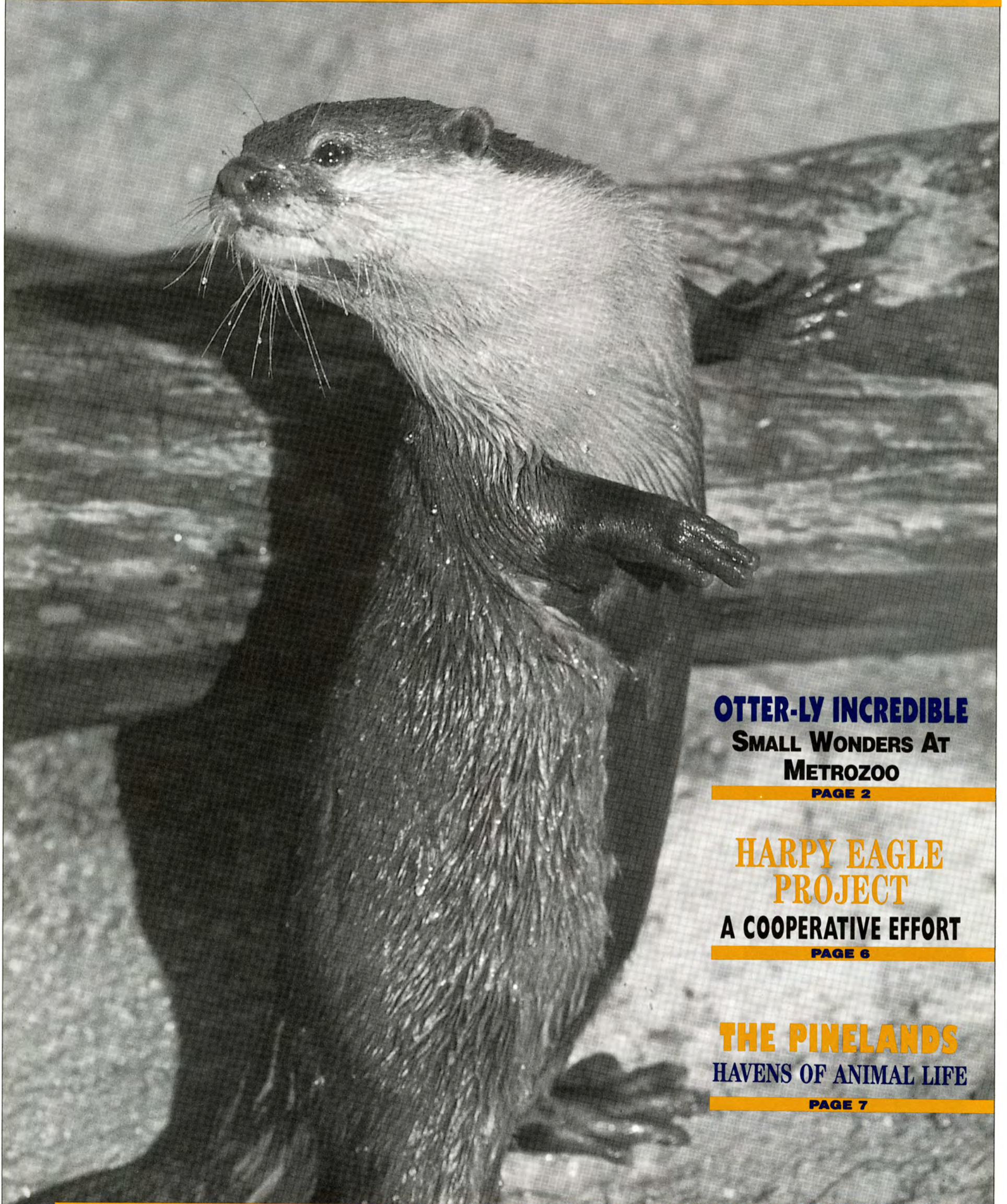


TOUCAN TALK

A TRIP TO THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU!



OTTER-LY INCREDIBLE
SMALL WONDERS AT
METROZOO

PAGE 2

HARPY EAGLE
PROJECT
A COOPERATIVE EFFORT

PAGE 6

THE PINELANDS
HAVENS OF ANIMAL LIFE

PAGE 7



Cover Photo: Small-clawed otter
by Ron Magill

Managing Editor

Janet Perales

Editor

Mayra González-Rey

Graphic Designer

Maribel Moure-Medina
Moure Graphic Design, Inc.

Photos

Dolora Batchelor

Ron Magill

Rick McCawley

Pam Monseur

Janet Perales

Contributors

Juliana Field

Sheila Fyfe

Stan Hemphill

Nancy Hotchkiss

Carol Gaudino

Chriss Miller

Pam Monseur

Bill Zeigler

Printed on ♻ recycled paper with vegetable-based inks. Please recycle this publication when you are finished with it.

Copyright © 1995 Zoological Society of Florida. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means without permission of the publisher.

Toucan Talk
Volume 21, Number 4
July/August, 1995

Published six times each year as a benefit to the members and supporters of Miami Metrozoo.

Zoological Society of Florida
Glenn Ekey, Executive Director
Sue Cobb, President

Miami Metrozoo
Al Fontana, Director

12400 SW 152nd Street
Miami, FL 33177-1499
Phone: 305-255-5551
Fax: 305-255-7126

Zoo Visitor Information
(305) 251-0401

OTTER-LY INCREDIBLE

By Pam Monseur

Otter Keeper

Otters are not just cute, furry creatures. They are very intelligent, curious and busy animals. When they are not sleeping, they are playing, swimming or digging. Jean-Luc and Celene, Berang and Phyllis, and Ariel and Samson—our three pairs of otters—are known for being very clever and quickly learning how to open doors, unscrewing bolts, and disassembling just about anything they can get their “claws” into (and I’m not talking as a proud otter keeper).

To keep them occupied, we try to provide them with a variety of enrichment toys which include blocks of ice with a treat inside (edible, of course), balls, coconuts or bamboo pieces. They love to play, so they will play with almost anything. But boredom quickly sets in, so it is a challenge to keep them interested.

WHO ARE THEY?

Asian small-clawed otters, the kind we have here at Miami Metrozoo, are the smallest of the 12 otter species (28–38 inches long, tail included). The largest ones are the giant river otters from South America, which can reach lengths of 7 feet.

All otters are mammals who belong to the order *Carnivora* and the family *Mustelidae*, or the weasel family, which includes other creatures such as minks, badgers and skunks. But otters are unique in this family because of their adaptation to aquatic life.

Small-clawed otters are found throughout Southeast Asia in the rainforests, close to water and streams. They live in family groups of four to 12 individuals. Otters can have two litters per year, with a gestation period of about 62 days and two or three pups are born. They are born with light-colored fur which darkens with time. Their eyes open at about 30 days and their teeth come in at about three weeks. When they are two months old, they are ready to eat solid foods and swim—something they become good at.

When watching any of our otters



In the wild, small-clawed otters eat fish, mollusks, and crayfish. Photo Janet Perales

swim gracefully in their exhibit (you can see them in action every day at noon during their daily feeding), it is very hard to believe that they are not born knowing how to swim (or even liking water!). Although they are excellent swimmers and divers, it is a skill they have to learn from their parents...and, in fact, something very comical to watch.

Some babies are curious about the water, but most have to be pushed or dragged in by “mom” or “dad.” After a few times, the little ones prac-

tice just putting their heads in and holding their breath. Pretty soon they decide it is not so bad after all, and quickly start going into deeper parts. Once they have learned the “tricks of the trade,” they can stay submerged between 15-30 seconds because their nose and ears close underwater. What a spectacle it is to watch them!

One of the things they do underwater (and do well indeed) is try to catch food. Small-clawed otters are small, but powerful predators. In the wild, they eat fish, mollusks, and crayfish, but they also eat snails, frogs, and worms. At Metrozoo, they are fed a mixture of meat, dog food, and eggs made

Continued on p. 3

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

Scent marking (scent is the odor left by an animal on a surface passed over) is very important in mustelids, such as the small-clawed otter, since it is used for marking territory, determining cycling on females, and recognizing individuals. Our otters often can be seen moving their tails from side to side on the sand on the exhibit. If you wonder what they are doing the answer is simple: They are using their scent glands to cover up any scents left by other otters.



Photo Janet Perales

Photo: Ron Magill



Continued from p. 2

into a ball (see "Food for All," p. 2-3, *Toucan Talk*, March-April '95) complemented by live fish, crickets or crayfish. By providing them with the latter during the regular keeper feeding, the otters get a chance to exercise their hunting behavior and show the public how skillful they can be under water.

Once out of the water, they will rub on rock, logs or dirt to dry. They dry very fast because they have a thick and very well-lubricated coat that prevents water from penetrating to the skin.

Small-clawed otters differ from other otters in that their claws are very tiny and that their toes are only partially webbed. Such adaptation has allowed them to have a highly developed sense of touch. This explains why you will see otters running their hands over an object without looking at it or "look" for food under rocks, mud or in crevices. Their long whiskers are very sensitive and important in detecting prey under water more so than eyesight. Their habit of probing for food makes them unpopular

with Asian rice growers because they uproot plants. They do, however, help the rice growers in another way: They eat large numbers of crabs, a constant pest in rice fields.

GETTING TO KNOW THEM

We presently have six otters which go out on display in pairs:

- Jean-Luc and Celene are now five years old and are the most active of the three pairs. Celene was one of the first otters born here at the Zoo. Fortunately enough, Celene just became a mother, May 12. The babies should be out in the exhibit by July.
- Berang and Phyllis are seven years old and they are siblings. They came to us from the Bronx Zoo.

- Ariel—who is 13 years old—and Samson (my favorite) who is 19, are the oldest pair. According to the books, otters live from 10 to 15 years in captivity, so "Sammy" has broken all records. In spite of some arthritis and other minor problems that go with age, he still is going strong. Sammy was caught in the wild and has been in zoos for many years. He had never sired any offspring until he arrived at Metrozoo. A few months after the opening of the Asian River Life Exhibit in 1990, we had our first litter!

Now that you know them on a first-name basis, don't miss the chance to visit them at the Asian River Life Exhibit.



Otters can have two litters per year, with a gestation period of about 62 days. Photo: Pam Monseur

BIRTHS & HATCHINGS

March 9 - May 7

Wart hog <i>Phacochoerus aethiopicus</i>	2 males/1 female	March 9
Red kangaroo <i>Megaleia rufa</i>	1 sex unknown	March 23 (first seen), estimated DOB December 23, 1994
Matschie's tree kangaroo <i>Dendrolagus matschiei</i>	1 sex unknown	March 24 (first seen), estimated DOB October 22, 1994
Arabian camel <i>Camelus dromedarius</i>	1 male	March 29
Addax <i>Addax nasomaculatus</i>	1 female	April 2
Radiated tortoise <i>Geochelone radiata</i>	2 sex unknown	April 4
Addax <i>Addax nasomaculatus</i>	1 female	April 10
Radiated tortoise <i>Geochelone radiata</i>	1 sex unknown	April 12
African spurred tortoise <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>	1 sex unknown	April 25
African spurred tortoise <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>	1 sex unknown	April 27
African spurred tortoise <i>Geochelone sulcata</i>	1 sex unknown	April 29
White-fronted wallaby <i>Macropus parma</i>	1 sex unknown	April 27 (first seen), estimated DOB January 10
Epauletted fruit bat <i>Epomophorus wahlbergi</i>	1 male	May 10
Red kangaroo <i>Megaleia rufa</i>	1 sex unknown	May 4 (first seen), estimated DOB November 4, 1994
Eastern leopard tortoise <i>Geochelone pardalis babcocki</i>	2 sex unknown	May 7
Small-clawed otter <i>Aonyx cinerea</i>	2 males/1 female	May 12



Arabian camel

Photo: Dolora Batchelor

HOORAY FOR VOLUNTEERS!

The Zoological Society of Florida (ZSF) participated in the JCPenney Golden Rule Award Recognition Breakfast held April 28, at the Radisson Mart Hotel. The breakfast, honoring Dade County's outstanding volunteers (and, of course, our own volunteer force), was co-sponsored by the Dade County Committee for National Volunteer Week and JCPenney.

ZSF volunteers Don Albert, Linda Crutchfield and Eileen Davis were nominated in the "Adult Category," and the Docent Council of the Zoological Society of Florida at Metrozoo was nominated in the "Group/Corporate Category." Congratulations to them for their valuable contribution!

The National Volunteer Week

celebrations concluded on April 29 when the Zoological Society of Florida and Metrozoo welcomed the Dade County volunteers for the First Annual Family Picnic at Metrozoo. Held Saturday, April 29, the picnic concluded a week of intense activities for volunteers.

BettyAnn M.B. Coté, our Director of Volunteer Services and member of the Dade County Committee for National Volunteer Week, was very excited about having the closing event of National Volunteer Week at Metrozoo. "It was a successful event, and it wouldn't had been possible without the support of a wide variety of sponsors and the teamwork of all participants," said Mrs. Coté.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS MANAGEMENT

- An additional tram has been purchased to help transport Metrozoo's growing number of visitors throughout the grounds.
- Planning is complete for the much anticipated **Falcon Batchelor Komodo Dragon Exhibit** in Metrozoo's Asian Lobe.
- The pressure cleaning, repair and repainting of the unusual **rockwork** features throughout the Zoo are underway, with completion scheduled this fall.
- Repair of the **Zoological Society's Administration Building** is nearing completion.

FAMILY FUN IN THE SUN

As a Member, you can visit Metrozoo all year round and enjoy every visit with your family. Throughout the Zoo you will find moms, dads and their offspring. Some have feathers, some have fur, but you always can get to know them even better! Try to answer the following questions (it's OK to ask your parents or a friend to help you) and you will learn something new:

1. The WART HOG has wart-like growths on both sides of its face.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
2. When born, the DROMEDARY CAMEL is white or very light brown.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
3. Newly-hatched CARIBBEAN FLAMINGOS are rosy-pink just like their parents.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
4. The arms of the ORANGUTAN are so long that, when standing straight, their fingers almost reach to the ankles.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
5. Only the male BLESBOK has horns.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
6. SABLE ANTELOPES are feared hunters in the African plains.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____

7. CHIMPANZEES spend six to eight hours daily searching for food.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
8. The orange coloring and white stripes of the BONGO help it blend in with its environment.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
9. GIRAFFES like to sleep standing up, dozing in the sun.
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
10. Narrow black stripes cover the entire body of the GREVY'S ZEBRA (including its belly).
TRUE _____ FALSE _____

ANSWERS:

1. TRUE
2. TRUE
3. FALSE. They are a light grey.
4. TRUE
5. FALSE. Both the male and the female have horns.
6. FALSE. They do not hunt, since they only feed on plants.
7. TRUE
8. TRUE
9. TRUE
10. FALSE. The belly is white, without stripes.



Photos: Rick McCawley

SUMMER ZOOFARI CAMP

There's still time to enroll in camp at Metrozoo! Campers ages 4-13 will find a wild adventure that's just right for them. Each Zoofari Camp includes crafts, games, special animals and activities to spark the budding zoologist.

KINDERCAMP

Ages 4-6
Mammals, birds, reptiles or amphibians? Through crafts and games we teach our youngest campers to appreciate the environment and wildlife. Two different programs are available, so register for one or both! New this year: registration for full or half days.

KINDERCAMP A — FUR, FEATHERS & SCALES

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Kidercamp B — Lifestyles of the Furred & Feathered
12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
July 10-14 July 17-21
July 31-August 4 August 7-11
Members \$80, Non-Members \$95 per week and per session
For a full day of Kidercamp, take both A and B.
Members \$160, Non-Members \$190. Fee includes a supervised lunch period between camps.

ZOOFARI

Ages 7-10
Zoofari campers are able to get close to some of our furry (and scaly) friends. Crafts and games further develop their understanding of animal characteristics.

ZOOFARI CAMP A — ZOO CLUES

Learning about classification is fun, as we become detectives to discover the "clues" about the environment and our wildlife.
July 10-14 July 31-August 4

ZOOFARI CAMP B — THOSE AMAZING ANIMALS!

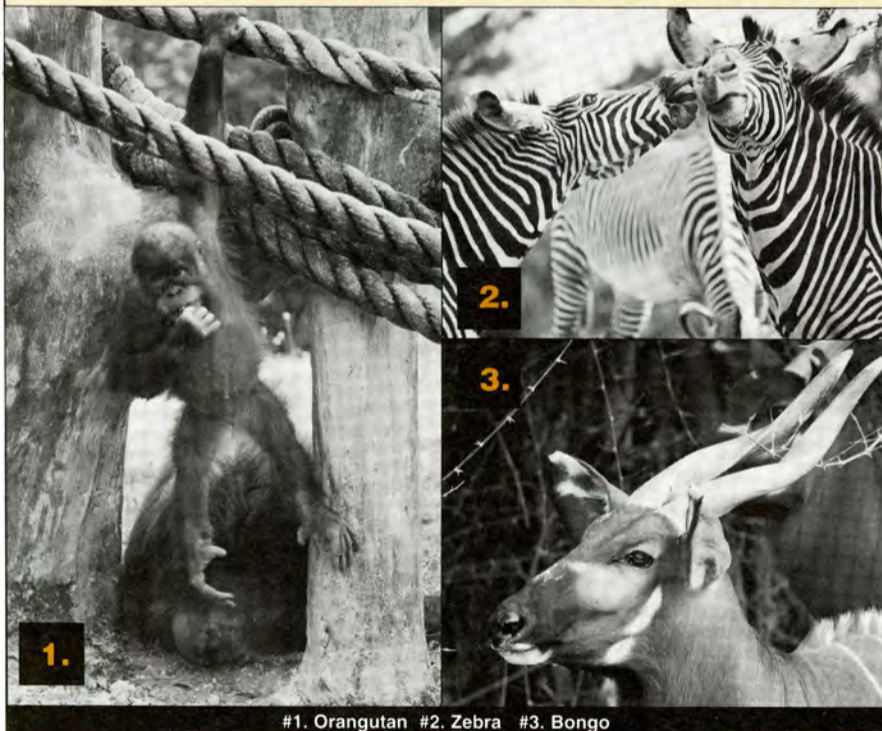
Find out about those amazing animals through up-close encounters with our residents. We'll discover which is the fastest animal in the world, if elephants are really afraid of mice and more!
June 26-30 July 24-28
August 7-11
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Members \$125 per week,
Non-Members \$145 per week

ZOOLIFE

Ages 11-13
This year's theme for Zoolife is animal classification. Our older campers will learn what zoologists do first-hand, differentiating animals by their characteristics.
Zoolife A — Uncharted Territory
Seek out strange life-forms, explore the diverse world of Metrozoo! While learning about the unusual and exotic, you'll get a chance to design your own creatures.
July 17-21

Zoolife B — Animal Facts & Fiction
Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction! Discover the difference between truth and myth for some of our most familiar creatures, as well as some you've never encountered.
July 24-28
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Members \$125 per week,
Non-Members \$145 per week

After-Camp Care is available at \$25 per week from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for all age groups. Please call the Education Department for reservations or more information at 305-255-5551.



#1. Orangutan #2. Zebra #3. Bongo

Photos: Dolores Batchelor

COMING TO A LIBRARY NEAR YOU!

Zoo On Wheels, an Education Program of the Zoological Society of Florida, could be in your neighborhood soon!

This summer, Metrozoo comes to a number of libraries in a lively mix of slides, biofacts, activities and small animals to help you learn

about the endangered and threatened animals of the world. Hear what Metrozoo is doing to help preserve rare animals, and what you can do to help! Check with your nearby Miami-Dade Public Library for a full listing of children's and adults' programs for the summer.

TRUSTEES MAKE IT HAPPEN IN '95!

When the Zoological Society needs help on its committees or special programs and projects, we turn to the members of the Board of Trustees.

The Trustees are individuals who love Metrozoo, support it with their time and talents, and make (or raise) annual gifts to the Zoological Society. In many instances they qualify as prospects for our governing Board of Directors.

"But this year, the Trustees have contributed so much that we just wouldn't be as successful without them," said Chairman **Sherrill Hudson** of **Deloitte & Touche**. "The Trustees have provided the backbone of many of our fund raising and other programs."

The '95 Membership Drive is just one example. With Trustee **Pat Kelly** leading the charge, Membership Committee members **Tom Clark** of **Barnett Bank**, **Andrea Mustelier** of **First Union National Bank**, and **John Seykora** from **Smith Barney** provided the leadership that successfully recruited 1,060 new Zoological Society members.

John was particularly creative, spearheading membership campaigns at Wal-Mart and Toys "Я" Us.

Signing up as corporate membership recruiters were Trustees **Aldrick Dodds** of **Coulter Corporation**, **Marc Osheroff** of **Fort Apache Marine Group**, **Tom Cooper** and the employees of **Chase Federal Bank**, **Dr. Jim Esserman** of **Esserman, Morales & Feldman**, **James Hawkins** from **Smith Barney's Brickell office**, and, of course, **Sherrill Hudson's** own **Deloitte & Touche**.

"This show of support from the Trustees was extremely gratifying," said **Carol Gaudino**, Associate Director of

Membership. "We owe many thanks to everyone who helped make 'Drive '95' happen."

But that's not all. The Zoological Society gained a new Trustee in the person of **Ed Mitchell**, Senior Vice President at **NationsBank**, when the bank agreed to co-sponsor the 1995 Educational Poster. Ed attended his first Trustee meeting in April and is looking forward to being a very involved member of the Board, helping to broaden our scope of support in the tri-county area.

And speaking of education, Trustee **Thea ("Teddy") Katzenstein**, a member of the Education Committee, made a major pledge to the Zoological Society in May in memory of her husband Bill. We're grateful that **Teddy** chose to honor her husband through her dedication to Metrozoo.

The Trustees gave a boost to the Zoological Society's "Animal of the Month" program, too. In March, **Gene Temple** and **JCPenney**—the sponsor of the African Lion exhibit—joined us for the "Animal of the Month" Celebration and festivities honoring the lion.

Former Trustee (and present Board of Directors member) **Dan Licciardi** of **Miami Jai-Alai** made a generous gift for a naming opportunity on the ZSF Education Department's Animal Cards, which will provide Zoo visitors of all ages with answers to frequently asked questions about the animals on exhibit.

"Because Metrozoo is primarily a place for family interaction, we're pleased that Jai-Alai will help us provide printed materials that will encourage discussion and discovery," said **Nancy Hotchkiss**, Director of Education.

Current Trustee **Richard Mahmarian** heads the Deferred

Gift Subcommittee, and is busy urging Friends of Metrozoo to say "I care about the Zoo" by making an **Incredible Gift** to the Zoological Society for the programs and services we provide Metrozoo.

The Incredible Gift—a life insurance policy to benefit the Zoological Society of Florida programs at Metrozoo—can potentially increase its value and thus your contribution to the continued growth of the Zoo. And your yearly payments are tax-deductible.

Richard Mahmarian is spearheading the program and is assisting Zoo Friends interested in providing for Metrozoo in their deferred giving plans.

In addition to supporting established programs, several Trustees have shown individual leadership. For instance, **Denis Arden** planned and coordinated the Concept Conference in February, which convened zoo professionals to discuss and help define the future of Metrozoo. **James Hawkins** has taken the lead on individual fund raising. And the Development Department depends on the services of **Phil Phillips**, who is known for giving one of the best Zoo golf-cart tours in town.

But the creativity award probably goes to **John Seykora**, who—with a little help from MIA Terminal Operations Supervisor **Nancy Smetenka**—placed a life-sized giraffe sculpture from **Banana Republic** at **Miami International Airport**. "Stanley" makes a fabulous picture spot—complete with Metrozoo sign—for the thousands of travelers who go through MIA each year. These are just a few of the ways that the Board of Trustees have supported our important work on behalf of Metrozoo. "The Zoological Society counts on the Trustees' help year-round," said **Sherrill**

Hudson. "And on top of everything else, they're a fun group! We're looking forward to welcoming more of South Florida's community leaders to get involved with us by joining the Board of Trustees."

For more information on how you can be a part of the Board of Trustees, call the Development Department at 305-255-5551.

FABULOUS FAMILY REUNION

Adopt-an-Animal parents and their guests enjoyed a fabulous "Family Reunion" at Metrozoo on June 17. The day's festivities began with a continental breakfast "deliciously" donated by **Andalusia Bake Shop**, **Epicure Market**, **Roasters 'N Toasters**, and **Publix Supermarkets**, with face-painting by **Rosa M. Douglass** from **Dragonstar Productions**. The morning "Baby Stroll" let adoptive "parents" view our new Zoo babies and hear interesting keeper chats along the way. The **Hip Hop Kidz** (under the direction of **Suzi Stone**) provided terrific entertainment at the Amphitheater. And we gave away great prizes all day. Many thanks to our tireless volunteers, generous sponsors and donors, including:

- A Likely Story
- Berkeley Florist Supply Company
- Books & Books
- Bookworks
- Curbside Florist & Gifts
- JCPenney
- Miami Youth Museum
- Professional Press
- Red Road Kids Club
- Sportservice Corporation
- Teleworld International, Inc.
- The Big Cheese
- Tobias/Rohan Photography Studio

HARPY EAGLE PROJECT: PANAMA

A Cooperative Effort to Establish a World-Class Exhibit for Panama's National Bird

By Ron Magill

Metrozoo Communications Director

Zoos today are faced with a tremendous challenge as they try to provide programs which will inform people about the wonders of our world's wildlife while hopefully creating a dedicated effort to conserve and protect it. There is, however, a limit to the impact a zoo can have in the native countries of some of the world's most endangered species. Some people may argue that simply displaying an animal to the public in an urban area in the U.S. is not going to do much towards saving it and its native habitat. It is necessary to get involved directly within the countries which are home to the wildlife so many zoos choose to exhibit.

With this in mind, correspondence was initiated with the Panamanian government and with the private industry in Panama. It was our intent to organize a program which could serve as a vehicle to inform and educate Panamanians about their incredible natural heritage, particularly in their tropical forests—some of the most beautiful in the world.

Panama was chosen because of its close proximity to Miami and for the already established U.S. connections to the country.

For the program to be effective, it had to focus on a "flagship animal" which would be easy to promote and one that people would be proud to be associated with. The harpy eagle was the natural choice. Highly endangered in Panama, the harpy eagle is not only one of the world's largest eagles, but it also is Panama's National Bird.

GETTING STARTED

The number one hurdle in establishing any program is usually money. That is why the private sector and the Panamanian government were approached for assistance. American Airlines was the first corporate sponsor, and provided travel support between Miami and Panama City. Sony of Panama became the next major supporter helping with the construction of a "Harpy Eagle Center" in Panama.



Photo: Ron Magill

The majestic harpy eagle, one of the world's largest eagles, is highly endangered in Panama.

A major factor in developing support for this project was the acquisition of the services of Jim Fowler from the Mutual of Omaha Wildlife Heritage Center. Internationally recognized as the co-host of the syndicated television program "Wild Kingdom," and by his appearances on the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson, Mr. Fowler now serves as the wildlife correspondent for NBC's "Today" show.

Much of the initial work done on harpy eagles in the wild was pioneered by Mr. Fowler, and he is widely recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities on this spectacular raptor. The opportunities that this project presented to help protect the harpy in Panama inspired Mr. Fowler to donate all of his consulting services adding tremendous credibility to the effort. Dave Rimlinger, who is the curator of birds at the San Diego Zoo,

also was very helpful in providing invaluable information in the form of video and publications regarding the harpy eagle and its care at his facility.

After a great deal of correspondence and preliminary planning, it was time to travel to Panama to better evaluate the logistics of the project and see if further support could be attained. Working closely with Metrozoo's Director, Al Fontana, arrangements were made for him, Mr. Fowler and myself to visit Panama and meet with Sony management and other key players, including government officials. Another main objective of the trip was to find a suitable site for the construction of the "Harpy Eagle Center."

After formally presenting our proposal to the Sony representatives, we were rewarded with not only the reconfirmation of the initial donation, but an additional yearly commitment for the follow-

ing three years was pledged. This was extremely important because it established long-term corporate involvement which we felt was imperative to the success of the project.

Next, we had the privilege of a special meeting with the Mayor of Panama City, Mayin Correa. Mayor Correa has long been a supporter of the environment and the natural heritage of Panama. Because more than half of all the people that live in that country are within the limits of Panama City, her involvement and support was crucial. She was very supportive of promoting the harpy eagle as the National Bird and using it as a flagship animal to develop awareness about the other wonders of Panama's tropical forests. After expressing to her our feeling that the botanical and zoological garden called "The Summit," which is under her jurisdiction, was being considered as the site of the project, the Mayor committed \$150,000 towards the construction of a harpy eagle facility at that location. Needless to say, "The Summit" was unanimously chosen. Further meetings were held with INRENARE—the national Fish and Wildlife Department—and with ANCON—the strongest non-governmental environmental group in Panama. Both organizations commended the project proposal and pledged to work together in full support.

We have all returned to Miami with an incredible sense of accomplishment combined with excitement for what lies ahead. The foundation has been laid to produce an exhibit and a program which can be an international role model for similar cooperatives worldwide. It will be an enormous amount of work to coordinate everything required to bring this dream to fruition under a very tight time frame. But the goal of educating the public about the majestic harpy eagle and the fascinating world it lives in is great motivation. We all look forward to the day when the pair of harpy eagles presently being held in a substandard, chain-link cage, can be displayed in a large, free-flight aviary which better reflects their status as monarchs of the forests.

LIFE IN THE PINELANDS

PART TWO

By Bill Zeigler

General Curator

This two-part series will cover the flora and fauna of the pinelands. We hope this will provide a better understanding of their importance to South Florida's environment and quality of life.

As you read in our previous issue of "Wild Florida," the pinelands of Dade County are a unique ecological area crucial to the overall environmental health of South Florida. Its restoration will take time and funding, but the effort is worth the cost. However, what needs to be understood is that restoration today refers primarily to the plant community that the pineland supports. If wildlife is placed into the restoration equation, it is no longer possible to restore the complete ecological package. It has been within our short lifetimes here in South Florida that we have forever and irreversibly affected the pineland ecology. And that is precisely why it is so important to protect what is left.

Dade County pinelands are always associated with elevated limestone outcroppings. These elevated areas were—and still are—the only year-round dry areas in South Florida, thus making them havens for all of the terrestrial wildlife that existed here. Also associated with the limestone outcropping are hardwood hammocks.

Because fire ecology pinelands were a constantly-renewing food source for deer, bear and a host of other grazers, browsers and seed eaters, this complex web also provided a food source for the large carnivores such as panthers and bobcats.

Man saw the pinelands as safe, dry places to build homes and cities, clear for crops and to obtain building materials. The results are obvious today: Little pineland is left and the major wildlife forms are gone, except for those in the Everglades National Park.

It would be interesting to know how many South Floridians actually think that deer in South Florida have always preferred the sawgrass swamps of the Everglades to the nice dry environment of the pinelands, with its ample food and shelter. Deer naturally prefer dry ground, but when their home is cleared for fields of tomatoes or rows of houses, they have little choice but to move. In this case, they move into less suitable habitat which, unfortunately, we have yet to completely understand and thus mismanage, causing periodic drought and floods that continue to plague the deer population.

Despite the fact that Dade County's pinelands outside the National Park will never see bear, panthers, and deer, there still is a large number of wildlife that continues to use this habitat.

The most visible are birds and, throughout the year, one can step into pineland habitat and see avian activity. Within this group, there is a wide variety because of the range of food and shelter the pinelands provide. At the top is the red-tailed hawk, *Buteo jamaicensis*. This large, heavy bird of prey, with its broad wings, is capable of flying through the pine stands with great agility and ease. It likes to perch high in the pine tops and scan the ground for movement from rats and rabbits, its primary prey. At the other end of the scale is the American kestrel or sparrow hawk, *Falco sparveria*s. This small insect-eating falcon is easily seen now in the winters as it sits on telephone lines over open grass fields waiting to dive down on unsuspecting luber grasshoppers. Smaller still, and just as voracious (although not in the hawk or falcon family), is the southern loggerhead shrike. Usually seen perching in the top of the pine trees, the shrike is a great hunter and will take small birds almost its own size such as sparrows.

The most commonly seen inhabitants of the pinelands are the woodpeckers and sapsuckers. In good pineland habitat you are likely to see northern flickers, *Colaptes auratus*; red-bellied woodpeckers, *Centurus carolinus*;

downy woodpeckers, *Dendrocopus pubescens*; and, on rare occasions, the pileated woodpecker, *Hylatomus pileatus*.

Depending on the season, a close inspection of the shrubs will yield an assortment of wrens, warblers and other songbirds along with flycatchers, thrushes, buntings, grackles, cowbirds, doves, grey and eastern kingbirds, blue jays and sparrows.

The mammalian life in the pinelands still is abundant, despite the lack of large mammals. Though seldom seen, the pineland floor is crisscrossed with well-worn paths of "hunters" and "hunted." The primary hunters today are the bobcat, *Lynx rufus*, grey fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, raccoon, *Procyon lotor*, opossum, *Didelphia virginiana*, and the spotted skunk, *Spilogale putorius* (see "Backyard Critters," March/April issue of Toucan Talk, p. 7). On the other end—of hunted animals seeking shelter and hiding from the predators—are deer, squirrels, rats, mice and rabbits.

A large variety of reptiles also call the pinelands home. They take advantage of every nook and cranny from the tops of trees to deep cool burrows that can house them and a number of insects, too.

Florida is considered one of the most heavily snake-populated states in the country, and the pinelands of Dade County are home to some of the largest, smallest and rarest of these slithering creatures.

Still found occasionally is the indigo snake, *Drymarchon corais couperi*, the longest snake in North America, reaching lengths of up to 8 feet. Also found in pinelands is the largest of our poisonous snakes, the eastern diamond-backed rattlesnake, *Crotalus adamanteus*. At the extreme end of the spectrum is the small, secretive and rare crown snake, *Tantilla oolitica*, named after the oolite or limerock outcropping it calls home. Known as the rimrock crown snake, it is considered by some to be the rarest snake in Florida. Little is known of its habits and biology.

Lizards are also abundant in the

pinelands. One of the prettiest, and yet least seen, is the six-lined racerunner, *Cnemidophorus sexlineatus*. Sporting six light racing stripes, this fast and bold lizard deserves its name. In some parts of its range they are called "field-streaks." We also have the south eastern five-lined skink, *Eumeces inexpectatus*, and the eastern glass lizard, *Ophisaurus ventralis*.

When it comes to tortoises and turtles, the pineland is home to the threatened gopher tortoise, *Gopherus polyphemus*, (whose burrows are home to indigos, racers, rattlesnakes and a hoist of insects), and also to the Florida box turtle, *Terrapine carolina bauri*. Over the last six years, there has been a growing concern for this once-common turtle. The pet trade in Europe has seen an increase in the demand for box turtles from North America and collectors are thinning out the populations. If left unchecked, box turtles may well become threatened in the near future.

The list of pineland residents could be much longer, in fact, the insects and spiders alone would have filled the space available for this article...and then there are the amphibians. Yes, even in the dry pine habitat you will find tree frogs and toads.

The point, however, is to inform you of the richness of life in that vacant, pine-covered lot down the street. Most people pass by such areas every day completely oblivious to the spectrum of life and its ongoing symphony.

Pinelands should be considered as cultural and heritage sites for the part they have played in our world and in the animal kingdom. Help support Dade County in its efforts to restore the pinelands we have left. It is well worth the effort and there will be a big part of "Wild Florida" that will thank you.

For information on the pinelands you can contact Metro-Dade Environmental Resources Management at 33 SW 2nd Avenue, Suite 400, Miami, FL 33130-1540.

JULY

15 **saturday**

BOWLING FOR RHINOS

12:30 p.m. - 4:00 a.m. — It's time to bowl for the rhinos again! This event is the American Association of Zookeepers' national fundraiser for the Ngare Sergoi Reserve. You get three games of bowling, a T-shirt, chances for door prizes and a great time. Part of your registration and 100% of any sponsorship you get for participating goes directly to the reserve. Help save and protect wildlife in Africa! For information and registration call Katrina Osborn at 305-940-8396.

16 **sunday**

ANIMAL-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB CELEBRATION

9:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. — This month, the honoree is the small-clawed otter (See "Otter-ly Incredible," p. 2). During this all-day celebration at the Asian River Life Exhibit, club members get to participate in games and special activities while watching the friendly otters. Members of the club work on a fun art project—which they get to take home along with an information sheet packed with interesting facts about this playful creature. For information call 305-255-5551.

AUGUST

20 **sunday**

ANIMAL-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB CELEBRATION

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

This month honors the Siamese crocodile, a "cool" member of the Zoo family worth visiting during the hot summer. The all-day celebration at its exhibit will offer Club members the chance to enjoy fun games and activities, even a computer puzzle that they receive as a gift! For information call 305-255-5551.

AND DRAGONS COME TO THE ZOO...

IF... IF... IF...

Metrozoo and the Zoological Society of Florida are working together on new and exciting projects to be completed for next season. By the time you receive this issue, Metrozoo's newest residents — a couple of Komodo Dragons, the world largest monitor lizards — will be adapting to their new home here in South Florida. Metrozoo is proud to contribute to the international conservation effort to protect this rare species. Working closely with the Indonesian government, Metrozoo will assist to develop conservation strategies for Komodos in the wild. Preparations for the Falcon Batchelor Komodo Dragon exhibit will be completed by the end of 1995 and the grand opening will be held early in 1996.

Our September/October issue of *Toucan Talk* will take a close look at these exotic and mysterious creatures, the conservation strategies for Komodos in the wild and the important role that Metrozoo will assume.

If you are looking for a meaningful and fun way to spend your valuable time, THINK METROZOO! The Zoological Society of Florida is looking for volunteers to help in different capacities. For more information on the opportunities available, contact the Volunteer Services Department at 305-255-5551.

If you want to experience the Zoo from a different perspective you should try the guided Tram Tour. With departures at 11:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, this is a comfortable way to get a behind-the-scenes look at the Zoo and learn about our facilities and animals. And the tram can also be booked in advance for private tours! For information on prices and departure times on weekdays call the Sales Department at 305-251-0401.

If your taste for animal-related paraphernalia is insatiable, come to the Toucan Trader or the Elephant Walk— our gift shops. Here you will find a variety of items from books to pens, stuffed animals and posters to fine pieces of art. And don't forget that as a member, you receive a 10 percent discount all year long.

TOUCAN TALK



Zoological Society of Florida
12400 SW 152nd Street
Miami, Florida 33177-1499

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 4358
Miami, Florida

