



# TOUCAN TALK

A Trip To The Zoo That Comes To You!



**TOUCAN TALK  
VOLUME 20, NUMBER 6**



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# EYE TO EYE WITH A BEAR



A few months ago, Ghengis—our Himalayan black bear—developed an ulcer in one of his eyes and our staff was concerned about it.

Keepers had been treating Ghengis' eye by enticing him into the passage way—which leads from the holding pen to the exhibit area—by giving him apples two or three times a day. They were quite successful in applying an antibiotic mist to the affected eye. But Dr. Christine Miller still wanted to get a closer look with Dr. Karpinski, a local veterinary ophthalmologist.

Once it was decided to anesthetize Ghengis, we all wondered how it would go; this bear had never been immobilized during his 12 years at the zoo.

At approximately 9:30 a.m., July 14, 1994, he was moved into a squeeze cage (a cage where he can be held tight for application of medicine or taking of blood samples) to inject him with a sedative. He started feeling drowsy in three minutes and after 10 minutes he was safe to approach. It was time to take him to the veterinary clinic.

But, as you can imagine, moving a large, floppy bear is not easy. Several people were at hand to maneuver him onto a tarpaulin and then load him into a pick-up truck for his trip. Once at the clinic he was weighed. Can you guess? A bare 373 lbs!

Ghengis was carefully monitored while asleep, keeping an eye on his heart rate and respiration.

Taking advantage of this opportu-

**By Jacky Shaw**

**Sr. Zookeeper and Veterinarian Assistant**

detailed exam was made of both his eyes. Good news: The ulcer was healing very well.

About 40 minutes later he was on



The characteristic white mark on its chest has given him one of his common names: Moon bear. Another common name is Asiatic black bear.

nity, an electrocardiogram (ECG) was done, blood samples were taken, and his teeth cleaned (very good teeth, by the way). Every inch of his body was checked and a

the way back to the holding pens, behind the exhibit. It took him the rest of the day to recover but, by the end of the day, he was back to normal.

## SOME BEAR FACTS

- The Himalayan bear is usually found in deciduous forests and brushy areas. In the Himalayas he spends winter in the forests of the foothills, but it climbs to 12,000 feet during the summer.
- It feeds mostly on plants (herbivorous), but also will eat lots of insects and honey, occasionally killing domestic animals.
- It is generally nocturnal, sleeping in places such as hollow trees during the day.
- The characteristic white mark on its chest has given him one of his common names: Moon bear. Another common name is Asiatic black bear.
- Sexual maturity is reached at about three years of age.
- Pregnancy lasts seven or eight months, and one or two cubs—the size of rats—are born in dens during January or February.
- Cubs grow rapidly, but they are not fully mature until they are three years old.
- Their population has decreased due to hunting by humans and the destruction of the forest habitat.

# A PEEK BEHIND THE SCENES: BREEDING SUCCESSES

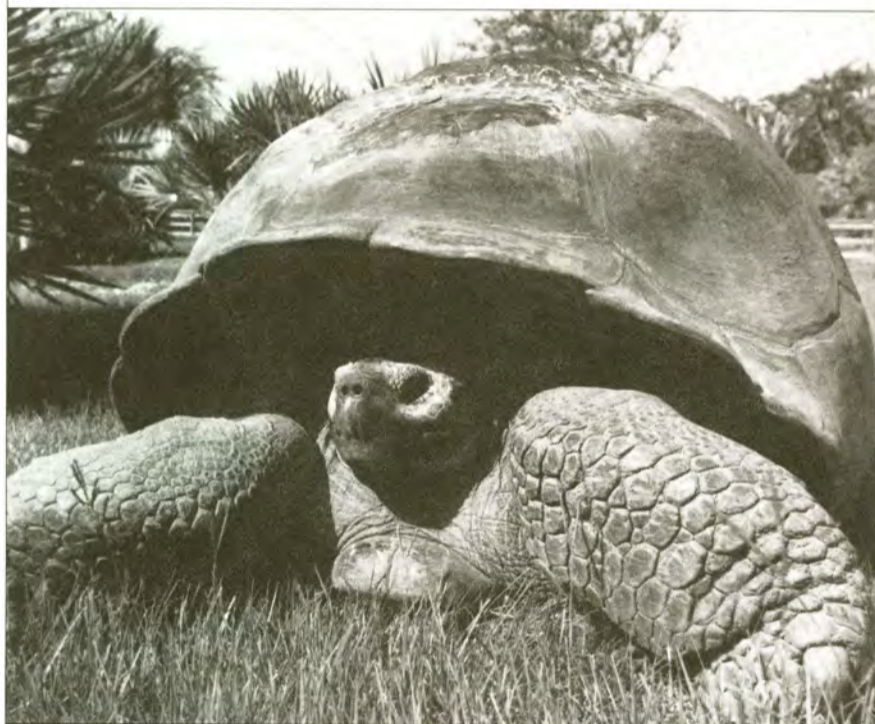
**B**ehind the scenes at Metrozoo is a completely different world of animals. In off-exhibit breeding areas, for example, we keep a variety of species of tortoises.

Most of these tortoises, at one time or another, have been on display on various exhibits throughout the park. Over time, however, we found that some of them preferred a less hectic environment in which to live...and, once we provided it,

**By Martha Thaden**  
Zookeeper and Quarantine Supervisor

due to their threatened existence and limited range in the wild. Unlike African spurred tortoises, which may lay between 10 and 25 eggs in a clutch, the radiated tortoise lays only one to four.

Currently, we have seven radiated tortoises: three adult males, one adult female, and three juveniles who should become mature within the next year.



Patches is one of the Galapagos tortoises you can see at Metrozoo.

we were rewarded with a banner year in babies.

In 1991 we acquired two male and three female African spurred tortoises on a breeding loan agreement. We already had a young pair in our collection which became sexually mature this past breeding season. Egg laying began in February 1994, and the first tiny tortoise hatched May 28, 1994. By the end of August, all four females had generated a total of 98 hatchlings! For a first breeding of this species at Metrozoo, we feel our program proved to be a giant success.

Perhaps even more significant for the zoo this year was the first successful propagation of the rare radiated tortoise of Madagascar. Radiated tortoises are managed by a Species Survival Plan, or SSP (See "Buying Time for Wildlife," p. 6)

Our female began laying eggs three years ago indicating her sexual maturity. Her eggs, however, were infertile; so we set out to discover what would make her accept the attention of a male. She got a larger pen, the grass was allowed to grow high so she could hide from the boys when "not in the mood," and several places in the pen were excavated and refilled with sand so she would have more choices when looking for nesting sites. Our work paid off: She laid her first fertile egg in November of last year. In the second clutch, laid in February of this year, two eggs proved fertile. And this spring, three strikingly beautiful hatchlings emerged from the ping pong ball-sized eggs. Metrozoo had another first!

Our African leopard tortoises have been another success story

since 1987. Many of you may remember seeing them on the Galapagos tortoise exhibit. Although they had a number of offspring there, it seemed that because of the large size of the paddock, they sometimes had difficulty finding each other for mating. We then decided to move them to a smaller pen, heavily planted with palmetto and with lots of soft areas for them to nest. The following year the number of hatchlings rose significantly. And this spring we hatched 28 leopard tortoises.

In the case of the Galapagos tortoise, a new and exciting exchange and breeding program may soon become a reality. The seven animals we have seem to be from different subspecies. Historically, there were 14 subspecies, each developing on separate islands in the Galapagos Archipelago. Today, four of those are extinct and only one specimen of a fifth subspecies remains. Until recently, it was difficult, if not impossible, to decipher which subspecies was which. As it is important to keep this endangered species genetically pure, we have not encouraged breeding among our "Galaps." (You may have noticed that, at times, our three females are not out on display.)

New technology in the study of DNA is about to play a part in our collection. All of our "Galaps" have had blood and tissue biopsies taken and processed, and the results are finally in. In the next two years, we hope to trade animals into and out of our collection and, with a little luck, we will achieve our goal of successfully propagating another endangered species. And Metrozoo will then have another first!

## TORTOISE'S CHECKLIST:

**T**he largest tortoise in the world is the Galapagos at 600 pounds. The smallest is the Egyptian tortoise, never weighing more than a few ounces. You can see these and other tortoises around the zoo:

- Egyptian tortoise at PAWS
- Burmese tortoises in the Muntjac exhibit at Asian River Life
- African spurred tortoises in the center display at the wart hog/wallaby facility
- Galapagos and Aldabra tortoises at the Giant Land Tortoise Exhibit

## BIRTHS & HATCHINGS

**July 14 - October 3**

**African spurred tortoise**  
*Geochelone sulcata*  
20 Unknown July 27 - August 21

**Greater kudu**  
*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*  
Female August 7  
Female August 10

**Stanley crane**  
*Anthropoides paradisea*  
Unknown August 17

**Black-&-white colobus**  
*Colobus polykomos angolensis*  
Unknown August 22  
Unknown September 21

**Oryx**  
*Oryx Gazella*  
Male August 25

**Mayayan tapir**  
*Tapirus indicus*  
Female August 29

**Bongo**  
*Tragelaphus eurycerus isaaci*  
Female September 4  
Male September 22

**Wahlberg bat**  
*Epomophorus wahlbergi*  
Male September 6

**Sable antelope**  
*Hippotragus niger*  
Female September 17  
Female September 19

**Baird's tapir**  
*Tapirus bairdii*  
Male October 3



Malayan tapir



Stanley crane

Photos: Dolora Batchelor

**Y**ou may have seen the recent "Newspaper in Education" series in *The Miami Herald*, *Zoo Clues*. This 12-week series—written by members of the ZSF's Education Staff—encourages readers to look longer, observe closely and understand more about wildlife. Although Metrozoo animals can't answer the questions of what they eat and where they originally come from, you can find out a lot of answers by observing them.

*The Miami Herald* readers enjoy the weekly articles, while classroom teachers expand the educational value using the accompanying "Teacher's Guide" which has in-depth lesson plans and classroom activities.

We hope your school is not missing out on these wild adventures!

For more information call the Education Department at 305-255-5551.

**LOOKING FOR GIFT IDEAS**

**T**he Holidays are here, and what better place to find that "something special" than the gift shops at Miami Metrozoo! Stop by to see our exciting new T-shirt designs, accessories and gift items.

Here's an idea: Give the gift of knowledge! We have expanded our book collection at the Toucan Trader to include a wider range of subjects and titles, from endangered species and protecting our environment, to coloring and story books for children.

The Toucan Trader and Elephant Walk are open from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 a.m., seven days a week. And remember that members receive 10% off their purchases all year long.

**MORE GIFT IDEAS...**

Membership is a great present for your loved ones! Give them one year of unlimited admission to Metrozoo and more than 150 zoos in the United States and Canada, too, plus other wonderful benefits. Or, if you prefer, buy them an animal brick or tile (we now have a Florida panther tile as an addition to our Endangered Species collection) which will be part of the "Walls of the Wild," a permanent tribute to friendship and wildlife! You also can make a friend happy through our Adopt-an-Animal program and, at the same time, sponsor a Metrozoo animal. Call the Development Department for more information at 305-255-5551.

# ZOOPERB FALL AT METROZOO

**Fall is already here, and the new season brings a variety of "wild adventures" at Metrozoo. From sleep-overs to breakfast with some of the creatures, these fun-filled programs will delight people of all ages.**

**Breakfast with the Beasts**

**Families**

Enjoy this favorite, early morning glimpse at Metrozoo's operations! A continental breakfast is followed by a special behind-the-scenes look at exotic animal care. You'll meet some unique animals and their caretakers along the way. A perfect way to start your day!

Session FAST-A: Saturday, November 12

Session FAST-B: Saturday, January 21

Time: 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.

Cost: Adult Member \$10, Non-Member \$15  
Child (12 and under) Member \$6, Non-Member \$8

**Holiday Crafts for Kids**

**Ages 6-10**

The best holiday gift is one you make yourself! This special workshop is for *kids only*. Our staff will help you design and create a unique gift for mom, dad, sister or brother. We supply all the materials, you bring the creativity!

Session A: Saturday, December 3

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Cost: Member \$12, Non-Member \$17

**Basket Weaving**

**Adults (18 and older)**

It's not as simple as it looks...but it's definitely fun! The result will be a work of art that you can enjoy for years. Birdkeeper Susan Kong demonstrates and teaches the art of basket weaving. Bring a bag lunch for your break on this all-day session. Cost includes all materials.

Date: Saturday, December 10

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Cost: Member \$25, Non-Member \$28

**Mini Camp**

**Ages 6-10 (grades 1-4)**

Dade County Schools may be "out," but classes are "in" at Metrozoo. Spend your day off with our "wild bunch" learning about the amazing residents of the zoo. This one-day safari includes live animals, crafts and snacks.

Dates: Friday, January 27

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Cost: Member \$30, Non-Member \$37

**Winter Camp**

**Ages 6-12**

Spend part of your vacation with us! An extra special treat for the holiday season, this three-day, fun-filled camp of wild adventures explores the animals of the grassland, forests, and air. Bring your lunch and a T-shirt to decorate as a special memory of the week. We provide the snacks, beverages, crafts and animals.

Session A: December 27-29

Session B: January 3-5

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Cost: Member \$95, Non-Member \$105

**Morning with the Giraffes**

**Adults (18 and older)**

We'll go to ANY length to get you here! This special glimpse into the world of the tallest mammals features a light refreshment, behind-the-scenes tour and special morning feeding of our giraffes. Zoological Supervisor Michael Gerlach introduces you to Kita, Karibou, and Colleen.

Session A: Saturday, January 7

Time: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Cost: Member \$10, Non-Member \$15

**REGISTRATION FORM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I'm a Member: Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ I'm not a Member \_\_\_\_\_

**For children's programs, complete the following:**

Parent's or Guardian's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Method of Payment (Please do NOT send cash):**

Check     American Express     MasterCard     Visa  
 Card \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Session	Name of Participant	Age/Grade	Fee
TOTAL:			\$

Mail this completed form with your payment to:  
 Education Department  
 Zoological Society of Florida  
 12400 SW 152nd Street  
 Miami, FL 33177-1499

Greetings, Zoo Friends. As 1994 draws to a close, we need to look back just a moment and thank **Charlie Delucca**, at **Melreese Golf Course**, who graciously donated three dozen huge golf umbrellas to our Zoofari Summer Camp program. He definitely made the 1994 rainy season much more pleasant for our many campers.

September and October brought things into full gear. First, the **Omni Colonnade** hosted a wonderful event to honor our "Walls of the Wild," the Zoological Society's program featuring personally engraved bricks and tiles installed permanently at Metrozoo. Over 200 guests sampled the delicious offerings provided by **George Cisneros**, General Manager, and his catering staff. We thank him and fellow host **Manny Soto**, for making this night possible. And be sure to mark your calendars for January 17, 1995—the official groundbreaking of "Walls" at Metrozoo.

And speaking of personally engraved bricks, **PetStuff** is holding a promotion through the end of December to underwrite bricks at Metrozoo for customers whose receipts total \$1,000 or more. So those of you with domestic creatures, listen up: go to PetStuff for your everyday purchases and those special holiday gifts for that furry or feathered friend of yours, and help Metrozoo at the same time.

In late September, we unveiled a new promotional campaign for all the programs we have to support Metrozoo. You may have seen the billboards or the bus backs and

Metrorail signs that said "Gift Wrap a Gorilla." We acknowledge our friends at **Ackerley Communications** and **Gateway** for helping to make it possible. And it's just one more reminder that our memberships, bricks, tiles, Adopt-an-Animal and other programs make great gifts for your loved ones, and also help our zoo. (For more information, just turn to our Holiday Gifts section on page 4.)

The Zoological Society's new **Board of Directors** was elected for 1994-95 by our **Board of Trustees**. **Dan Licciardi** of Miami Jai-Alai, artist **Romero Britto**, **Larry Mulkey** from Ryder System, Inc., attorney **Eric Buermann**, **Sandy Batchelor**, **Licia Green-Hill**, **Kerry Clemmons** of John Alden Life Insurance and Southern Bell's **Joseph DiBenedetto** all will formally take the reins at our Board Installation Dinner on November 12. Also re-elected were **Lynn Cambest** of SunBank, **Shutts & Bowen's Bill Gallwey**, **Michael Greif** of Hornsby Sacher Zelman & Stanton, *The Miami Herald's* **Sam Verdeja**, **Allan Pekor** from Lennar Corporation and **Andrew Weinstein** of Holland & Knight. Congratulations all!

New Board member **Dan Licciardi** is kicking off his term with a **Miami Jai-Alai Charity Day** on Saturday, November 5. In addition to contributing a portion of the full day's proceeds to Metrozoo, Jai-Alai also will hold a raffle with three wildlife poster sculptures by artist **Patricia Caballero-Rodriguez** to inspire ticket sales!

As long as we're on the subject of people doing nice things for us, we must mention our friends at **Torresella Wines**. Once again, **Torresella and National Distributing Company** are contributing a percentage to the Zoo Rebuilding Fund for each bottle of their wine sold in November and December. With the support of their major retail and restaurant accounts, **Torresella** hopes to present another very impressive gift to the aviary. So when you're shopping for spirits this holiday season, make sure it's **Torresella**, and help our feathered friends have a place to fly again.

Meanwhile, the **Trustees** are staying closely involved in all things at Metrozoo. On November 3 they will gather at **Shutts & Bowen** for a breakfast and special briefing by Executive Director **Glenn Ekey** on the Society's business plan for fiscal year 1994-95. Many thanks to Board Vice-President **Bill Gallwey** and his employees at **Shutts**, for hosting this event. And we'll have more Trustee developments in our next issue.

Last but not least, **Chase Federal Bank** has announced an ingenious promotion beginning in January 1995—for every new checking account opened there, **Chase Federal** will make a contribution to the Zoological Society to help the Children's Zoo. Customers can also get checks with the ZSF logo on them! We need to thank CEO **Tom Cooper** and Vice President of Marketing **Frank Barbato** for their clever ideas. And if you need to open a checking account, run down to **Chase Federal** right after the first of the year!

## A WILD NIGHT

November and December bring South Florida cooler weather and the one thing we gladly suffer the summer for: Season!

Yes, it's time to pull out those social calendars and pencil in not-to-be-missed dates. So be sure to mark the following one in pen:

**Friday, March 3, 1995**, for the 8th Annual **Feast With The Beasts** presented by American Express.

For those of you more recent Zoo Friends, **Feast With The Beasts** is the Zoological Society's biggest fund-raiser of the year. Guests happily "graze" through Metrozoo at night, sampling delicious food and drink from more than 40 of South Florida's finest restaurants and beverage distributors.

The 1995 **Feast** will benefit ZSF's education programs and with terrific music, dancing, and entertainment you know your revelry will be going toward a good cause.

Chair **Jennifer Getz** and the 1995 **Feast With The Beasts** Committee promise an outstanding event, so brush off your best black-tie and **SAVE THE DATE!**

## ANIMAL OF THE MONTH CLUB

### FUN ALL YEAR 'ROUND

Welcome to a new fun idea: The "Animal of the Month Club" at Metrozoo. Open to members only, the Club has designated a different zoo animal to represent each month of 1995, from January through December. For just \$25 per person, Club members receive an official "Adopt an Animal" packet containing a fact sheet on their chosen animal along with a 4" x 6" color photo, a Certificate of Adoption, and a special decal. Members also will enjoy a free mask or face painting when they visit the designated animal exhibit during special "Animal of the Month" celebrations, which will be held at Metrozoo on the third Sunday of each month.

Club members will be issued their own Club Card imprinted with the 12 months of the year. Members attending a minimum of six monthly celebrations and having the Club Card properly stamped will receive a free personalized Zoo Brick at the end of the year. Members who attend all 12 celebrations and have the stamped card to prove it, will receive a free, personalized Endangered Species Tile. Both the \$50 Zoo Brick and the \$250 Endangered Species Tile will be installed on the new "Walls of the Wild" overlooking the Flamingo Lake.



Illustrations: Sandra Fiol

### ANIMAL OF THE MONTH

Month/Celebration	Animal	Month/Celebration	Animal
January 15	Wart hog	July 16	Asian small-clawed otter
February 19	Caribbean flamingos	August 20	Siamese crocodile
March 19	Lion	September 17	Gorilla
April 16	African elephant	October 15	Blesbok
May 21	Red kangaroo	November 19	Zebra
June 18	White-handed gibbon	December 17	White tiger

Yes! I want to be a member of the "Animal of the Month Club."

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Day phone \_\_\_\_\_

Evening phone \_\_\_\_\_

My animal/month choice is: \_\_\_\_\_

Make a \$25 check payable to:

Zoological Society of Florida  
"Animal of the Month Club"  
12400 SW 152nd Street  
Miami, FL 33177-1499

For additional members please use plain sheet of paper. For more information call the Development Department at 305-255-5551.

Of the 69 species in the SSP programs, the following are found at Metrozoo:

**MAMMALS**

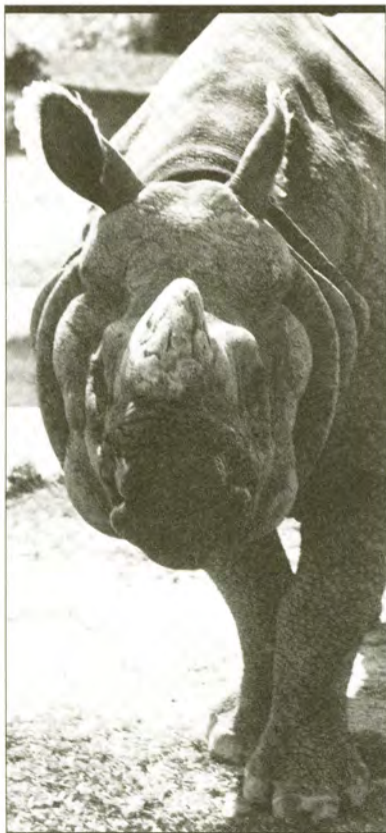
- Addax
- African wild dog (Cape hunting dog)
- Arabian oryx
- Asian small-clawed otter
- Black rhinoceros (Eastern)
- Chimpanzee
- Clouded leopard
- Elephant (African)
- Gaur
- Gibbons
- Greater one-horned Asian rhinoceros
- Grevy's zebra
- Lion (African)
- Lowland gorilla
- Orangutan
- Pygmy hippopotamus
- Ruffed lemurs (Red)
- Scimitar-horned oryx
- Tree kangaroos

**BIRDS**

- Crane (Wattled)

**AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES**

- Radiated tortoise



Greater one-horned Asian rhinoceros

Photo: Alex Worden

**H**ave you ever wondered why an animal is transferred out of Metrozoo? One of the reasons may be that is a necessary step of what's called a Species Survival Plan (SSP) of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA).

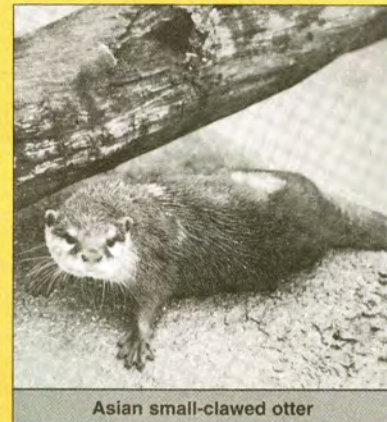
Zoos help conserve wildlife in different ways, including education of the public and the raising of funds to further field conservation. But one of the most important roles is the careful manage-

ment of captive breeding. And this is where the SSPs come into play.

The goal of these plans—developed for certain endangered species at zoos according to pre-established criteria—is to aid in species recovery. One of the ways this is achieved is through the study of the genetic background of all members of a captive population to determine which pairings are ideal. The study of the genetic background is important because animals in zoos, for the most part, have been bred in captivity; only a few have come from the wild in recent years. At the same time, one of the purposes of the SSPs is to maintain genetic diversity to

reintroduce some animals to their natural habitats.

Since the number of animals in captivity is limited, the pairing of animals is carefully monitored to preserve the genetic diversity and what is called demographic fitness; in other words, the proper sex ratio, age groups, and numbers altogether. The mating of animals closely related could cause inbreeding problems (See



Asian small-clawed otter

Photo: Frank Martin

# BUYING TIME FOR WILDLIFE

**By Mayra González-Rey**

**Community Relations Assistant**

**“One of the most encouraging aspects of SSPs is their commitment to researching health concerns for various species.”**

*Alice Gilley  
Zoological Supervisor*

“Wild Florida,” p. 7) that would harm the species in captivity. It is for these reasons that to obtain genetic diversity to reintroduce some animals to their natural habitats, detailed records of a species are kept in individual studbooks which, according to the AZA’s “Species Survival Plans, Strategies for Wildlife Conservation,” are a collection of births, deaths, transfers, genealogical relationships and other biological data.

Once this data is gathered, the total zoo population is studied and decisions are made regarding the ideal “companion” for a particular animal. But this ideal match is most often somewhere other than in the same zoo; so participating institutions—such as Metrozoo—loan their animals to other AZA institutions to contribute to the health and survival of that species. That’s why you may see one of your favorite animals go.

The SSPs have made a difference in the case of many animals, such as the Arabian oryx and the golden lion tamarin, and the successes have brought some species out of a possible extinction. But it is also necessary that we act to preserve the beauty and health of our environment, our home and that of the other living creatures.



Most animals in zoos have been bred in captivity.

# FLORIDA PANTHER: 1 EXTINCTION: 0

By Bill Zeigler

Metrozoo's General Curator

The state of Florida is blessed with an abundance of different habitats which give us a greater diversity of wildlife than most states.

Unfortunately that abundance, coupled with the attractiveness of this state for people, has created a number of problems. Florida has the dubious honor of being second only to California in endangered species due to human activity.

And one of these species now holds the title of the most endangered large carnivore in the world. That animal is our state animal: The Florida panther, or *Felis concolor coryi*.

Down to less than fifty animals in the southern tip of the state, the Florida panther is barely hanging on to survival. The tragedy of the species is not only that man has robbed it of its habitat, but that now, due to its small number and isolated locality, the species has, without its knowledge, turned upon itself.

As a population decreases in size, the genetic and demographic make up come under pressure through inbreeding. In other words, animals of a close relationship begin to breed with each other. The resulting offspring become less fit to survive due to the appearance of abnormalities which are normally suppressed by a healthy genetic make up.

In the Florida panther, such abnormalities have increased dramatically. As an example, 90

to 95 percent of a male panther's sperm has abnormal structures, which can inhibit egg fertilization. Another common abnormality is an increase in the characteristic called cryptorchidism which occurs when one or both testicles of a male do not descend at birth from the body cavity into the scrotum. This results in the reduction of sperm produced, possibly rendering a male sterile.

When a number of abnormal characteristics such as these appear all at one time, they spell impending disaster. And this is what has happened with the Florida panther, placing it on the brink of extinction.

## BRING THEM BACK

In January of 1989, the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service asked Miami Metrozoo, Lowry Park, the Jacksonville Zoo and White Oak Plantation to aid in an ongoing recovery program for the panther.

A team of four government agencies, a host of world renowned geneticists and zoo professionals, have finally developed a plan that will, in the opinion of the team, save panthers in Florida.

The program is based on the fact that, just before the turn of the century, the *Felis concolor coryi* had quite an extensive range, and in fact overlapped, with a number of other subspecies of panthers or cougars, as they were called out west. Genetic analysis shows that all subspecies in North America are almost identical and did, at one

time, exchange genetic material. Thus the Florida panther is, in reality, the "southern panther" once found in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, and as far north as Tennessee and southern Arkansas.

It has only been within the last 150 years that man has isolated the southern population due to hunting and agricultural development. This isolation resulted in the inbreeding effects described above.

As a means of reversing the inbreeding, which would result in the extinction of the species perhaps within the next 25 years, the recovery plan calls for reestablishing the gene flow that occurred naturally in the species.

Coupled with habitat protection and possibly translocation of panthers into areas where it was hunted out, the Florida panther would be able to survive for many years.

## DECISIONS ARE IN

In June of this year, the Federal government and the state of Florida agreed to allow the recovery team to release up to eight female cougars into the South Florida population, with additional releases over the next few years. The cats will come from Texas, the closest population of southern cats, therefore the last population that probably had contact with it. This introduction will be a milestone for the recovery program, and it will most likely allow future generations of Floridians to see panthers as part of our natural heritage.

Metrozoo has designated an area behind our displays to assist

this program. Injured panthers will be able to recover here with the care of our veterinary staff until they can be returned to the wild. As this program progresses, I will keep you up to date through follow-up articles in Wild Florida.

## ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE

The ninth meeting of the parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will take place in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The meeting, which will be held November 7-18, will focus mainly on the need for increased protection of animals threatened by international trade. Bill Zeigler, General Curator of Miami Metrozoo will represent the AZA (American Zoo and Aquarium Association) and Metrozoo.

The Florida Panther Conference, which will cover the present status of this species, its general biology, history and recovery program, will be held in Fort Myers November 1-3.

If you need additional information contact:

Tom Logan  
Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission  
620 S. Meridian  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
904-488-3831

Dennis B. Jorden  
USFWS  
117 Newins-Ziegler Hall  
University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611

NOVEMBER

**4** **friday**

**FIRE PREVENTION  
POSTER JUDGING**

10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the zoo: For Fire Prevention week, the Division of Forestry is sponsoring a poster contest for elementary schools in areas highly affected by Hurricane Andrew. The judging ceremony will be held at Metrozoo, and over 1200 kids will participate in the festivities. Come see the posters and meet sports mascots. And don't miss the visit from Smokey the Bear! For more information call Amy Henegar at 305-257-0876.

**12-13** **saturday  
& sunday**

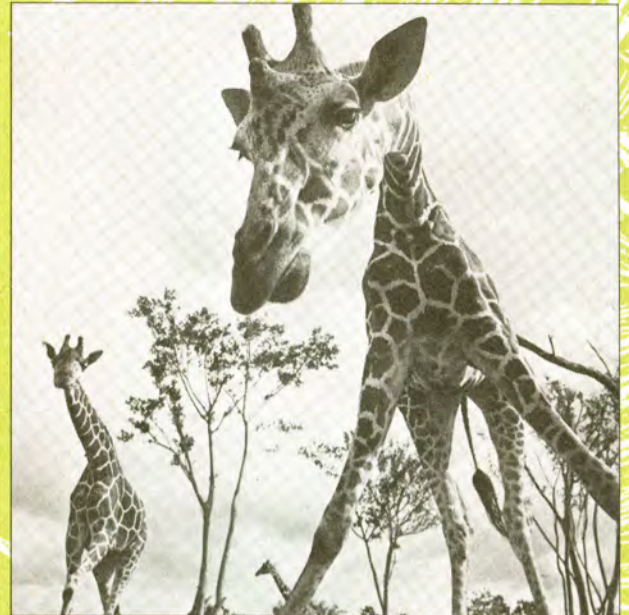
**ALADDIN DAYS AT METROZOO**

10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. — Free with zoo admission  
Aladdin, Jasmine, Jafar and the rest of the motion picture characters will be at Metrozoo for a special meet-and-greet encounter. Join them in the Concert Field for an appearance that will delight people of all ages. For information call 305-251-0401.

**12** **saturday**

**BREAKFAST WITH ALADDIN**

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. at the Zebraaar  
What a way to start your morning! A delicious breakfast complemented by the exclusive appearance of the Aladdin motion picture characters. Kids will receive Aladdin gifts for this one-of-a-kind breakfast. Reservations are required. For information and prices call 305-251-0401.



**A MESSAGE FROM...**

During fiscal year 1993-94 Metrozoo almost doubled its attendance over the prior year (\$530,027 FY 93-94 vs. \$316,420 FY 92-93). The zoo almost tripled its earned revenue over the prior year (\$2,579,192 FY 93-94 vs. \$917,545 FY 92-93). For the first time in its history, Metrozoo will wind up with a cash carryover. All in all a successful year financially.

Fiscal year 1994-95 will be a tough year financially since the zoo's general fund subsidy was reduced dramatically from \$2,994,000 in FY 93-94 to \$835,000 in FY 94-95 and will have to maximize its earned revenue.

However, fiscal year 1994-95 will see the beginning and completion of many construction projects none the least of which will be the restoration of the monorail system.

The zoo has worked its way through tough times before and fiscal year 1994-95 will be no different. We not only will endure, we will prevail.

Robert L. Yokel  
Miami Metrozoo  
Director

**WANT TO VOLUNTEER**

The Volunteer Department is getting ready for the new year and they encourage you to join them. If you are 21 years or older and are interested in becoming part of our volunteer force, please call the Volunteer Department at 305-255-5551.

**Get Acquainted Class**

Saturday, January 14, 1995

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 pm

If you decide to join us you must not miss this class! Familiarize yourself with all the volunteer opportunities available.

**Orientation Class**

Saturday, January 21, 1995

Once you've decided where you'd like to volunteer, it's time to have a look at the Zoological Society of Florida and Metrozoo, including their history and general operations. In this class you'll also review the policies and procedures of the Volunteer Program.

TOUCAN TALK

**Zoological Society of Florida**  
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Miami, Florida 33177-1499

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