

TOUCAN TALK

A TRIP TO THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU!



EXCITING ADDITIONS TO PARADISE THE LEMUR EXHIBIT

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SPECIAL SUMMER CAMP INSERT



Cover Photo: Red Ruffed Lemur
by Ron Magill

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Toucan Talk
Volume 22, Number 2
March/April, 1996

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

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305-251-0401

METROZOO'S LEMUR EXHIBIT

A PIECE OF MADAGASCAN PARADISE



A black lemur receives raisins as treats from keeper Linda Owen.

As part of the efforts to constantly enhance Metrozoo for its visitors, there have been some changes in the Lemur Exhibit. The following is an interview with Linda Owen, Primates Keeper, who is in charge of caring for the lemurs.

TOUCAN TALK: Tell me about the new additions to the Lemur Exhibit.

LINDA OWEN: Up until now, we only had red ruffed lemurs at the exhibit, but we decided to add two other species: ring-tailed and black lemurs. This decision was made to enhance the visitor's experience and to liven up the exhibit.

TT: What was the criteria to choose the species?

LO: The species were chosen because they would be compatible with the red ruffed. In the case of ring-tailed, they tend to be more on the ground as opposed to the red ruffed lemurs which are more arboreal. We thought they would not compete for each other's territory. Our only concern was the interaction between the red and black lemurs because they're both arboreal.

TT: How many lemurs do we have now?

LO: We have two ring-tailed lemurs, Zak and Zoey; two black lemurs, Johnny and Pearl, and one male red ruffed, Jurmans.

TT: How were they introduced?

LO: From the original family of red ruffed lemurs, we kept Jurmans, who was the juvenile male. He stayed by himself for two days, which made it easier to introduce him to his new companions. The other lemurs were allowed into the exhibit in December of 1995.

TT: How did they react?

Curiously enough, the red ruffed ended up having no problem with the black lemurs. He chased after the ring-tailed lemurs for three days, but finally stopped being aggressive. It only took all of them a month to get used to each other and now they eat out of the same plate!

TT: Any plans for new additions to the island?

LO: We're trying to get two more female ring-tailed lemurs and one male red ruffed. We hope this will come true.

TT: Besides being a great experience for our visitors and members, what's their importance to the population in captivity?

LO: The red ruffed and the black lemurs are part of the American

Zoo and Aquariums' Species Survival Plan, and currently there are talks about incorporating the ring-tailed lemurs into the program. We're very excited to have these animals here, and we think the ring-tailed female is pregnant, which would mean having babies out in the exhibit this summer.

TT: What do the lemurs eat here at Metrozoo?

They are fed twice a day, and they eat banana monkey chow, which has a 25-percent protein content, cooked sweet potatoes, fresh bananas and oranges. I also give them raisins as treats when I go out there to check on everybody and to feed them.

TT: And what do they like to do?

LO: Basically they like to nap, particularly during the warm season, but they're more active in the morning and early evening, right before they're fed. They also like to sunbathe early in the morning, which is a pretty neat thing to watch because it looks as if they were ready to hug somebody, with their arms held out to the side.

TT: Anything you would like to add?

LO: The island is now full of animals. People may not know it, but we have koi, pacu and catfish in the moat. In the island itself, we have a white-face whistling duck, seven Egyptian geese, a gopher tortoise and, of course, the three different species of lemurs, so it's very exciting to see them all at once. I hope people will visit...they may even see the ring-tailed lemurs chasing after the geese!

Thanks to Galloway Gillman Curtis Vento & Horn, P.A. for sponsoring the Lemur Exhibit.



The ring-tailed lemur opens his arms to enjoy a sunny day.

LEMUR FACTS

- ◆ Lemurs are primates who belong to the suborder of prosimians or lower primates.
- ◆ They are exclusively from Madagascar, an island off the coast of south-east Africa.
- ◆ The word lemur means "ghost."
- ◆ Lemurs evolved over millions of years completely isolated from the monkeys and apes in Africa, gradually producing the species of lemurs known today.
- ◆ Most lemurs are quadrupedal, very agile when moving on trees and can leap considerable distances when jumping from one tree to another. The ring-tailed lemur is the exception, preferring to travel on the ground.
- ◆ All lemurs are vegetarian.

AND THE WINNER IS...REBECCA MULDER! FOR A JOB WELL DONE

It takes more than competent people to take care of animals at the Zoo. It requires patient and loving individuals.

This is why Rebecca Mulder was honored with the 1995 Keeper of the Year Award by the American Association of Zookeepers (AAZK).

The South Florida Chapter of the AAZK, one of the oldest in the United States, has been presenting these awards since its inception in 1980. And last year, Rebecca Mulder was voted by her peers as the example of dedication to the bongos and other animals under her care.

Some time ago, Metrozoo lost a male bongo called Beau, one of the reasons being an ear infection. As Rebecca puts it "it's not easy to apply drops into a 600- to 800-pound animal." Last year, Otis—the older male we now have on the exhibit—developed an ear infection, and Rebecca first noticed something wrong because one of his ears was not standing upright as it usually is.

Otis has a reputation for being aggressive. "He has been aggressive towards his females," says Rebecca, and often downright mean towards people. It has been hard to work with him." But Rebecca decided to change things around.

Rebecca started treating a condition Otis had developed as a result of flies and ants bothering his eyes. "We had to apply insect repellent. It



Photo: Dolora Batchelor

recalls Rebecca. "But he ended up recognizing the smell of the repellent and would not come near me."

It was about this time when Rebecca noticed the ear infection. The veterinarian did a culture and determined he had not only fungi, but also three types of bacteria. Fearing this could eventually kill him, Rebecca tried to give him the prescribed 43 tablets twice a day. "I tried mixing them with a lot of things, including bananas, but he would just eat the bananas and spit out the pills," remembers Rebecca.

But she was not about to give up. She took some pills home and started

experimenting with food that would hide the taste (that implied trying the concoctions herself!). The winning recipe was a bit complicated: "I dissolved the pills in apple cider vinegar; then added bran until it was absorbed; then

concentrated apple juice, some of the regular grain which they normally are fed, sweet feed—which is a mixture of molasses, corn and oats—and also bananas. He finally ate his

pills!" she proudly adds.

The treatment of the infection also involved squirting some medicine into his ear, which probably was more important than the pills. "We had to get him into a stall, and the first time it took three people one hour. We were afraid we wouldn't be able to get him into the stall a second time," states Rebecca.

Due to the inconvenience of the process, Rebecca started trying to lure him with treats to go into the stall. She did a great job. Over a period of several days, she was able to directly apply the drops in Otis' ear five or six times with one hand, while distracting him with treats in the other hand.

"We're pals now. I can walk into his pen with him," she says smiling. "He will even put his head inside a bucket to reach the grain at the bottom while I'm walking with it, even though his eyes are covered and he can't see where he's going."

It surely is a matter of trust. And our bongos have every reason to trust her. We join Rebecca's fellow keepers in recognizing a job well done.

You can visit the Bongo Exhibit located across from the giraffes and also adopt any of Metrozoo's animals through our Adopt-an-Animal program.



Photo: Ron Magill

wasn't easy! I would try to get him to come up to the fence in the back of the exhibit by giving him treats, and he sometimes would allow me to put the repellent on his face"

BIRTHS & HATCHINGS

November 16 - January 10

Reticulated giraffe

Giraffa Camelopardalis reticulata
1 male November 19

Nile lechwe

Kobus megaceros
1 male November 22

Nile lechwe

Kobus megaceros
1 female December 5

Angolan black-and-white colobus monkey

Colobus polykomos angolensis
1 sex unknown December 7

Nile lechwe

Kobus megaceros
1 unknown December 12

Common zebra

Equus burchelli Bohmi
1 male December 14

Yellow-backed duiker

Cephalophus sylvicultor
1 female December 22

Angolan black-and-white colobus monkey

Colobus polykomos angolensis
1 sex unknown December 22

Angolan black-and-white colobus monkey

Colobus polykomos angolensis
1 sex unknown December 22

Red Kangaroo

Megaleia rufa
1 sex unknown January 5

Addax

Addax nasomaculatus
1 male January 10

Gerenuk

Litocranius walleri
1 female January 10

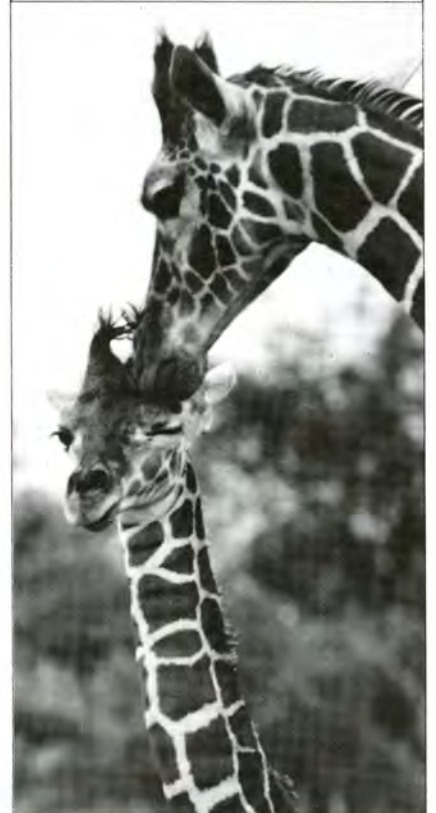


Photo: Dolora Batchelor

JOIN OUR TEAM FOR GREAT SPRING PROGRAMS!

SPRING BREAK CAMP

Ages 6-12

School may be out for spring break, so why not spend your time off with us? Our mini zoofari camp is a four days of wildlife adventures that will take you to the wilds of Africa, Australia, Asia and our own backyard of Florida. Complete your experience with a special zoo passport to document your travels and animal adventures. A souvenir t-shirt will help make the memories last.

Date: April 8-11

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

Cost:

Member \$80

Child Non-member \$96

BREAKFAST WITH THE BEASTS

Families

The early bird gets the worm, so what do ZSF members get? Breakfast with the Beasts at Metrozoo! A continental breakfast will be followed by a special look at one of our zoo residents. A few animal guests may join us, too.

Session FAST-A: Saturday, Mar 16

Session FAST-B: Saturday, Apr 20

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

Cost: Adult Member \$10

Adult Non-Member \$15

Child (12 and under) Member \$6

Child Non-member \$8

FOR THE BIRDS



Families

Things are hatching at Metrozoo. Join our feathered friends for a special morning adventure. We'll learn why flamingoes are pink, how birds can "disappear" in the rainforest, and who builds the biggest nest at Metrozoo. We'll explore animal diets and make our own mixes. Maybe even try some to find out what it means to "eat like a bird"!

Date: Saturday, Apr 6

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Cost: Adult Member \$6

Adult Non-Member \$11

Child (14 and under) Member \$4

Child Non-member \$9

FAMILY SLEEP OVERS

Ages 8 - Adult

A family flashlight safari, featuring the incredible sounds and mysterious sights after sunset. As darkness

falls, the adventure begins with an orientation talk from one of our zookeepers, and pizza to gain strength for what lies ahead. Families will embark on a 2-3 hour hike exploring the Zoo at night. Who knows what we'll see and hear! A special "nocturnal craft" will add to the memories, as will a late night snack to keep up the energy. Our classrooms will be base camp as they bunk down, then rise early to meet more animal quests. The adventure concludes with a continental breakfast.

Session A: Saturday, Apr 27

Session B: Friday, Apr 12

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Cost: Member \$25

Non-Member \$30

FAMILY DISCOVERY ROOMS



Families

Plan to use your membership cards when we open up our closets and trunks of hands-on artifacts for our Family Discovery Rooms. Compare your hands and feet to the prints of some of our most famous residents, or examine the difference between teeth of carnivores and herbivores. Browse through our books for

young and old, or test your skills against some animal "Olympians."

Date: Saturday and Sunday, Mar 16 and 17

Saturday and Sunday, Apr 20 and 21

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

HABITAT SAMPLER FIELD TRIP

Get to know a bit of "wild south Florida" on this family field trip to the Everglades. Former General Curator of Metrozoo, Bill Zeigler, will lead this one-day expedition to explore the familiar and not-so-familiar wilderness region that is in our own backyard. Whether you are a lifelong resident of this area or a new one, you'll see the "river of grass" with different eyes. Participants will meet at the Zoo parking lot to board the bus. It'll be a full day, so bring a lunch and snacks in recyclable containers. We'll provide the beverages.

Date: Saturday, Mar 30

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Cost: Adult Member \$15

Adult Non-Member \$20

Child (under 12) Member \$10

Child Non-Member \$15

FACT OR FICTION

TEST YOUR ANIMAL I.Q.

- In the wild, NILE LECHWES live in small groups called flocks.
TRUE _____
FALSE _____
- The baby COLOBUS MONKEY is all white at birth.
TRUE _____
FALSE _____
- The BENNETT'S WALLABY is a small kangaroo.
TRUE _____
FALSE _____
- The TREE KANGAROO uses its tail to hang from trees.
TRUE _____
FALSE _____
- The KOMODO DRAGON is the smallest reptile.
TRUE _____
FALSE _____

- ANSWERS:**
- FALSE. They live in large groups called herds.
 - TRUE
 - TRUE
 - FALSE. It uses the tail for balance and to help itself when climbing.
 - FALSE. It is the largest true lizard.

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):

Credit cardholders may register by phone.

- Check American Express MasterCard Visa

Card _____ Expiration Date: _____

Customer Signature: _____

Program/Session	Name of Participant	Age/Grade	Fee

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

TOTAL: \$ _____

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF FLORIDA ♦ SUMMER 1996

ZOOFARI CAMP

PRESENTED BY
BELL SOUTH



Photo: Mayra González-Rey

1996 SUMMER ZOOFARI CAMP AT METROZOO

METROZOO ZOOFARI CAMP 1996

It's never too early to plan for your summer adventure, and there's no better place for wild times than at your Metrozoo! For campers ages 4-17, there's an exotic adventure that's just right for them. Each Zoofari Camp includes crafts, games, special animals and activities to spark the budding zoologist. Our instructor to camper ratio is 1:6 so you can be assured of personal attention. These programs fill up fast, so register today! Simply fill in the attached form and mail or fax it in!

KINDERCAMP

Ages 4-6

Travel around the world, visiting and getting to know wild animals on each of the continents. Learn about their homes in Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America, Europe and the polar regions. Games and crafts each day will reflect the variety of cultures, and animal guests will bring the message close to home. A special passport will preserve your memories for years to come. Our youngest campers can register for full- or half-day adventures.

a.m. Session: 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
p.m. Session: 12:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

KINDERCAMP A

Northern Hemisphere (Asia, Europe, North America, Central America, Arctic area)

Dates:
Jun 24-28 (a.m.) Jul 1-5 (p.m.) Jul 15-19 (a.m.)
Jul 22-26 (a.m.) Aug 5-9 (p.m.)

Cost:
Members \$80 per week and per session
Non-Members \$95 per week and per session

KINDERCAMP B

Southern Hemisphere (Africa, South America, Australia, Antarctica, oceans)

Dates:
Jun 24-28 (p.m.) Jul 1-5 (a.m.) Jul 15-19 (p.m.)
Jul 22-26 (p.m.) Aug 5-9 (a.m.)

Cost:
Members \$80 per week and per session
Non-Members \$95 per week and per session

*For a full day of Kindercamp, take both A and B.
Members \$160, Non-Members \$190. (Fee includes a supervised lunch period between camps.)*

ZOOFARI

Ages 7-10

Our campers will set off on a round-the-world trek, touching down in each continent and bio-climatic zone. They will explore the forests, deserts, mountains and grasslands of Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America, Europe, and the polar regions. Visits to Zoo animals and caretakers will acquaint our trekkers with the complexity of exotic animal care, while international storytelling and art projects specifically chosen will reflect the variety of cultures and animal lore of each region. Two different hemispheres are available, register for one or the entire globe!

ZOOFARI CAMP A

Northern Hemisphere (Asia, Europe, North America, Central America, Arctic area)

Dates:
Jun 17-21 Jul 1-5 Jul 22-26

Time:
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost:
Members \$125 per week
Non-Members \$145 per week



ZOOFARI CAMP B

Southern Hemisphere (Africa, South America, Australia, Antarctica, oceans)

Dates:
Jun 24-28 Jul 15-19 Jul 29-Aug 2

Time:
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost:
Members \$125 per week
Non-Members \$145 per week

ZOOLIFE

Ages 11-13

Our intrepid explorers will travel around the world, as they prepare their very own "Global Wildlife" play to present to zoo visitors and staff. Research time will take them to each continent and bio-climatic zone as they gather information on the world's animals. They will explore the forests, deserts, mountains and grasslands of Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America, Europe, and the polar regions. Visits to Zoo animals and caretakers will acquaint our trekkers with the complexity of exotic animal care, while international storytelling and art projects will show them the variety of cultures and animal lore of each unique region. The culminating project will be presenting their plays in our own Ecology Theater! Two different hemispheres are available, register for one or the entire globe!

ZOOLIFE A

Northern Hemisphere (Asia, Europe, North America, Central America, Arctic area)

Date:
Jul 29-Aug 2

Time:
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost:
Members \$125 per week
Non-Members \$145 per week

ZOOLIFE B

Southern Hemisphere (Africa, South America, Australia, Antarctica, oceans)

Date:
Aug 5-9

Time:
9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost:
Members \$125 per week
Non-Members \$145 per week

REGISTRATION FORM

Parent/Guardian Name _____
Street Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Daytime Phone # _____ Evening Phone # _____
Membership # _____ Non-Member _____
Payment enclosed: Check # _____ Mastercard _____ Visa _____ AMEX _____
Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____
Signature of Cardholder _____ Camp Fee(s) Total _____

CAMPER INFORMATION

Name of Camper _____ Date of Birth: _____
Camp Program _____ Date _____
Camp Session(s) _____ Date _____
Camp Session(s) _____ Date _____

CAMPER'S MEDICAL INFORMATION FORM

Physician Name _____ Phone _____
Dentist Name _____ Phone _____

In an emergency, if the parent, guardian or designated physician/dentist cannot be reached, I authorize the Zoological Society of Florida to transport and/or obtain medical services from any physician for my child.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Please indicate any medical conditions or health problems which the Camp staff should be aware of. Please describe: (if you require further space, please use a separate sheet of paper):

Allergies _____ Physically challenged _____

Prescribed Medications _____ Other _____

(Your signature below gives permission to Camp staff to dispense only prescribed medications you send with your child. Please provide the prescribed container and paraphernalia necessary for taking medications, and provide explicit instructions on a separate sheet of paper.)

NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL PICK UP THE CAMPER

Name _____ Relationship _____
Phone # _____ Vehicle information: Make _____
Color _____ Tag # _____

I give permission for my child to participate in the Zoological Society of Florida's Summer Camp program. I have read the registration and medical forms and have supplied accurate information. My child can be photographed and his/her picture used for public relations purposes.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____



Mail to: Zoological Society of Florida/Education Department
12400 S.W. 152nd Street, Miami, Fl 33177-1499

Registration cannot be processed unless this form is thoroughly completed.

METROZOO ZOOFARI CAMP 1996

TEEN ZOOLOGISTS

Ages 14-17

Become a member of our Teen Zoologists Team! Interested teens train for a summer of volunteer work while learning the "ins and outs" of zoos. Teen Zoologists assist with our summer camp programs, in our Children's Zoo petting yard and at the Ecology Theater. Upon completing this training program, teens are eligible to join in our Zoo Volunteer Team. Teens must apply and will be interviewed and evaluated. Each volunteer is required to assist with one week of Zoofari Camp as well as work a total of 40 hours during the summer session.

Date:

Jun 17-21

Cost:

Members \$125 per week

Non-Members \$145 per week

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

Photos: Barbara Crutchfield



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

ZOO SOCIETY CELEBRATES THE SUNTRUST SUPER KEEPERS!

If you've visited the Children's Zoo lately, you may have noticed the distinctive and colorful addition of the "SunTrust Super Keepers" donor board!

The Super Keepers are dedicated Friends of Metrozoo who annually support Zoological Society of Florida programs like the Children's Zoo.

"Thanks to the Super Keepers and donors like them, the Zoological Society can provide memorable experiences like up-close-and-personal encounters with animals in the petting yard," said Glenn Ekey, ZSF Executive Director. "It's an



The SunTrust Super Keepers board is located inside the Children's Zoo.
Photo: Dolora Batchelor

important component of the Metrozoo experience that children

and adults have the opportunity to interact with animals one-on-one."

The Zoological Society and its Board of Trustees will honor SunTrust and the Super Keepers for their generosity with a Super Keeper Celebration at the Children's Zoo in April.

"We look forward to honoring the friends currently listed on the donor board and other Friends of Metrozoo who are interested in becoming Super Keepers," Ekey said.

If you'd like information on how to become a SunTrust Super Keeper, contact the Development Department at 305-255-5551.

KOMODO EXHIBIT OPENS!

For the first time since Hurricane Andrew, the Zoological Society of Florida and Metrozoo celebrated the opening of a new animal exhibit: The Falcon Batchelor Komodo Dragon Encounter.

Benefactors George and Marianne Batchelor were honored by a crowd of 300 Metrozoo supporters and South Florida community leaders with a VIP reception at the exhibit on January 25, followed by the official ribbon-cutting ceremony on January 26.

Guests at the Thursday night event—among them Indonesian Consul General Siswadi Harjowijoyo, the Batchelors, ZSF President Sue Cobb and Ambassador Charles E. Cobb, the Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees, Metro Parks officials and the exhibit construction committee—had their first opportunity to formally inspect "Jack's" and "Lubier's" new, dragon-appropriate home.

The komodos are esconced in a mist-shrouded replica of their native land, with lush, jungle-reminiscent foliage and misters providing the proper Indonesian atmosphere.

The exhibit also features a life-sized bronze sculpture of a Komodo dragon. Created by Tom Tishler and underwritten by the Dade Community Foundation, the statue is a masterful replica that will tempt any camera buff and climbing toddler.

"It means a great deal to all of us who care about Metrozoo that we have passed this important milestone, of building a new exhibit after the destruction of the hurricane," said Sue Cobb.

"Ambassador Cobb and I were honored to salute George Batchelor, the Republic of Indonesia, and all the fine people who contributed so much to make the Komodo Dragon Encounter possible. We know that generations of Metrozoo visitors will enjoy these magnificent animals in a home that is truly worthy of them."



From left to right: ZSF's long-time benefactor George Batchelor, Metro-Dade Park and Recreation Department Acting Director Bill Cutié, ZSF President Sue Cobb, ZSF Executive Director Glenn Ekey, and Metrozoo Director Al Fontana.



From left to right: Indonesian Consul General Siswadi Harjowijoyo, ZSF President Sue Cobb, Metrozoo Director Al Fontana, ZSF Board Member Romero Britto, ZSF Executive Director Glenn Ekey and Metro-Dade Park and Recreation Department Acting Deputy Director Silvia Unzueta.

HOORAY FOR VOLUNTEERS

APPRECIATION DINNER A "ROARING" SUCCESS.

ZSF volunteers were the guests of honor at an appreciation dinner held on Wednesday, January 17. Hosted by ZSF's Board of Directors, Trustees, staff and Metrozoo's staff, the festivities began with a wine-tasting reception in front of the Austin L. Weeks Center. The guests then proceeded

who donated the sodas; Happy Balloons courtesy of Carole Cotton, who donated the decorations; and Antonio Flores, zookeeper, who painted the beautiful artwork of a toucan, upon which the volunteers and their hosts signed names and greetings.



Keeper Chris Breder serves up the "sweets" at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.

down the walkways to the Zebrazaar, where they were greeted by their hosts with a glass of champagne and a delicious meal. After dinner, awards and gifts were bestowed upon the Docent Council Executive Committee, the Day Captains, and 182 volunteers, who collectively have contributed 244,777 hours of service to Miami Metrozoo throughout their volunteer careers.

Many contributed time, goods, and services to make this event a success, including Boston Market, who donated the food; Coca-Cola,



Photos: Harvey Blitt

Photo: Barbara Crutchfield

Photos: Ricardo Simoes

WE'RE WEARING SOME NEW CLOTHES!

By Nancy Hotchkiss

Director of Education

Thanks to a generous grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to the Zoological Society of Florida, Metrozoo is trying on some new outfits, in the form of colorful new directional signs, playful bunny signs in the Children's Zoo and a complete face-lift of Asian River Life to match the recently opened Falcon Batchelor Komodo Dragon Encounter. If you haven't visited YOUR Zoo recently, we think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Our new directional sign system—printed on weather-durable banners—is big, bright and eye-catching as well as functional, and can be changed to announce new exhibits and other upcoming events at Metrozoo. Each panel features a large graphic image of one of Metrozoo's animals with an interesting fact or tidbit. Framing the image on the top are directional arrows to guide you to nearby exhibits and monorail stations. The lower third features helpful information on food, rest areas, gift shops and playground areas. Since each directional sign kiosk is three sided, you'll get three times as much information!

FOR THE LITTLE ONES

While our Children's Zoo gets some needed repairs, introduce

your family to the new PAWS Guide, our playful bunny. He (we think) is larger than life, but very friendly, welcoming you to the Children's Zoo, pointing out butterfly gardens, asking "didjaknow" facts about elephants, telling you when the next Ecology Theater show is and challenging you to jump as far as a frog or rabbit. Our bunny also gently reminds you about putting litter in the trash cans and where to park strollers while you are in the Petting Yard with our animals. Next time you're in the zoo, come welcome our latest addition to the family.



Photo: Ricardo Stanoss



Photo: Harvey Bitt

ALSO OUT THERE

Large photo banners now announce where you can "Talk to a Keeper" and get the "inside scoop" on exotic animal care. Nine different stations allow you to meet our talented and knowledgeable zookeeper staff to hear about the lives of our tigers, bears and chimpanzees, among others. So look for the time and location and plan your Zoo day around them!

Asian River Life received sparkling new signs that will withstand South Florida weather. Our original signs faded in the harsh sunlight and have been updated

and replaced with baked enamel signs that are bright and show off our original watercolors of these delicate animals. Of course these signs needed newly painted carved frames, so they could keep up with their new neighbor, the Falcon Batchelor Komodo Dragon Encounter. Both components of this dynamic area of the Zoo help paint an exotic picture of the wildlife of the far east.

Despite all these changes, we're not done yet. Every week brings new ideas on how to make your visit more enjoyable and fun. We're testing new interactives that will allow you to measure yourself against a gerenuk or a kangaroo. Our classroom will be occasionally opened up for "discovery time" on the weekends.

We also are serving as a research site for family Explore-A-Zoo packets that were developed by the Philadelphia Zoo and are being tested in four U.S. cities. These packets are designed to help families with young kids get more out of their zoo visits. So.... next time you're in Metrozoo and you see someone coming over to invite you to join in any of our tests, jump on in. We can't wait to play!

THE BIRDS ARE HERE AGAIN!

(AND THEY'RE WAITING FOR YOU)

By Bill Zeigler

It's that time of year when south Florida is the bird-watching capital of the United States. Well into Florida's dry season, migratory birds are making their way north, and South Florida's native birds gather around lakes, canals and river systems. As a bonus, the anhingas and cormorants are into their breeding dress with nest and chicks well on their way.

Florida itself is like a huge highway marker for migratory birds out of the Bahamas and South America. For the really adventurous birder, a trip to the costal islands will be a reward with sights of the largest concentration of warblers and song birds around.

Coming from their long trip, birds rest up on the islands and replenish themselves with food and water. Some of the more colorful birds you will be able to see are American redstarts, white-eyed vireos, scarlet tanagers, summer tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks, indigo buntings and painted buntings. If you are patient and quiet, you'll find the shrubs and lower canopy full of less colorful species like the Connecticut warbler, yellow-breasted chat, blackpoll warbler, yellow warbler and others.

For those of you who want an easy day of bird-watching, a quick trip to the Everglades National Park will meet your needs with its numerous trails and boardwalks. The most well-known area is at Royal Palm



Photos: Ricardo Stanoss

hammock, where watching wading birds will allow you to see egrets, tricolor herons, great blue herons, little blue herons, green herons, American bittern, glossy ibis, ibis, coots, gallinules and, for the lucky ones, an occasional limpkin.

Another good area for those with the time and conditioning to hike or bike ride is the 15-mile trail at Shark Valley, off the Tamiami Trail. This is a great area to see wading birds as well as woodstorks, and bird of prey like the everglades kite,

swallow-tail kite, red shoulder hawks, osprey and more.

For those of you without time to leave the city, there are many parks in Dade that provide for good bird-watching. Metrozoo is, of course, a good area to spend your time watching native and exotic birds. You also can try Greynolds Park, Matheson Hammock, or even a leisurely walk along the bike path on southern Old Cutler Road, which will provide good viewing opportunities.

No matter where you go, make

sure you are properly equipped or your trip will more than likely be a frustrating one.

I suggest you take the following:

1. Mosquito and tick repellent.
2. Water bottle.
3. Binoculars, usually small ones, with multi-coated lenses for better light, and at least 7x35 power, preferably 8x20 or more. But remember: The more powerful your binoculars the more they will shake when hand held. Some people use spotting scopes with monopods or tripods to hold them steady.
4. An easy reference bird book. (I prefer those that have the actual photographs of birds rather than the paintings.) Whichever you select, make sure it is small, easy to carry and soft-bound so you can fit it into a pocket or belly bag.
5. If you are going into the Everglades, always take a compass. Once into the cypress swamps on flat land, it is easy to become disoriented.
6. Wear long pants if you plan to get out in the bush, with high socks and comfortable shoes that you do not mind getting dirty or wet. If you are going to the Everglades, remember to watch where you walk—snakes also are out enjoying the spring weather.

7. Finally make sure someone knows where you are going and when you are expected to come back.

You now are ready to go, so let me give you one more piece of advice: Birding is supposed to be relaxing and enjoyable. Don't rush, take in the beauty of nature around you and, at the end of the day, even if you have not seen that many birds, you have had the opportunity to enjoy part of Wild Florida.

MARCH

1 friday

FEAST WITH THE BEASTS

ZSF's largest fundraiser of the year fills the night with fun entertainment, delicacies from 40 of South Florida's best restaurants, and an elegant atmosphere surrounded by the unique setting of the Zoo. For reservations call 305-255-5551.

APRIL

21 sunday

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK PICNIC

As the kick-off special event for National Volunteers Week, the Zoological Society of Florida and Metrozoo welcome Dade's volunteers for a picnic luncheon and a great day at the Zoo. Volunteers can sign up with their organization's volunteer director or call 305-585-6451.

21-27 sunday - saturday

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

This is your chance to get more involved with the Zoological Society of Florida and other organizations in celebrating the valuable contribution of volunteers. Give some of your time to help others, be they human or animal!

A MESSAGE FROM...

This year, the Zoological Society of Florida (ZSF) proudly celebrates its 40th anniversary. Since ZSF's formation in 1956, many have passed through its offices leaving behind their achievements and memories, helping ZSF carry on the mission of supporting Metrozoo.

I encourage you to assist us continue this tradition of excellence by joining ZSF in its efforts to help make Metrozoo the best it can be. ZSF members enjoy having the latest information about new additions to this, your Zoo, as well as its popular all-time favorites.

Throughout the year, *Toucan Talk* will bring to your home highlights of the first 40 years. We hope you will relish this look at our past as you continue to enjoy the many benefits of being a part of our Zoo family today.

See you at Metrozoo!



Glenn Ekey
Executive Director
Zoological Society of Florida

ZOO NOTES

- ▶ The Lakeside Grille Restaurant, located across from the new Playground Area, will reopen by the end of spring with a pleasant air-conditioned atmosphere, more serving windows for your convenience, and a contemporary menu with local flavor. And don't forget the beautiful view!
- ▶ Ground has been broken for the new rest room facility across from Monorail Station #4. We expect to have this much-needed addition to Metrozoo also ready by the end of the spring.
- ▶ And speaking about Monorail, all four stations are now available for boarding, so take advantage of this convenient in-park, air-conditioned transportation system.

TOUCAN TALK



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