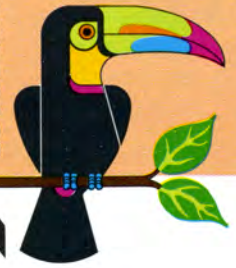


TOUCAN TALK

ZOOLOGICAL

SOCIETY OF FLORIDA



JULY—AUGUST / VOL. 10, NO. 4

THE REAL “BIG BIRD”



The ostrich is the world's largest living bird, fleet as a gazelle in spite of its size. The ostrich needs its turn of speed to survive. Its showy black and white plumage attracts the attention of large predators. Ironically, the ostrich's wing and tail plumes are purely decorative (and therefore prized by the fashion world), because the ostrich cannot fly.

It might seem odd to hear about a flightless bird, but the ostrich is not alone. The rhea, emu, cassowary, kiwi, penguin & the recently extinct moa of New Zealand are all earthbound birds.

Although the ostrich cannot fly, it can run from its enemies, often reaching a speed of 40 mph. We've all heard the story that when an ostrich is in danger, it buries its head in the sand and waits for the enemy to go away. The legend paints a charming picture of this giant bird with its rump in the air, thinking it's invisible, but the story simply isn't true. The ostrich is dangerous when cornered and fights its foes with powerful kicks.

The ostrich is a remarkable bird in many ways. First, because of its size--the male is usually around 8 feet tall and weighs over 300 lbs. while the female weighs about a hundred pounds less.

Second, because of its coloring--in males, the naked thighs and sparsely-feathered neck are vividly colored, varying from flesh-pink in the Sahara to an astonishing bright blue in Somalia. Females, which far outnumber the males, have an inconspicuous brown-grey plumage, while the helpless young are protectively patterned in browns and greys.

Third, because of its remarkable tolerance of heat-- the ostrich can withstand very high temperatures without undue stress. It adapts remarkably well to life in deserts and arid steppes, and is typically found in the plains, open thorn-bush country and semi-desert regions of Africa. Although it can go for days without water, when it can get it, the ostrich enjoys frequent drinking and bathing, often submerging all but its head.

Fourth, because of a unique feature-- the ostrich is the only bird having just two toes, with cushioned soles to prevent the bird from sinking in loose sand.

Ostriches often band together in groups of around 20, sometimes travelling with large mammals which flush up food. Not that ostriches are picky about what they eat. Succulent plants, fruit and seeds form their principal diet, but the birds are scavengers and will happily eat berries, small animals, insects and reptiles. In return, ostriches often give their travelling companions early warning of approaching danger, which they sense because of their alertness and keen eyesight.

As breeding time approaches, the male, usually silent, lets out a hollow booming call and tries to attract the female by squatting and waving his wings. A male has a harem of 3-4 females who lay 15-20 eggs in a communal nest scooped in the ground.

Since the ostrich is the world's largest bird, it's not surprising that it lays the world's heaviest egg, averaging more than 3½ pounds. Males incubate the eggs by night, females by day, and the buff-colored eggs hatch in about 6 weeks. The young leave the nest within 24 hours.

Metrozoo has had tremendous success with its ostrich eggs. The eggs are sometimes gathered by zookeepers and put into an incubator because the parents have not built a nest. Of a total of 68 so far this year, 35 eggs have hatched and out of those 29 have survived. The young ostriches will eventually be traded to other zoos for stock we need.

We already have our own ostrich exhibit at the zoo. Now that you're better acquainted with this remarkable bird, come see it again.



pic by Sam Leung

Thank You!

From time to time, we would like to recognize our corporate sponsors in these pages. Their generosity and vision are helping us to meet our goal of building a world-class zoo right here in Miami.



Donald J. Mulligan

Chase Federal Savings & Loan Association, now celebrating its 50th anniversary, is a dedicated supporter of the Zoological Society, and through it, of Metrozoo.

While most financial institutions have accounts that bear interest, Chase Federal goes one better: it is also interested in bears. Chase Federal recently made a significant contribution to the Zoological Society and became the official sponsor of the Himalayan Black Bears at Metrozoo.

"The contribution was motivated by our company's respect and concern for a community we call home," said Donald J. Mulligan, senior vice president of savings operations at Chase Federal, who is also on the Zoological Society's Board of Trustees. *"Metrozoo is a great asset to our community and serves to improve the lifestyle of South Floridians. We are pleased to be an integral part of its development."*

Sneak Preview

By popular demand, well-known wildlife artist Charles Fracé will return to Metrozoo around Thanksgiving, bringing with him his fabulous collection of wildlife paintings, posters and prints, just in time to stock up on gifts for the holiday season. Watch this space for details and you'll have another reason to be thankful this Thanksgiving.

Saks Appeal

One of the most spectacular events of the coming social season will be Saks Fifth Avenue's gala opening party at their new store in the Dadeland Mall on Friday, November 2nd. What makes it even more special is that the party will benefit deserving organizations in the community. And the Zoological Society is one of them. Watch for details on this big benefit bash.



President's Message

Metrozoo is a dazzling example of what a community can do when it seeks a common goal. It is visible evidence that we in Miami and Dade County are concerned about the environment, about education, and about the quality of life. It is a concrete illustration giving credence to the phrase that this community cares.

In creating Metrozoo, a true sanctuary has been provided for wildlife in a magnificent setting of indigenous vegetation. It gives the citizens of this community a sense of pride in the beauty and grandeur of our natural resources and a sense of pride in community accomplishment. It also serves as a reminder that we have a responsibility to preserve endangered species of animal life.

But, Metrozoo has become more than that. It is a respite from our busy lives, a family place where we can spend a day, where young and old can enjoy and learn. Metrozoo has also become a human sanctuary for people to visit for a variety of reasons.

As citizens, we have a rare opportunity to support and sustain a project designed to enhance the quality of life in Greater Miami and Dade County. As citizens we are fortunate to have the opportunity to invest in our community in such a positive way. We are always asked to eliminate the negatives in our society. This is one of the few times we can accentuate the positive.

The dividends to the whole community can be enormous. Family-oriented citizens prefer to locate in quality environments. They want to raise their children in a cultural and educational atmosphere to utilize the natural resources and to take pride in their community.

Miami has made great strides in the last few years in turning our image around. But, attracting high quality people to this area is no longer easy. Supporting Metrozoo is one of the best ways to continue improving the quality of life in a positive way.

For those who have received so much from this community in the past, it is time to reinvest and give back to the community so that it may continue to prosper. For our citizens it is a channel to ensure the future. On a personal level the support and sustenance of Metrozoo is an investment in our county and the future. It is one of the wonderful ways we have to enhance and protect the environment, to make Miami and Dade County an outstanding community, and to enjoy and reap the benefits of our philanthropy.

Metrozoo is a world-class project. When completed, it will be the finest, the most innovative, and the largest zoo in the country. It will take more than leadership and vision, however, to accomplish these goals. We need the financial commitment from the whole community.

Working together we can insure a better tomorrow for Miami and South Florida economically, culturally, and educationally. More than that, we can permanently improve the quality of life for ourselves, our families, our neighbors, and those generations yet unborn.

Ron Esserman
Zoological Society of Florida

Education Outlook

Picture yourself at the zoo this summer. If you weren't here last year, you don't know what you're missing. With our exciting new programs, learning is a snap. What's more, you'll really click with some new friends, both human and animal. Sound exciting? Call the Education Department at 255-5551 for details and a brochure. We'll sign you up in a flash. Get the picture? Then let Metrozoo put you in the perfect frame of mind this summer.



Program Lineup • July 5th — September 14th

Metrozoo-Inn

A 'slumber party' at the zoo. Discover the creatures of the dark and spend the night in wild surroundings.

September 14th • 5 p.m. Friday to 9 a.m. Saturday • Grades 4 to 6
\$17.50—Members • \$20—Nonmembers

Zoo Seachers

Rose Krubsack will lead an exciting journey of exploration into prehistory. Learn about animals who roamed the earth long before there were people around to study them.

4 consecutive Saturdays • July 14th thru August 4th • 9 a.m. to Noon • Grades 5 & 6
\$45—Members • \$55—Nonmembers

Breakfast With The Beasts

A chance for the whole family to learn about the fascinating food habits of various animals at the zoo. Eat breakfast at the zoo before it opens, and then watch the animals eating their breakfast at Sulawesi.

July 22nd & August 12th • 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Families — Adults
\$8—Members • \$10—Nonmembers

Jungle Juniors

An exciting way for you to get acquainted with the zoo and its inhabitants. Children will enjoy learning about animals and identifying them from clues. Reel animals will join real ones as you watch a "creature feature."

July 30th thru August 3rd • 8 a.m. to Noon
Grades 1 — 3
\$55—Members • \$65—Nonmembers

Art Camp II

The earliest cave drawings were of animals.

You, too, can discover the magical world of animals in art.

July 23rd thru July 27th • 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Grades K — 2
\$45—Members • \$55—Nonmembers

Zoo Camp

One of the nation's finest zoos is right here at our doorstep. Take advantage of a unique opportunity to explore the exciting world of animals, learn about animal behavior and how animals adapt to their changing environment. Each day's program will focus on a different topic, including marine mammals, reptiles, birds and much, much more.

July 16th thru July 20th • 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Grades 3 to 6
\$75—Members • \$85—Nonmembers

Kinder Kamp

An active program involving child participation. You will learn about animals, how they look, how they move and what sounds they make. You'll make a lot of special animal friends at the zoo during this exciting camp.

2 sessions • July 9th thru July 13th
Aug. 13th thru Aug. 17th • 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Preschool • 3 to 5 years old
\$40—Members • \$50—Nonmembers

The Investigators

You'll discover fascinating facts as an investigator of the animal world. Through various clues, you will be able to identify various plants and animals, observe animal behavior and learn about animal breeding.

July 23rd thru 27th • August 13th thru 17th
9 a.m. to Noon • Grades 7 to 9
\$55—Members • \$65—Nonmembers

Summer Safari

You can go on safari without flying out to

Africa. There's a wonderful world of wildlife right here in Miami and the Society's summer safari offers you a unique opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at some of the zoo's outstanding exhibits.

August 6th thru August 11th • 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Grades 8 to 12
\$75—Members • \$85—Nonmembers

Gifted Goings-On

All children are talented but only some are gifted. The Zoological Society is pleased to present a special program just for gifted children. On "Spaceship Earth" you'll learn about the relationships between animals & everyone & everything aboard our planet. The requirement to register is a score in the top 10% of a recognized IQ or achievement test.

August 6th thru August 10th • 9 a.m.-Noon
Gifted, ages 4, 5, & 6
\$45—Members • \$55—Nonmembers

Shutter Bugs

A class which focuses on animal photography for beginners. Just bring a 35mm SLR camera and learn from professional photographer Dan Wilson how to shoot animals in the kindest way possible.

4 consecutive Thursdays • July 5th thru July 26th • 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
High School to Adults
\$35—Members • \$40—Nonmembers

Snap Judgements

If you're already a photography buff, develop your lens flair. Refine your skills and acquire new techniques at the zoo. Comments and critique of work provided by noted photographer, Dan Wilson.

4 consecutive Thursdays • Aug. 2-Aug. 23
7 p.m. to 9 p.m. • High School to Adults
\$35—Members • \$40—Nonmembers

Toucan Tidbits



The Hunt

*Here's a cordial invitation
(And a handy application)
To ensure participation
In the Hunt that's on its way.*

*On October 27th we have a date,
Come before the clock strikes eight,
So you know you won't be late
(That's how good hunters play).*

*At 12 we'll find the winner
And provide a light dinner
To satisfy your inner
Needs, and cap a super day.*

*Sixty dollars for each twosome
(You'll need 3 per car), so woo some
They'll be glad you did, so do some
Recruiting right away*

*For the Zoological Society,
And an evening of variety.
To avoid undue anxiety
Mail your check out today.*

The Hunt is an annual event for the Zoological Society of Florida. This one will be held on Saturday, October 27th, at 8 p.m.

The fee is \$60 per couple, and there must be three couples per car. Make your checks out to the Zoological Society of Florida (yes, they're tax deductible!) and mail them to:

Dr. & Mrs. Monroe Scheiner
7325 S.W. 162nd St., Miami, FL 33157

After we receive your checks, we'll send you details and specific instructions for the Hunt. The deadline for applications is October 1st. The Hunt will be limited to the first 60 applications, so hurry.

If you are unable to attend in person, be there in spirit by mailing in a tax-deductible contribution to the Zoological Society.

Application Form

Couple #1

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Couple #2

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Couple #3

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Docent Doings

What is a docent? The word came from the Latin "docere", meaning 'to teach.' The dictionary defines docent as "teacher, one who imparts knowledge, a guide, often unpaid."

The Docent Council of the Zoological Society of Florida is a group of very special people: men and women, retirees and career people. Some have time on their hands. Others, hardly a moment to spare. They are a diverse group with a common bond--a love for animals and a wish to imbue others with that love.

Docents believe that education is the key to the preservation of endangered species. They share their knowledge with zoo visitors through free guided walking tours, lectures to schoolchildren and much more.

Before they can impart knowledge, however, they have to acquire it. Intensive docent training classes equip them with answers to the questions people ask. The next docent training session begins September 25th. Classes will be held at Metrozoo on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call the docent office at 255-2214.

A Capital Idea

If you are excited about visiting zoos around the country, then Toucan Travel's visit to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., should sound capital.

The weekend trip, October 19th-21st, will begin with a visit to the well-known National Zoo, where you can see their celebrated pandas and the rest of their wonderful animal collection. You'll also meet representatives from the zoo and from the Friends of the National Zoo (FONZ), our counterparts in Washington.

Saturday afternoon, we'll visit the Smithsonian, one of the best-known museums in the world. On Sunday, we'll be on our own--to return to the zoo if we want, or to sample some of the many cultural and historic places of interest in the city.

For complete information about itinerary and cost, call Aileen Lotz, Travel Coordinator at 661-9500.

A.A.Z.P.A. Conference

The letters A.A.Z.P.A. are familiar to all zoo professionals in North America, and to most zoo people everywhere. Come September, they will be well-known in South Florida as well.

The letters stand for the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums, the largest organization of its kind in the world, which will be holding its annual conference in Miami this year.

The A.A.Z.P.A. was founded 60 years ago as a branch of the old American Institute of Park Executives. However, as the Park and Recreation profession and the Zoo and Aquarium profession matured, the basic philosophical differences between the two became more evident. Zoos and Aquariums accepted the challenge of wildlife conservation and public education, and broke away to form an independent organization in 1971.

The organization has come a long way since the early 70's. Besides upgrading the operational level of the body, much was done to raise the professional level.

Over the years, the A.A.Z.P.A. has built up a roster of almost 4,000 members. The highlight of the year is an annual conference when members get a chance to get together, share information and exchange notes about their zoo experiences. We are very honored to have been chosen as the host city this year. It's an indication of the respect that A.A.Z.P.A. has for our new zoo (currently being evaluated for accreditation.)

The conference will be held from September 9th-13th, with headquarters at the Omni International Hotel. We expect about 1,100 delegates (with their wives and families), making it the largest conference in A.A.Z.P.A. history. Putting on a conference of this magnitude is a formidable challenge, requiring the combined efforts of Metrozoo staff and Zoological Society members. Its success depends on the extent of our enthusiasm and involvement.

This is a great opportunity for volunteers to participate and prove to the rest of the zoo profession that we have the right stuff. For more information on how you can get involved, contact volunteer coordinator Laurie Ditmer at 255-5551.

Easter Egg-Stravaganza

The first annual Easter Festival at Metrozoo was no yolkng matter for our hundreds of eggcited visitors. In all their finery, the visitors almost stole the show from the animals.

The day's festivities began with an Easter Bonnet Contest in the amphitheatre, where children between the ages of 2 and 12 modelled their bonnets, most of them hand-made and beautiful. We hope the winners of the contest didn't let success go to their heads. Winning ribbons were also awarded to exceptional entries in the Decorated Egg Contest.



Some bunny special at Metrozoo...

Our resident giant Easter Bunny, Tony the Cougar and the University of Miami's Maniac all showed up to lead our Easter Parade. The instrument of the day? The kaZOO, of course.

The parade was followed by four separate Easter Egg Hunts for different age groups. Those who found eggs marked with special designs won prizes such as Easter baskets, T-shirts and hand-painted balloons, donated by our talented volunteer, Tony Colon, while others went home happy with the chocolates and creme eggs.

Many thanks to our volunteers, who made the event possible. And many thanks to our participants who made the event special. Since our first Easter Festival was such a success, we have high hopes for the next one. We hope you'll be there to egg us on.



Hats off to all the participants...

The Tapir

A Living Fossil

Although there have been more celebrated births at the zoo in recent months, the birth of Metrozoo's first Baird's tapir was one of the most significant. This may be the rarest species ever bred at the zoo to date. All four living species of tapirs are classified as endangered in the wild. The Baird's tapir, native to Central America, is almost extinct in Mexico and endangered in the rest of its range as well. There are only 25 Baird's tapirs in zoos around the world, so the one born at Metrozoo (only the third baby born in captivity since 1980) is a valuable addition to our mammal collection.

Two other zoos share in Metrozoo's achievement. The Riverbanks Zoo in South Carolina and the San Diego Zoo sent us the male and female parents, respectively, on breeding loan. Because of the small number of captive animals to work with, the continued propagation of this species depends on the cooperation of zoos.

The joint venture certainly worked in this case. After a 14-month gestation period, the male offspring was born on April 17th. He tipped the scales at 18 lbs. and since then has increased his weight by about a pound a day.

Like all newborn tapirs, he looks rather like a watermelon with legs. The striking coat pattern of the young is unique among all the other members of the odd-toed order of mammals called perissodactyls. This natal, or buffer coat probably acts as

camouflage in the wild and protects the helpless baby from predators. After about 2 months, the coat starts to fade and in about four to six months the young tapir acquires the reddish-brown coloring of its parents.

Like its parents, it has the elongated semi-prehensile nose, and the relatively short limbs with four toes (three main digits and one small one) on each forefoot, and three toes on each hind foot. In fact, the odd-looking tapir was a taxonomical enigma for many years. Some thought the tapir was a relative of the hippopotamus because of its rotund body and propensity for swimming. Others thought it was a type of giant pig. Still others thought it was related to the anteater because of its fleshy nose. Actually, it turns out, the tapir is most closely related to the horse and rhinoceros, which are also perissodactyls.

The first tapirs were around some 50 million years ago, so today's tapirs are prehistoric remnants of a once flourishing species.

Don't pass up your chance to see one of the newest of these living fossils. Metrozoo's new Baird's tapir can be seen daily at Sulawesi Village, where it is being bottlefed because its inexperienced mother would not allow it to nurse. At one month old, the baby weighed almost 50 lbs. By the time it's two years old, it will weigh almost 400 lbs.

Come see our tapir grow.



-- pix by Sam Lewis

Kid's Corner

Read each clue and unscramble the letters to form the correct word. When you are finished put the circled numbered letters in the correct blank to form another animal's name. The first 25 correct entries returned will win a t-shirt. The contest is open to Society members' children ages 7-12.

1. Third largest land mammal; often found in water

7 _____ 12

2. Small kangaroo-like animal

1 _____ 13

3. Bottlenose, river and common are three types of this water dwelling mammal

2 _____ 14

4. The largest ape, also known as the gentle giant of the forest

8 _____ 10

5. Largest living bird which can run up to 40 mph.

_____ 4 _____ 11

6. Tallest land mammal who has a prehensile (grasping) tongue

_____ 5

7. Land-dwelling, shelled reptile

6 _____ 3 _____ 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

NOW ON DISPLAY!!!

Send your entry to the Education Dept.
Zoological Society of Florida
 12400 S.W. 152nd St., Miami, FL 33177

Keeping P.A.C.E. at Metrozoo

This summer, the animals won't be the only ones making wild sounds at Metrozoo. Visitors to the zoo will enjoy the sounds of music, ranging from salsa to golden oldies to jazz to country-and-western, during Metrozoo's summer concert series, produced by P.A.C.E. (Performing Arts for Community and Education) and co-sponsored by The Miami Herald & WSVN--Channel 7, among others. All concerts will be at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. in the new Performance Meadow, and are free with regular zoo admission. Since Zoological Society members are entitled to free admission anyway, you might want to make the most of your visit to the zoo by timing it to coincide with these musical events. Mark your calendars now.

July 15th • Armed Forces Patriot Day at Metrozoo

Hear the world-famous U.S. Air Force Jazz/Contemporary Band playing top 40, pop, patriotic and jazz tunes.

July 29th • Jazzoo at Metrozoo

Enjoy all that jazz at the zoo and keep cool with South Florida's finest jazz musicians.

August 5th • Oldie Day at Metrozoo

Trip down memory lane as you jitterbug and twist away on the Performance Meadow "dance floor" to the beloved melodies of yesteryear.

August 12th • Salsa Safari at Metrozoo

Pulsate to the infectious Latin beat as the spirit of Carnival Miami comes to the zoo.

August 18th & 19th • Zoo Rodeo at Metrozoo

Fans of country & western and bluegrass music can come down home to the zoo to enjoy the great pickin's, along with finger-lickin' barbeque and foot-stomping cloggers.

September 1st & 2nd • Labor Day At Metrozoo

End summer with a bang and some terrific rock and roll during Metrozoo's Labor Day musical event.

Animal Trivia:

OSTRICHES DO NOT HIDE THEIR HEADS IN THE SAND! Ostriches may lie down and stretch their necks out to avoid being seen, but if a predator gets too close, the ostrich will get up and run. Ostriches can run up to 40 mph, and when cornered, will kick to defend themselves.

SNAKES CAN'T STING OR BITE WITH THEIR TONGUES. Instead the tongue is used to smell. The forked tongue picks up small particles from the air or ground then "smells" them by putting the tip of the tongue into its

Jacobson's organ which is located in the roof of the snake's mouth. This mechanism allows the snake to trail prey.

MOSQUITOES DO NOT REALLY BITE. Instead they pierce the skin with their stylets which are strawlike mouth parts. The female mosquito is the only one who "bites." The itchy swelling found after the bite is caused by the mosquito's saliva which is an anti-coagulant, allowing the mosquito to "get her fill" before a scab forms over the "bite."

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