10 UCANUALK

A TRIP TO THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU!



VOLUME 26, NUMBER 3



Cover photo by Ricardo Stanoss

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Zoological Society of Florida Glenn Ekey, Executive Director Edward Soto, President

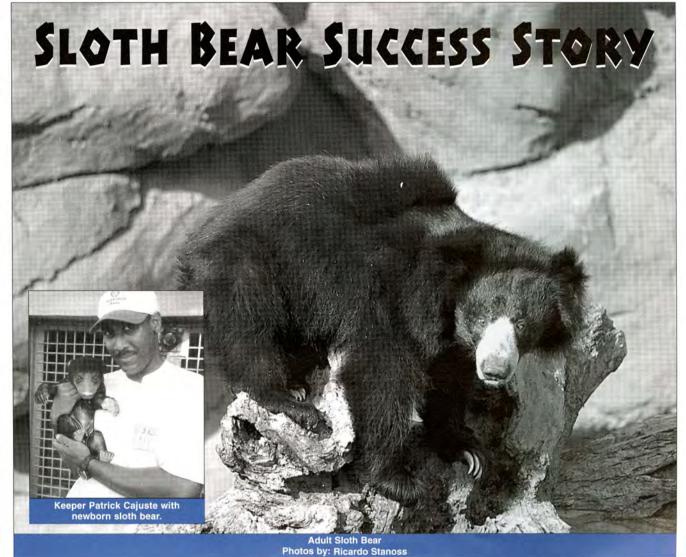
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By Steven Conners

General Curator

reeding animals is one of our goals at Metrozoo. Some species are easier to breed than others, and above and beyond the act of giving birth we want mom to take care of her offspring. Unfortunately it doesn't always work out that way. One alternative to this is handrearing the baby which can be a problem for everyone, the animal included. So we strive to make sure that expectant mothers are comfortable with their surroundings and will therefore be less likely to reject their babies. Sometimes our plans work, especially with more experienced moms, and our latest sloth bear cubs (Melursus ursinus) are among those success stories.

As a general rule temperate zone bears tend to give birth while they are in their winter den. Sloth bears, found in a tropical climate, don't den up for the winter, but do confine themselves to a "maternity lair" in a cave or dig beneath a boulder in order to give birth. At the zoo we increased the privacy and security of the female's nighthouse by covering the wire mesh of the cage with plywood, in effect creating a nice dark cave. Although we were certain the reduced disturbance facilitated by the plywood would improve our female sloth bear "Dusty"'s frame of mind, it also made it difficult to tell what was going on in her den. To solve this problem we installed a small video camera with infrared imaging capabilities (it was very dark in there) and hooked this up to a VCR. With this set up we could get an idea as to how mother and offspring were doing without causing any undue disturbance to them. In all honesty, our high-tech equipment produced a pretty lousy picture, but it was better than nothing.

Dusty's past history gave us cause for concern. In 1996 one of her cubs was stillborn and she ignored the other. The surviving cub, "Dirt Devil," was hand-raised and proved to be quite

entertaining, but this wasn't our preferred plan. Last year she seemed be caring for a single cub as far as we could tell, but it died of an infection after two days. The fact that she was caring for it was encouraging, though. This year we were very hopeful and anxious to see how it would go.

On December 9th we got our chance. On that day the keepers heard the squawk of an upset baby sloth bear, and more often the low contented "motor running" sound of a happy baby. Well it was getting air to its lungs anyway! There really wasn't much you could pick up on the video since newborn bears are very small considering their size as adults. The barely discernable moving blob on the videotape, combined with these strong sounds, led us to believe that the cub was healthy and nursing over the next few days. Dusty hadn't been feeding for a while, so an attempt to bribe her away from her offspring with food in order to inspect it would be futile. There was nothing more to do but keep our eyes and ears open and hope for the best. As the days passed some of the keepers thought perhaps they heard more than one cub vocalizing in the den. Eventually this was confirmed on videotape. So mom was caring for two cubs instead of one and apparently doing an excellent job!

It was mid-January before Dusty's appetite began to pick-up. Finally towards the end of the month we were able to trap her away from the cubs and get our hands on them. (By this point the risk of them being rejected by their mother was practically nil). We found two little males, currently nameless, that weighed in at a little over six pounds at about 6 weeks of age. This is an indication of how small they must have been at birth.

One of the interesting things about sloth bears is the female's habit of carrying her young around on her back

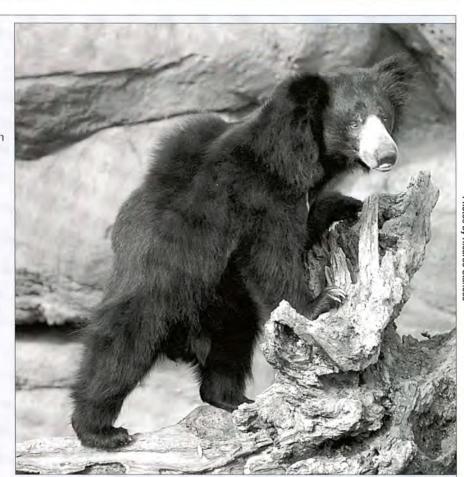
Continued on page 3



after they leave their den. This is one of the unique behaviors we hoped to display to zoo visitors when the cubs got old enough to go out on exhibit. Strangely enough it appeared that Dusty hadn't read any of the books on sloth bear behavior. When the cubs tried to climb onto her back she immediately proceeded to scrape them off with her paws. We became concerned as to what this meant about their exhibit possibilities altogether. We wanted the group to be well bonded prior to going out in order to reduce the likelihood of an accident occurring to the cubs, such as one of them falling into the moat

and being unable to climb out. Luckily Dusty's behavior seems to have changed for the better and she's now allowing the youngsters to "saddle-up" the way they're supposed to. By the time you read this we hope to have the trio showing this typical behavior for the public.

The moral of the story is, if at first you don't succeed try and try again. Its actually quite rare that everything goes according to plans when dealing with exotic animals. This is especially true when it comes to inexperienced animal moms. Patience and persistence usually are rewarded, however, in this case we all (especially the bears) came out winners.



ILE METRO

KRISTIN JIMENEZ

CHILDREN'S ZOO MANAGER



hances are, if you've been to our Children's Zoo, you've run into Kristin limenez, working hard and educating the public about exotic creatures and domestic animals. Kristin joined the Zoological Society of Florida in September 1995 as a Children's Zoo Keeper. Originally, she saw this as a stepping stone to work with larger animals in the zoo's collection, but Kristin has enjoyed her work so much, she has since decided that this is exactly where she wants to be. She has no doubt the Children's Zoo is a very important area where many people visit, thus giving her an excellent opportunity to interact with the public. This is a great chance for her to talk about the animals at the Children's Zoo, as well as the animals and events throughout the entire zoo. She feels that because the animals in the moated exhibits may seem so far away to the younger children, their experience at the petting yard is very valuable. There they actually get into the "exhibit" and walk among the animals, observe them up close and touch them.

Kristin's enthusiasm led to her assignment to the position of Senior Children's Zoo Keeper in January 1998, assuming the responsibility for a team of four keepers and many volunteers. Later that year, in October, she was officially promoted as Children's Zoo Manager.

Kristin has witnessed many wonderful changes at the

Children's Zoo, including the beautiful renovation of the petting yard. During the renovation, the Ecology Theater continued to present daily shows and provided a chance for handson learning with biofacts. "Meet An Animal" encounters were initiated in the Children's Zoo area. Meanwhile, the petting yard animals were moved to the back of the Animal Resource Center (ARC) and the collection grew. The interval allowed Kristin to really get to know the new animals' personalities, enabling her to better teach and interpret them to the public. It also gave her a chance to work on the re-opening of the petting yard in conjunction with the BigBug out celebration in January, 1999. Kristin hopes to see more growth in the area, including more hands-on interaction for children and adults alike, such as games and picture charts.

If you ask Kristin what her favorite animal is, her answer will depend on what she is doing at the time. If she is working with the chickens, then they are her favorite, If she is with a snake, it is her favorite. Her dynamic personality reflects in her love of all animals, exotic, or not! She also delights in taking care of the animals' needs, especially when she is clipping their wings or nails to ensure their safety.

Born and raised in Miami, Kristin grew up home-schooled since the fourth grade, which she believes to be a reason for her love of animals. At her own pace, she was able to learn what was very important to her, including backyard excursions in the hopes of finding snakes or other reptiles, and curious insects, as well! This led her to work in a pet store for a while and soon enough she found her way to the zoo. She has never really wanted to do anything else and is very comfortable at the Children's Zoo. During her spare time she takes pleasure in drawing and painting, doing great outdoor stuff, and spending time with her husband, Dave, who is Senior Keeper for the Asian lobe here at Metrozoo. They have been very busy painting their new house, and she plans to plant a beautiful garden.

Don't forget to catch up to Kristin at the petting yard or at one of the three daily presentations in the Ecology Theater. See you there!

METROZOO

RECENT ARRIVALS

January, February 1999

BIRTHS

White-handed gibbon Nile lechwe Gerenuk Yellow-backed duiker

ACQUISITIONS

Reticulated python
King vulture
Radjah shelduck
Domestic pig
Sumatran orangutan
African giant pouched rat



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305-229-7002 The Melting Pot 305-279-8816 Norman Brothers Produce 305-274-9363 Norma's On The Beach/Ortanique On The Mile 305-532-2809 O'Casey's 305-256-2667 The Olive Garden Restaurant* 305-266-5000 Outback Steakhouse 305-254-4456 The Parrot Jungle Cafe at Parrot Jungle & Gardens 305-666-4931

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305-446-6572 Roasters n' Toasters 305-251-4848 Rusty Pelican 305-361-3818 Ruth's Chris Steak House 305-949-0100 South Beach Brasserie 305-534-2474 Tap Tap Haitian Restaurant 305-672-2898 Taco Rico Tex Mex Cafe 305-232-8899 Tropical Chinese 305-262-7576

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The Wine News

*indicates twelve consecutive year of support.

Special thanks go to all the staff and volunteers of the Zoological Society of Florida and Miami Metrozoo. Great job!

KOMODO DRAGON RESEARCHER TO VISIT MIAMI

iami Metrozoo will be sponsoring a lecture by renowned Komodo dragon expert Dr. Putra Sastrawan of Udayana University in Denpasar, Indonesia. Dr. Sastrawan first began his work on the dragons in 1969 with Dr. Walter Auffenburg of the Universty of Florida resulting in the landmark book The Behavioral Ecology of the Komodo Monitor. Since that initial study, Dr. Sastrawan has been named Vice Chancellor of Udayana University and his research on the dragons has involved studies of population size, habitat, food preferences, daily activity, ecology of the nest and hatchling behavior, and the microbiology of their saliva. While in the US, Dr. Sastrawan will be lecturing in Cincinnati, Washington, Memphis, Nashville, and Los Angeles in addition to Miami. He will be speaking about his Komodo dragon studies on Tuesday, June 22 in the zoo amphitheater at 8:00 pm. Tickets are free. See you there!





Ricardo Stanoss

The Big BugOut

by Kristin Jimenez (Photos by Ricardo Stanoss and Glenn Ekey)

The Big BugOut was a big hit and that doesn't mean with a fly-swatter! The ten-day event, held from January 9 through the 18, was swarming with people eager to learn more about the most abundant group of animals in the world. Did

you know that more than three quarters of all animal species on earth are arthropods? From spiders to scorpions, butterflies to beetles, centipedes to millipedes, the BugOut showcased some of the coolest creepy crawlers of them all! The bugs' importance in the food web was demonstrated in presentations on insectivorous animals in the Ecology Theater. Then, buglovers were invited to sample such treats as barbecue or cheddar flavored mealworms, Chocolate Chirp cricket brownies, or stir fried mealworms during cooking demonstations in the Bug Bowl! If that didn't whet the appetite, the wall of museum mounted specimens was a feast for the eyes! The dis-play included such creatures as the enormous Asian walking stick as large as a man's hand, the beautiful blue Morpho butterflies from South America, and an Atlas beetle from Southeast Asia boasting three large horns. We also had the largest beetles of them all, the Volkswagens presented by the Pal- metto Bugs car club, Truly Nolen, and South Motors.

A more personal encounter could be experienced by taking a walk through the butterfly house filled with hundreds of live, native butterflies and their host plants, or by actually standing still while a real live bug crawled right up your arm! Monstrous Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches and giant sized millipedes were even referred to as being "kind of cute"

when our zookeepers let visitors hold them! The petting zoo was also re-opened just in time for the BugOut, so in addition to creepy crawlies, folks enjoyed a visit with warm and fuzzy animals, too. A buzzing good time was had by adults and larvae alike. So look for the swarm to return at the Big Bug





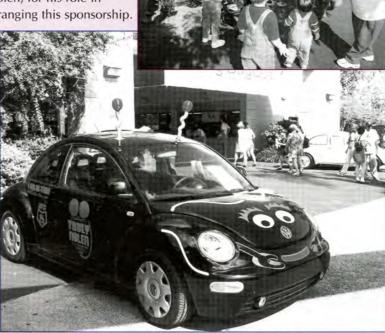




Thanks, Truly Nolen!

We are very grateful to receive a \$5,000 sponsorship from Truly Nolen of America, Inc.. Truly Nolen was the sponsor of the beautiful Bug Gallery featured at Metrozoo's Big Bug Out celebration in January. Children and adults attending the festival marveled at the museum quality displays of the Bug Gallery showing an amazing variety of mounted insects. Truly Nolen also loaned us one of its Volkswagen "Bugs" complete with antennae, for

display at the entrance to the Children's Zoo during the festival. Thanks are due to Barry Murray, National Media Spokesperson for Truly Nolen, for his role in arranging this sponsorship.



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GEORGE BATCHELOR, WE ARE WILD ABOUT YOU!

avannah, Metrozoo's beautiful cheetah, will be joined by a King Cheetah this summer, thanks to a gift in the amount of \$35,000 from Batchelor Enterprises. We thank George Batchelor for his donation which will help us purchase the King Cheetah and undertake the renovation of "housing" appropriate for his needs. The King cheetah is not a separate species. They display a color pattern variation caused by a rare genetic mutation which results in some spots being elongated into

SCORPIONS...

THE ROACH CONTROL BRIGADE!

By Damien Kong

Director of Education

corpions are some of the most misunderstood creatures in the world. They are Arachnids, just like spiders. Which means they have eight legs, booklungs and very simple eyes, but unlike spiders they have an elongated tail (postabdomen), which ends in a large poison filled stinger. One easy way to tell a scorpion from an insect, is that insects have antennae and scorpions do not. After the tail and stinger, what most people notice first about scorpions are their claws (pedipalps) which they use to catch their prey.

The United States has around twenty-four species of scorpion, seven of which are found in Florida. Of these I have only seen three types. The two most common species here in South Florida are the Hentz's Centruroides (Centruroides hentzi), and the Brown Centruroides (Centruroides gracilis).

The Hentz's Centruroides is a beautiful reddish brown scorpion that lives under the bark of pine trees. This species is found nowhere else in the world except Florida. Hentz's are a good indicator of the health of a pineland. If this scorpion disappears it means something is wrong with that habitat.

The Hentz's Centruroides is a small species, with females less than two inches long, and the males barely getting to two and a half inches long. Like all members of this family of scorpions, the male has a very elongated tail and pinchers. So an easy way to determine the sex of a scorpion is to look at the length of the tail.

The Brown Centruroides is a much bigger species, males reaching up to four inches in length and females around three inches. They are a dark brown in color, with lighter colored legs. This is a very different kind of animal from the

Hentz's, as it prefers disturbed habitats and human habitations. People regularly come across this species.

Except for the Sculptured Centruroides (Centruroides sculpturatus) of Arizona, no American species is deadly to humans. The sting of most scorpions feels similar to the sting of a wasp. It usually hurts locally and there might be some numbness. Of the thousand species of scorpions in the world, fewer than ten percent are deadly to humans, unless an allergic reaction occurs.

There are many mysteries and misunderstandings about scorpions. Did you know all scorpions fluoresce yellow under a black light? No one knows the reason for this phenomenon, but it enables biologists to use black lights to find scorpions at night.

Many people believe that the bigger the scorpion the more venomous the animal. Actually it is the reverse. Scorpions originally developed venom to kill prey. Big, strong species can physically overcome their prey, and do not need strong venom, but smaller and weaker species need to have strong venom to subdue their prey. So if you see a big scorpion walking around don't get nervous. It is the small one in your shoe that you have to worry about.

Scorpions are an important part of the ecosystem. They eat many pest creatures such as cockroaches, crickets, and grasshoppers. Without scorpions the South Florida ecosystem could become a wreck, overrun by pest creatures such as roaches, so unless you find a scorpion inside your house, leave it alone. Indoors or out, scorpions mean fewer roaches in your home.

Z.O.O N.O.T.E.S

THE SECOND YEAR OF THE CARNIVAL KIDS PROGRAM IS ABOUT TO FINISH

The 1998/99 Carnival Kids Program is close to its completion. February was the month of the Everglades for 370 fourth graders from Carol City Elementary, Miami Park Elementary, and Liberty City Elementary. The Carnival Kids could appreciate concepts learned at the zoo, such as animal and plant adaptations, food webs and endangered species out in our natural habitat: The Everglades! We all enjoyed Everglades National Park in our wonderful winter weather.

Smithsonian Project ELIPSE: Working Together

arch was most interesting for everyone involved in the Smithsonian's Environmental Latino Initiative Promoting Science (ELIPSE) Program, with several visiting experts taking the project to new levels of achievement. Mike Weddle, an outstanding Oregon middle school teacher and conservation educator, came to South Florida for a week to share his extensive environmental experience in the U.S., Africa, India, and Burma.

ELIPSE teachers and some of their students will be working on a biodiversity monitoring project, established at FIU's Environmental Preserve on the University Park campus. Dr. Thomas Pliske of the FIU Environmental Studies Department and Christopher Ros of the UNESCO/Smithsonian Institution Man and the Biosphere project are leading this venture which will be the centerpiece of the ELIPSE program.

THINK YOU'D LIKE TO BECOME A ZOO VOLUNTEER?

ome to the Volunteer Open House on Saturday, June 5. There you will be provided with an introduction to our volunteer program and upcoming opportunities. Training classes will take place in late June. If you are interested in attending, please contact our Volunteer Services department at 305-255-5551, ext. 124.



Volunteer introduces a resident ferret to our youngest audience.

Ricardo Stanoss

TOUCAN TALK'S ANIMAL SERIES CONTEST

All ages

Here's the third issue of "Toucan Talk's Animal Series" in which we present the beautiful crowned crane. Each issue this year has featured a different animal with really interesting information about its life. Read and collect all six issues and at the end of 1999 look for our contest question about the animals in the series. The winner will enjoy a special "Behind the Scenes Tour" with Metrozoo's own Ron Magill!

CROWNED CRANE

(Balearica pavonia) Status: Common

bird native to Africa, the crowned crane is characterized by a crown of stiff yellow feathers on its head resembling a shaving brush. There are two species of this bird. The East African crowned crane has white cheeks while the West African bird is generally darker in color and has pink cheeks. Crowned cranes are large birds. They are approximately three feet in height, possess a long neck and legs and have a short wide tail and wide wings. The record life span for a crowned crane is 43 years.

Cranes feed on vegetation such as grains, berries, small fruits and tender roots as well as insects, larvae, worms, snails, amphibians, reptiles and small birds and mammals. They stamp their feet as they advance through the grasslands to scare insects into flight and they probe and dig with their bills for larvae and roots. They fly to water twice per day and drink by immersing their bills up to the nostrils and then quickly tipping their heads up to swallow.

Crowned cranes are gregarious in nature. They migrate in large flocks, flying with necks outstretched while crying loudly to each other. They breed easily in captivity and their nesting ritual begins with a spectacular dance. The birds make stiff, quick movements, take high leaps, bows and stretches. Then, with half spread wings, they toss objects into the air and spear them as they fall. Nests are usually built on the ground and a normal clutch consists of two pale eggs that hatch after approximately 31 days of incubation. Both the male and female share the responsibility for building the nest, incubating and caring for their young. The newborns are able to run immediately. Chicks are mottled brown to grey in color, are covered in down and will fledge (leave the nest) in ten weeks.



REGISTRATION FORM

Space is limited for all our education programs...so call (305) 255-5551 and register early to secure your spot.

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Program/Session	Name of Participant	Age/Grade	Fee

FATHER S DAY BREAKFAST WITH THE KEEPERS

Families

South Florida American Association of Zoo Keepers (SFAAZK) will hold its annual "Breakfast with the Keepers" on Father's Day. Animals featured with their keepers: "Savannah" the cheetah, a baby Komodo dragon, and some animal guests from our Children's Zoo "PAWS". Come and meet our Zookeepers! All proceeds benefit SFAAZK. To register call the Education Department at (305) 255-5551.

Pre-registration required

MONKEYING AROUND

Families

Come meet Scott Fuller, a zookeeper who has had a great deal of experience working with our primates. He will introduce you to some of our favorite primate friends here at Metrozoo. You will learn why gorillas beat their chest, why colobus monkey babies are white at birth, or which primate is the most closely related to humans! Come and join us for a light breakfast of coffee, tea, juice and monkey biscuits!

Date: Saturday, May 8, 1999
Time: 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Cost: Members \$8.00
Non-members \$10.00

Pre-registration required

BIG CATS IN THE CITY

For adults and families with children ages 6 and up

You'll be seeing spots and stripes when you venture through the zoo visiting tigers, lions, clouded leopards and servals. Meet cat keepers as they share their experiences working with felines. Learn what these cats like to eat, and watch them chew a treat when we visit them during this tour. Instructors: Ricardo Stanoss and keepers.

Date: Saturday, June 5, 1999 **Time:** 9:30 am - 11:30 am

Cost: Members \$10.00 (per adult with one child, additional child \$4.00)

Non-members \$15.00 (per adult with one child, additional child \$6.00)

Pre-registration required

EDUCATOR S DAY

For Teachers of Children with Special Needs

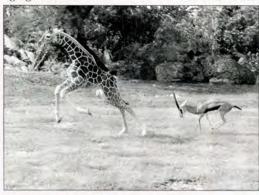
On May 15 the ZSF's Educational Department will be conducting the Teacher Educational Certificatition Program (TEC) for teachers of children with special needs. Teachers will receive curriculum materials full of zoo and follow-up activities and helpful tips on how to maximize their classroom visits to the zoo. Our instructors will introduce teachers to all the programs we offer and discuss accomodations we can provide to special needs school groups. This program has been sponsored by the generosity of Dade Community Foundation. Remember, the program has limited space, so call the TEC office today to reserve your spot!

Z-0-0 N-0-T-E-S

Members' Photo Corner

Thanks everybody for your participation! Deciding which picture wins is a hard task. Receiving so many awesome zoo shots by our talented members is great fun. We want to encourage even more members to participate.

Competition is tough, yet encouraging for all of us.



You may send up to five of your best shots (slides or prints no larger than 8x10 inches) along with your name, address and phone number clearly printed on the back of each picture. Submission grants the right to the Zoological Society of Florida to publish selected photographs in the Toucan Talk newsletter. Pictures

will not be returned, so please do not send originals. Just ask for an entry form at the Zoological Society of Florida building when you come to

Congratulations to Richard Arnold for taking this unique photo of a baby giraffe pursued by a Grant's gazelle!

METROZOO SCAVENGER HUNT

Carefully read each of the animal's signs and take a good look at the animals themselves. The answers may be right in front of you! After you answer all the questions, hand them in at the reception desk of the Zoological Society of Florida. A special prize will be awarded to the winner of a drawing that will be held June 25.

- Which species is the largest African forest dwelling antelope, which also has the name of a drum?
- What is the "little" hippo that can weigh up to 600 pounds called?
- Which animal is the black and white cousin of the Baird's tapir?
- Which is the smallest species of wild cattle?
- Which species of camel has only one hump?
- Name one species of Rhinoceros that has two
- Which is the largest of the great apes?
- Which species is considered the most beautiful of the wild oxen?
- Which is the only species of monkey found at Metrozoo?
- 10. Which giant reptile has the longest lifespan?

ANSWERS

"Animal Wonders" Session A

In this program we will explore the many wondrous adaptations animals have evolved to help them survive. We will discover how animal architects, social organizations, prey defense, physical adaptations, and locomotion all serve very important purposes.

" Amazing World of Animals" Session B

Earth is filled with animals that amaze us all. During this camp session we will investigate animals such as the majestic Bengal tigers and the very intriguing Komodo dragons. We'll also answer some interesting questions and see for ourselves the answers! What's the longest snake? What does an opposum look like up close? Why do porcupines have quills? Plus many more to satisfy hungry minds!

Kindercamp Session A: Ages 4-6

July 19 - 23 Dates: June 28 - July 2 (am) July 5 - 9 July 26 - 30 (pm (am) July 12 - 16 (am) August 2 - 6 (pm)

Kindercamp Session B: Ages 4-6

Dates: June 28 - July 2 (pm) July 19 - 23 (am)) July 5 - 9 (am) July 26 - 30 (pm) July 12 - 16 (pm) August 2 - 6

Times: a.m. session 9:00 am - 12:00 noon p.m. session 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Costs: Cost per session per week Member \$80.00 Non-member \$95.00

For a full day of Kindercamp, register for both A & B (Fee includes a supervised lunch period between camps)

Zoofari Camp Session A

Ages 7- 10 Dates: June 21 - 25

July 5 - 9

July 19 -23

August 2 - 6

August 16 - 20

Zoofari Camp Session B

Dates: June 28 - July 2 July 12 - 16 July 26 - 30 August 9 - 13

Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm Cost: Member \$125 per week Non-member \$145 per week

Zoolife Camp Session A

Ages 11 - 13 Dates: August 9 - 13

Zoolife Camp Session B

Dates: August 16 - 20 Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm Cost: Members \$125 per week Non-members \$145 per week

Teen Zoologist

Ages 14 - 17

Become a member of our Teen Zoologist Team! Interested teens train for a summer of volunteer work while learning the "ins and outs" of the zoo. 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 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.

Dates: June 21 - 25 Times: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm Costs: Members \$125 per week Non-members \$145 per week

- \$10.00 discount with 2 or more weeks registration or
- \$10.00 discount with 2 or more sib-
- \$10.00 discount with full day for Kindercamp.

Please only one discount per family. Lunch will not be provided.

All Summer Zoofari Camp programs are subject to a \$30.00 cancellation

Early morning drop-off 8:30 am (earliest) additional \$10.00 per week per child

After camp care 3:30 - 5:30 pm (latest) additional \$25.00 per week per

FOR CAMP REGISTRATION PLEASE



OUCAN



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

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