator of Birds Appointed

A new position in the Animal Science Division was recently filled with the appointment of *Ron Johnson* as Curator of Birds. Johnson works directly for General Curator *Bill Zeigler*, and his responsibilities include all bird acquisitions, supervision of the field work of his zoological staff, and the ongoing implementation of Metrozoo's bird breeding programs.

Johnson holds a B.S. in wildlife biology from the University of Minnesota and comes to Miami from the progressive Minnesota Zoo, where he developed their bird management program and coordinated aviary construction and bird acquisition.

Metrozoo's free-flight aviary, scheduled to open next spring, will be one of the largest and finest in the world. An acre and a half in area and 65 feet high, the entire structure will be covered with vinyl netting. Inside, streams, mountains and lush landscaping are designed to resemble specific Asian habitats, in keeping with the zoogeographic theme of the zoo.

"Ron's major task initially," says Zeigler, "is the acquisition of the rare Asian birds the aviary will house. It's a complicated process, and we're very glad to have the benefit of the experience Ron has had in doing just this sort of thing at Minnesota."

"An aviary can add a whole new dimension to a zoo," adds Johnson, "and I think Metrozoo's aviary will be a highlight here. It's a real challenge to be involved in a project of this magnitude at such an early stage."

The Other Side of the Moat



Monkeys very sensibly refrain from speech, lest they should be set to earn their living.

—Kenneth Grahame



The camel has a single hump; The dromedary, two; Or else the other way around. I'm never sure. Are you?

—Ogden Nash

ZOO VIEWS...ZOO VIEWS...ZOO VIEWS...ZOO VIEWS...

ADMISSIONS & CONCESSIONS

Maria Frank has been touring Europe for the last few weeks, and the postcards have been pouring in—the office is decorated à l'Oktoberfest. And congratulations to *Kathy Young Radiano* on her marriage. We're glad she survived the party.

SECURITY

Two new security officers have come on board in the past month. *Jerry Rudd* has an extensive military security background, and has civilian experience as well. One of his past jobs was witness protection for the federal courts here in Miami. *Jim Shaver's* expertise is accident investigation, through working as a videographer for area attorneys and the local justice system.

GRAPHICS & DESIGN

What with several new African exhibits opening and the many exhibit changes in the Eurasian Lobe, the Design Team is concentrating on signage right now. 18 new exhibit signs are in various stages of production. *Banjong Mianmanus* is working on the special project of the high-relief ceramic frieze for the African Oasis plaza—32 plaques in all that will be joined together to make up two large friezes. *Bill Tuttle's* air-brush painting of the Sulawesi Village will be installed soon in that area of the zoo.

MAINTENANCE & LANDSCAPE

A new employee, *Jorge Maura*, just received a promotion to Landscape Supervisor II. Before coming to the zoo, Jorge worked for the Aviation Department. *Raymond Sanders*, who has worked at Metrozoo for a couple of years, received a promotion to Landscape Supervisor I. His new position will be at Crandon Park. And congratulations to *Nestor Cabrera*, who was promoted to Lead Worker.

MARKETING

The 52nd Annual World Travel Congress of the American Society of Travel Agents was held in Miami the second week in October, and the whole town seemed to go ASTA-mad. Every function throughout the week was an opportunity for some sort of Metrozoo representation, and we were able to be present at nearly all of them. The Design Team designed the displays, Construction and Maintenance helped build them, and Animal Science provided the animals, while Marketing seemed to spend most of its time carting brochures around from one convention center to another. The ASTA conference is one of the most important events of the year in the tour and travel industry, so a good showing by Metrozoo in particular and Dade County in general was a worthwhile cause, and there's no doubt that we did a magnificent job of it. Thanks to everyone who was involved.

ANIMAL SCIENCE

All the keepers have come over from Crandon Park now. The last of the birds there, the flamingoes, are coming down to the new zoo, where they'll be on display at the entrance lake.

There are several new keepers here. *Vince Gibaldi*, originally from Miami, has returned home after working at the San Antonio Zoo. He'll be working the giraffe area. *Debbie Brown* is working in the quarantine area. She was an animal health care technician at the Alexandria Zoological Park in Louisiana. *Debbie Argel* has come here from the Houston Zoo.

Joe Ware is retiring this November after 15 years working in the zoo kitchen, first at Crandon Park and now here at Metrozoo. He'll be very much missed.

VETERINARY SERVICES

In anticipation of the construction of the hospital/nursery that is proposed for the Malayan Village area, *Dr. Esra* and Zoological Society Board of Directors member *Dr. Jim Block* recently traveled to the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Florida to see first-hand the facilities and equipment in their hospital. Their discussions there with university staff produced many helpful comments and suggestions which have been incorporated into the final plans that are now being drawn up by the Park and Recreation Planning Department.

