

# TOUCAN TALK

A TRIP TO THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU!

For more information please see pg. 7  
**COOL ZOO HAPPENINGS**

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CHOSEN AS ONE OF THE  
NATION'S TOP TEN ZOOS**

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Rebecca with new born gerenuk  
Cover photo by Ron Magill

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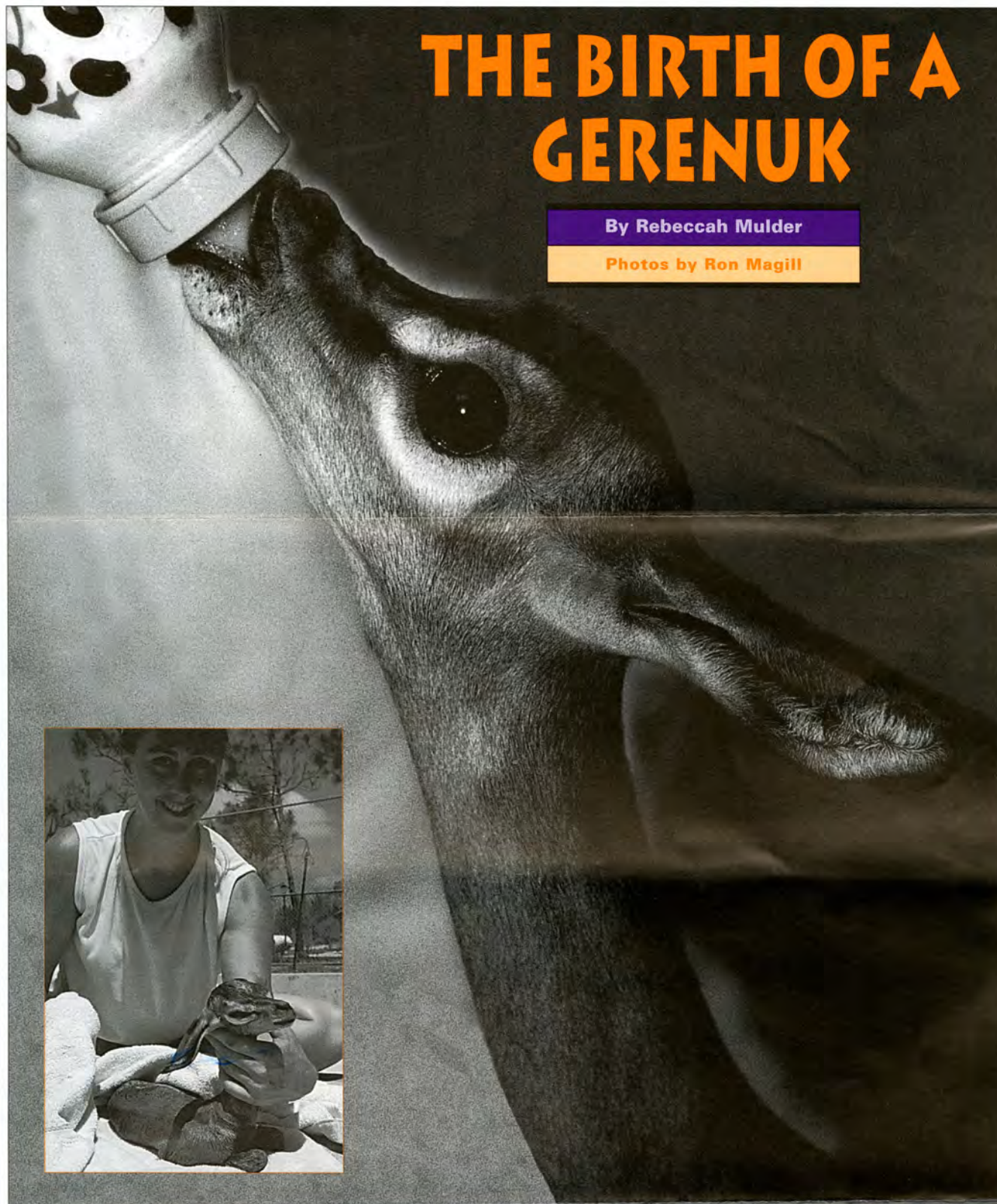
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# THE BIRTH OF A GERENUK

By Rebecca Mulder

Photos by Ron Magill



April enjoying her meal

**A**t about 7:20 am, April 6, I made my first check of the day on the gerenuk (*Litocranius walleri*) in my area. I noticed that Rebecca (named for me, but not by me!) had a damp tail. This caught my attention because she was pregnant, but according to our calculations, was not due to deliver for another two weeks or so. I was hoping it was just a case of overgrooming, but kept a close watch on her. By 8:30 am it was obvious she was in the beginning stages of labor. I radioed senior keeper, John Strickland, and let him know what was happening and my concerns, and John spoke with the zoo veterinarian, Dr. Chriss Miller.

A normal gerenuk delivery can be anywhere from one to three hours in length, so at this point there was nothing to do but watch and hope that everything would go well.

At 10:30 am, there was no apparent progression of labor and it was obvious that Rebecca was in trouble. Dr. Miller made the decision to immobilize her in order to try deliver the baby. With the help of several other keepers, Rebecca was separated from the herd and moved into a stall. She was sedated and tranquilized and then Dr. Miller tried to deliver the baby. Unfortunately, Rebecca was too small to deliver the baby vaginally; and a Cesarean-section became the only option. We loaded Rebecca onto a truck and moved her to the zoo hospital for surgery.

Dr. Miller performed the c-section and at 11:55 am a female baby was born. The mother was doing well, but the baby did not start breathing right away. Therefore, Dr. Miller inserted a breathing tube with Zoological Supervisor Alice Gilley breathing through it to start the baby's natural respiration. When the baby started breathing, the tube was removed. She still had to be encouraged to breathe regularly by massaging her, pulling on her ears, and very lightly slapping her on the rib cage. It was about 20 minutes before she was really breathing on her own. By this time it was obvious she was showing neurologic signs of hypoxia (oxygen deprivation) - lack of head and neck control and "star gazing" - head wobbling back and gazing at the sky. Rebecca was milked after the surgery was completed. The first milk from the mother is very important because it contains colostrum, which is rich in maternal anti-bodies. After the baby was weighed (60 lbs) she was tube-fed the colostrum. Now that both mother and daughter were out of immediate danger, Dr. Miller and John Strickland decided it was best to return both to the barn for recovery and hopefully some loving bonding. Since Rebecca had no previous offspring and didn't deliver this baby normally, it was unknown if she would accept and raise the baby. They were placed in a stall and we

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watched and waited for Rebeccah to wake up. When she did, she didn't seem to notice the baby. To further complicate matters, the baby had yet to stand. Under normal circumstances a baby will stand 45-60 minutes after birth, but not this one. Occasionally she would move a little bit, which would attract Rebeccah's attention. But Rebeccah only sniffed her a couple of times and walked away. We were all pretty discouraged by this but kept our fingers crossed.

**At Metrozoo, hand-rearing babies is only done as a last resort.** A baby will not be taken from its mother unless there is absolutely no possibility of survival without human intervention, so the baby gerenuk was left with her mother overnight. One of the last things I heard before leaving was, "One way or another a Rebeccah is going to raise this baby." I was rooting for the

gerenuk, not the keeper! At 8:00 am, the next morning, the baby still had not stood up, and Rebeccah was still oblivious to her presence. The decision was therefore made to hand-rear her.

Several years ago I hand-raised a Kirk's dik dik, an impala, and a yellow-backed duiker. On all those occasions, a nursing routine had already been established by others, and the really exhausting work had already been done. This would be the first time I would be the "mother" from the start. So at 9:00 am I made my first attempt to feed the baby gerenuk. To me she was scrawny, weak, still couldn't stand, and downright pitiful with her head and neck wobbling towards her back. I wasn't quite sure how to hold her to nurse her, and it was obvious she was not going to help me out. I put the nipple in her mouth and she spit it out. I put it back in, and she spit it out again. The next time I tried she wouldn't even open her mouth. I made "mommy" noises, I petted her, I pleaded with her, but she didn't care.

At 10:30 am Dr. Miller tried again. The baby at least noticed her, but there was still no real response. At 11:40 am I tried again. I helped her stand up, but she couldn't really hold the position and fell down after trying to take a step. She did seem more interested in the feeding and pleading, but still would not suck.

Dr. Miller assured me this was quite normal and advised me not to worry for a couple of days! Could she really last that long? For the rest of the day I continued to make efforts to feed the baby; 1:30 pm, 3:20 pm. After the 6:00 pm attempt, I loaded her in an air kennel into my car and brought her to my house. Luckily, I was going to be home for the next few days (not because of the baby - these were my normal days off. As it turned out, they would be neither "normal" nor "days off".) I continued my attempts to get "my" new baby to eat, but with no success; 8:15 pm, 9:30 pm, 11:00 pm, 1:00 am, 3:25 am, 5:30 am. To my surprise the 7:30 am (April 8) feeding was pretty exciting. No, she didn't eat, but she stood up by herself for the first time! It was very sloppy with legs going everywhere, but she finally did it by herself!

She was not eating, but there were some breakthroughs. First, there was some lip-smacking, then she seemed to be looking for something. I kept telling her what she should be looking for, but she wouldn't listen to me. Nine thirty am, 11:25 am, 1:20 pm. By now she was walking a little better. She would even keep the nipple of the bottle in her mouth once it was put there, but she wouldn't suck. By the 3:25 pm feeding, I knew she wanted to nurse, but she couldn't figure out the sucking motions required. I was pretty worried the problem might lie with the person holding the bottle, so I loaded her up in my car and took her back to the Zoo. Dr. Miller tried the 5:30 pm feeding, and though the gerenuk still did not eat, she felt the baby was improving and that there was no need to panic. After a pep-talk, the gerenuk and I went back home with a couple of different nipples to try out, just in case she was just being picky.

"Haven't you named her yet?" "No, I'm not going to name her until she eats and I am sure that she is going to live." Eight forty five pm, 11:10 pm, 3:15 am, 6:30 am (by now April 9). Luckily, she seemed to learn a little more each time. That's the only thing that kept me going - By this time I was absolutely exhausted and eating my roommate's food because I did not have time to go shopping. Eight forty am, 10:55 am, 12:50...Yea!! She actually sucked down 10 whole milliliters. Yes, it is a miniscule amount, but she actually sucked it out of the bottle and swallowed it.

Three fifty pm - After the earlier success, I was really disappointed when she wouldn't do much more than spit out the nipple, over, and over, and over. Seven pm - Yippie!! She actually nursed like she might know what she was doing. I was so excited I immediately called my mom in Georgia, "She's eating, she's eating!" Then I called Dr. Miller to let her know too. She told me that if she nursed and took the whole 40 milliliters at the 10:30 am feeding, then I could start feeding her every 4 hours. Now that she had a good taste of the milk, April (yes, now she has a name) was more than happy to oblige. And I was more than happy to get 3 1/2 hours of sleep at a time.

Now that April is on a regular feeding schedule, putting on weight and doing well, my partner, Janet Johnson, is taking her home half the time. That way April will receive the attention she needs and both Janet and I will still have some time to do laundry, grocery shopping and sleep. Oh yeah - and do our regular zoo-keeping jobs.



# Miami Metrozoo

## Chosen as One of the Nations Top Ten Zoos

On the heels of receiving an anonymous \$5 million donation and in the midst of opening a new Andean condor exhibit, Miami Metrozoo has received the admirable distinction of being chosen as one of the top ten zoos in the country. The prestigious international *Travel and Leisure Magazine*, based in New York City, has listed Metrozoo as one of America's top ten zoos in their Spring/Summer Family Special Edition for 1999.

After its official grand opening in December of 1981, Metrozoo quickly became recognized as one of the most progressive and innovative zoos in the country. As the only zoo in the continental United States located in a sub-tropical climate, it was extremely successful in exhibiting and reproducing some of the world's most exotic and endangered species in natural environments. However, in August of 1992, Hurricane Andrew devastated southern Miami-Dade county and nearly destroyed Metrozoo. Thanks to the generous

support of countless people from around the world, and the work of zoo and ZSF staff and volunteers, Miami Metrozoo has regained its status as one of the world's great zoos.

Major projects underway at present include a state-of-the-art Education Center scheduled to open next year. This facility will provide thousands of square feet of air-conditioned gallery space for traveling exhibits. In addition, the process has been initiated to select a contractor for the rebuilding of Metrozoo's aviary, the only exhibit not re-opened following the hurricane. Also, thanks to the support of the voters of Miami-Dade County, \$12 million from the Safe Neighborhood Parks Bond has been allocated for the development of "Tropical America" which will be developed and constructed over the next several years.

The staff and volunteers at Miami Metrozoo and the Zoological Society of Florida are extremely proud to be part of one of "America's Top Ten Zoos."

### BIRTHS

#### RECENT ARRIVALS March, April 1999

##### Births

- 0.1 Gerenuk
- 1.0 Siamang

##### Acquisitions

- 1.0 Koala
- 0.1 Colobus monkey

##### Hatchings

- 6 African spurred tortoises
- 5 Red jungle fowl
- 5 Red-crested pochards
- 5 Cape teal
- 4 White storks



Koala

Photo: Carmen Fernandez

**ZSF**

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**ATTENTION!!!**

The Adopt-An-Animal program has a new addition to its collection here at Metrozoo: Two Andean condors, and they are already on exhibit!

Why not adopt an Andean condor for \$50? Your package includes:

- A personalized adoption certificate (suitable for framing)
- A fascinating fact sheet on the Andean condor
- An Adopt-An-Animal auto decal
- A 4X6 color photograph
- An Andean condor beanie toy (To the first 20 adoptions)

Call now at (305) 255-5551 to order your adoption package.

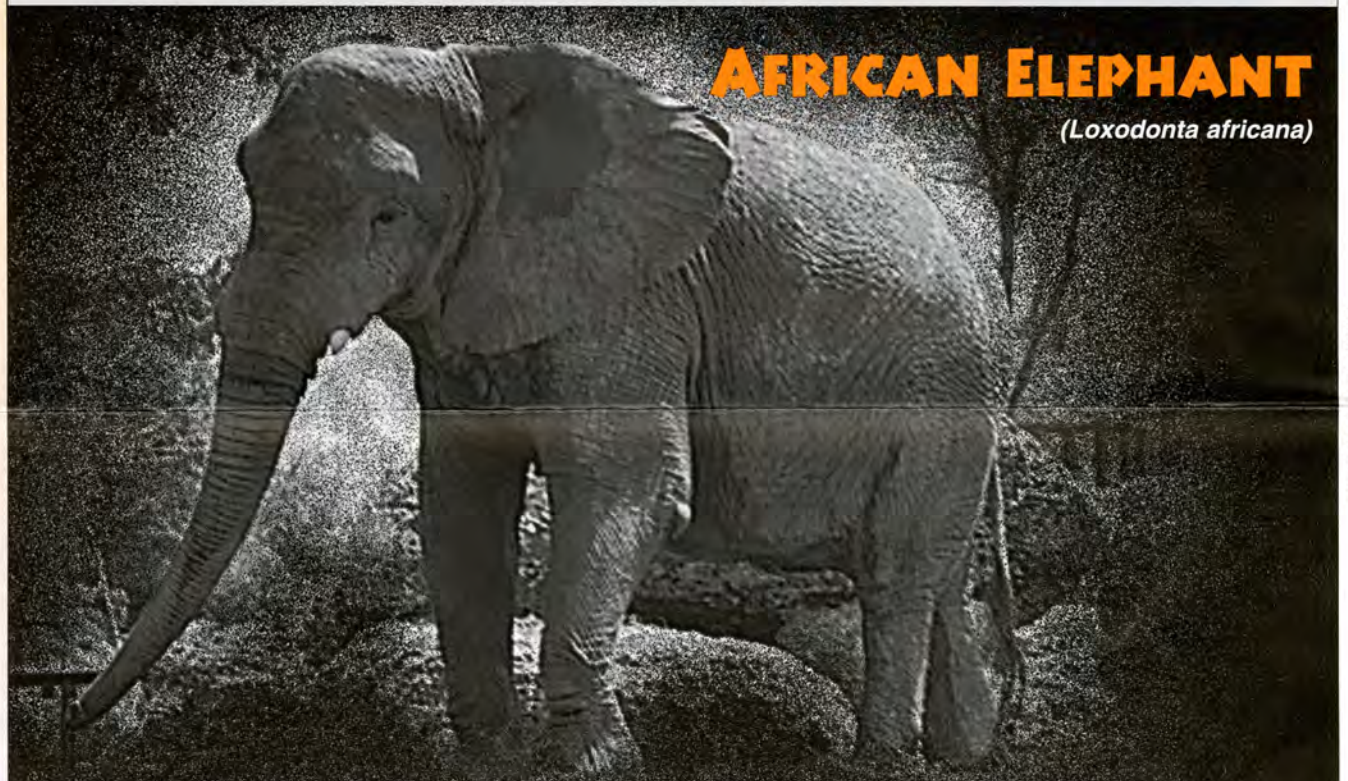


Photo: Ron Magjill

**TOUCAN TALK'S ANIMAL SERIES CONTEST**

**All ages**

The fourth issue of "Toucan Talk's Animal Series" brings to you the very impressive African elephant. Previous issues have showcased several animals with many wonderful facts about the animal. Read and collect all 6 issues this year and at the end of 1999 look for our contest questions about the animals in the series. The winner will enjoy a special "Behind the Scenes Tour" with Metrozoo's Ron Magjill.



**AFRICAN ELEPHANT**  
(*Loxodonta africana*)

Photo: Carmen Fernandez

The African elephant is the most imposing of all the African mammals. It has thick pillar-like legs and large ears that flap to and fro to help cool it down in the hot African sun. Its trunk, which is an elongated nose and upper lip, is very flexible and has a manipulative tip. The nose is very sensitive and is used to gather food, drink, smell and fight. Females are smaller than males and have shorter tusks.

Elephants are social animals. They live in family groups which consist mainly of females and their young. Cooperative babysitting is one advantage of this arrangement, but the group also provides defense and support of the weaker members. The males form bachelor herds as they mature.

Breeding can occur at any time of the year and usually results in only one offspring. The calf is nursed for two years and will remain with the mother even longer. Females give birth only once every two to four years and many have several calves of different ages in her herd.

Both African and Asian elephants have suffered from habitat destruction and poaching. Laws have, to some extent, protected the elephant for many years, but as long as an illegal market for ivory exists, poaching for tusks will continue. With more high-powered weapons available to poachers, hunting is less dangerous and faster, and also makes the park rangers more vulnerable on their patrols.

**ASK PEGGY!**



**Hello, Toucan Talkers**

**W**e are proud to announce that starting with the next issue of Toucan Talk, Peggy, the African elephant, will be answering any animal question our youngest readers may have. Twenty two year old Peggy is the zoo's wisest and most dignified resident. To fulfill her new "tusk" she will be aided by her keepers George Smith and Steve Netser, and a team of very able volunteer docents.

Peggy will select the two best questions to be printed in Toucan Talk, and the children who asked these questions will receive a photo of Peggy herself, along with an autographed copy of her answer. So if you have any "burning" questions you may send them by mail to:

**Ask Peggy**  
c/o Zoological Society of Florida  
12400 SW 152 Street  
Miami, Florida 33177

Photo: Ricardo Stanoss

**THANK YOU**

**ZOO-INNS...  
A COMPLETE SUCCESS**

**T**he ZSF Education Department would like to thank all of its members, volunteers and Zoo-Inn staff for making this year's Zoo-Inns a far-reaching success. As a result of working closely with each other, we have provided once again, a quality program for the South Florida community that combines learning with fun. We anticipate an equally successful season for the beginning of the new millennium, and look forward to seeing all ages "behind the scenes" at Metrozoo!

**TROPICAL AG FIESTA '99**

ZSF is happy to announce the Tropical Agricultural Fiesta on July 10th and 11th at the Gold Coast Railroad Museum. This Taste of the Tropics is only \$4 for adults and \$2 for children. Those who are interested can stop by the zoo's Membership Booth and pick up a discount coupon for the event.

# King George Comes to MetroZoo!

**O**n Saturday, May 15, Ron Magill returned from South Africa with a very special animal – a King cheetah. Most zoo fans are already aware of Savannah, the wonderful female cheetah that arrived from DeWildt Cheetah Center in South Africa in April of last year. Her many public appearances on television and in person have made her a crowd favorite and a very effective ambassador for wildlife around the world. The Cheetah Ambassador program at Metrozoo has been so successful that the need now exists to expand the program by acquiring another animal. The King cheetah is a male, and like Savannah, was captive born at the DeWildt Cheetah Center.



\*King cheetah, Spooky, father of George

The King cheetah is not a different species or even a subspecies of cheetah. What distinguishes the "King" from a "normal" cheetah are the dramatic markings it displays. As opposed to the small separate spots seen on the normal cheetah, the King has much larger black markings that appear to almost "bleed" out into one another. These markings are the result of a genetic mutation which until recently was rarely seen. For years, the King cheetah was believed to be a mythical animal, described only through isolated sightings that could not be verified. After a specimen was finally cap-

tured, it was initially believed to be a new species that generated a great deal of attention. It wasn't until the first King cheetah was born in captivity at the DeWildt Cheetah Center that it could be proven that it was not a different species but a rare mutation resulting from a recessive gene carried by a few "normal" cheetahs.

The special animal that Ron brought to Metrozoo is one of only a handful of King cheetahs in the Western Hemisphere. Metrozoo was able to purchase him as a result of George Batchelor's generosity, hence the new cheetah's name. Look for more information on this truly remarkable animal in the next issue of Toucan Talk!

## REUNION BY THE BAY

**P**ast and present Board members of the Zoological Society of Florida held a very special reunion to celebrate the partnership agreement between ZSF and Miami-Dade County. The bayside home of Charlene and Ron Esserman was the gracious venue for this happy occasion. It was a time to renew long-time friendships, share reminiscences and admire the beauty of Savannah, Metrozoo's cheetah. Savannah was the star of the evening, reminding us that the survival of our planet's precious wildlife is in our hands.



Savannah with Charlene and Ron Esserman and wildlife trainer Jennifer Reddish



Phyllis Tamburello, Jennifer Getz, Diana Udell and Mayra Gonzalez-Rey



Mary King, Judge James King, Lynn Cambest and Maura Cambest



Senator Jack Gordon and Alfredo Duran

## EGG SAFARI

**D**ue to printing deadlines, we didn't have a chance in our last issue to let our readers know how much fun kids had during The Great Metrozoo Egg Safari, April 4. All the wonderful activities would not have been possible without the generosity of Mr. Fredrick C. Brandau, who presented our event on behalf of the Make-A-Wish Foundation; Eckerd and COAST 97.3 FM. We sincerely thank our sponsors and look forward to seeing all of you next year on Easter Sunday!



Photo: Ricardo Stanoss

## BOWLING FOR RHINOS '99

**Y**ou can save an entire ecosystem while having fun on Saturday, August 21, 1999, at Don Carter's Kendall Lanes. The South Florida Chapter of the American Association of Zookeepers invites you to the Bowling for Rhinos Fund-raiser. All proceeds go to the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya.

The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy is a 110-thousand acre area, which supports an entire ecosystem, from orchids to elephants, and adjoins the Hgare Ndare Forest Reserve. If the rhino is to regain a stable population, it must have a suitable habitat to return to. With your support, we can help to provide this habitat - and this valuable ecosystem can be protected for future generations to enjoy.

You can pledge your support by:

1. Individual or team bowling
2. Prize donation
3. Sponsor a bowler

For information contact Patty Leon-Singer 305-253-6151

The Zoological Society of Florida was grateful to receive a grant from Dade Community Foundation in the amount of \$7,000. Ann Pope, DCF board member, presents the check to Maria Roberts, ZSF associate director of development, and Cynthia Curry, ZSF vice president and DCF board member.



Photos: Sergio Alsina

## Suzanne Stokoe Sets an Example

**T**he Zoological Society of Florida is the recipient of a bequest from the estate of Suzanne Mary Stokoe. Mrs. Stokoe was gracious in her foresight, placing this provision in her will in 1991. Those of us who will be making or revising a will or other planned giving instrument in the near future might want to follow her good example. Please consider making a bequest to the Zoological Society of Florida. A member of ZSF's Development Department at (305) 255-5551 will be glad to discuss this with you or with a planned giving professional you designate.



Photo: Ricardo Stanoss

## TOUCAN TRADER

**W**hen visiting the zoo, stop by the Toucan Trader Gift Shop to see our new selection of figurines and hand-carved gift items from Zimbabwe.

Don't forget, members receive a 10% discount on all merchandise.

## WISH LIST

- Mowers
- Weed Eaters
- Flight kennels
- Pole saws
- Chain saws
- Long-handled dip nets, or pool skimmer nets
- Long piece of heavy duty PVC pipe, 12" diameter
- Hemp rope
- Hand tools - drills, hammers, etc.

Please bring donations to the ZSF front desk or call (305) 255-5551 for someone to pick up your donation.

Photos: A. Gort Photography

# Behind the Scenes Keeper Series

Story and Photos by Carmen Fernandez

## Tiger Area



Lucky finds a new toy

**H**ave you ever wondered what it's like to be a zoo keeper, or what it is like behind the scenes at the zoo? It involves a lot of work and it is a great deal of responsibility. "It's awesome," says zoo keeper Andrea Adams, "but it is a lot of work!" Zoo keeping is a very physical job. There is a lot of responsibility, not only for the animal's lives, but for their welfare, and the public's as well. Keepers need to be keenly aware of everything going on around them, especially their own activities. The keepers need to learn the behaviors of the animals in their care. If an animal is acting unlike him-or herself,

this may indicate a problem.

Andrea works 5 days a week with our 4 Bengal tigers (*Panthera tigris*): Lucknow ("Lucky"), Natacha, Katy, and Lyric; 3 Malayan tapirs (*Tapirus indicus*): Hustus, Matilda, and Schizo; 2 sunbears (*Helarctos malayanus*) Kayla and wild-born Elsa; and 3 lowland anoa (*Bubalus depressicornis*) Elvis, Priscilla, and Lisa Marie. Andrea has been working at the zoo for three and a half years and has trained in every area of animal care except quarantine. The other keeper working in the area is Diane Minderman, a swing keeper, or relief keeper, as they are sometimes called. Diane works the tiger area on Andrea's days off and also works 2 days in the koala area. On her fifth workday, she goes where she is needed.

Every morning the animals in the tiger area must be out on exhibit by 9:30 am as it is the first area zoo visitors encounter. When Andrea or Diane arrive at the night house the tigers are checked to make sure that they had a good night and that they are all right. A high-priority morning duty is "switching" the tigers. That is, the three females sleep in the night house and Lucky sleeps outdoors under the stars. Every morning Lucky anxiously waits for Andrea to arrive so that he can go inside the night house and eat. The three tigresses, after being in all night, are ready to go outside and run around in the morning sun.

After Andrea switches the tigers, she goes to the Malayan tapirs and let them out. The tapirs on exhibit have been breeding lately and we are all hoping that we may have some tapir babies. The tapirs love to spend time in their pool or out in the shade resting under a tree.

Andrea then lets out a sunbear. The sunbears take turns being on exhibit. Then it is time to let out the lowland anoa.

Besides shifting animals, the keepers do a lot of cleaning. The night houses and holding pens need to be cleaned daily. Some of the animals are fed inside and some are fed out on the exhibit in the morning or in the afternoon. Feeding them makes it easy to move them from one area to another since most of the time the animals are eagerly awaiting food time. The tiger keepers have an 11 o'clock keeper talk where they edu-

cate the public about the tigers. Then it is time to go back to cleaning, all of which should be done before the afternoon. That way, there will be plenty of time to work on projects, which are also the responsibility of the keepers in that area. From weed eating in the moats and raking leaves, to providing enrichment and browse to keep the animals from becoming bored – the keepers spend their afternoons on projects such as these. The tiger keepers have a lot of work to do because they also have to clean three pools. The tiger and sunbear pools get washed once a week and the tapir pool needs to be cleaned as many as three times a week.

Most important is the care the keepers must take in noting the animal's behavior. Behavior can be very indicative of illness or injury. If an animal has recently undergone surgery, the keepers must keep a watchful eye on the progress of the animal's recovery. All of these observations are noted in very detailed night reports that are entered into a special database by Paul Bermudez, our zoo's Records Keeper.

Paul records important information such as births, treatments, behaviors, and feedings into ARKS (Animal Record Keeping System), which is a program run by ISIS (International Species Information System). ISIS produces reference CDs four times a year with a list of all animals reported to ISIS central database.

Andrea and Diane both feel very lucky to have this job. "It is very rewarding," they both say. Andrea loves it when babies are born in her area, and is very interested in taking care of the animals when they go to the doctor.



Andrea and Diane with new toy for Lucky



Browse is left for the anoa



Andrea ready to clean up the tiger paddock

## MALAYAN TAPIR EYE PROCEDURE

**R**ecently, Hustus, our 27-year old wildborn Malayan tapir (*Tapirus indicus*) underwent eye surgery. He was suffering from keratitis, a chronic eye problem common to tapirs. Keratitis may be related to long-term sun exposure. Hustus had developed a "mass," suspected to be a cancerous tumor, on the surface of his eye. Veterinary ophthalmologist, Dr. Loraine Karpinski, once again donated her valuable services. She performed a delicate surgical removal of the tumor and treated the site with cryotherapy to prevent recurrence. Cryotherapy literally means "cold treatment," a method of treating abnormal cells by freezing them. A biopsy determined that the tumor was benign and should not return after this treatment. Dr. Chriss Miller, our zoo veterinarian, says Hustus is healing well.



Malayan tapir

There are four species of tapir. The Malayan tapir, or saddle-back tapir is the only one found in Asia, the other three species being native to Central and South America. Like all tapirs, Hustus is related to rhinoceroses and horses.

Tapirs are nocturnal foragers, they feed mainly on leaves, fresh sprouts and small branches. Malayan tapirs are the largest of the tapirs and live in remaining rainforests from Burma and Thailand to Malaysia and Sumatra. Hustus was born in Johore in Malaysia. We are relieved to know that he doing well.

1. Dr. Karpinski getting ready to perform surgery on Hustus.
2. Dr. Karpinski and Dr. Miller during Hustus' surgery.



Photos: Dolara Batchelor

## Individual Animal Identification

By Ron Magill

**T**o provide the best of care for animals at zoos and elsewhere, it is essential to be able to positively identify and track each animal. Zoos have historically utilized several methods to identify individual animals. Some of the more commonly seen methods involve a variety of tags that display colors and numbers. For hoof-stock such as antelope, deer and cattle, ear tags are most often the system of choice. These tags provide information that can be cross referenced with an international database maintained by the animal management staff through ISIS (International Species Information System) or ARKS (Animal Records Keeping System). Zoos usually designate one ear for females and the other ear for males when attaching the tag. The tags are placed shortly after birth (preferably during the neonatal exam) in a manner similar to a baby having ears pierced for earrings.

For primates, external tags are not an effective method of identification. This is because these animals have the manual dexterity to remove the tags from themselves and/or each other - which is most often done during natural grooming behaviors. For this reason, identification numbers are usually tattooed on these animals. These tattoos are most often placed in a discreet location and are not obvious to the public.

For birds, a system of leg bands has proven to be the most popular method of identification. Occasionally, wing bands and large wing tags are used when clear identification from a long distance is necessary. An example of this is the California condor project where birds which have been released into the wild are constantly monitored to evaluate the success of the project. Like the ear tags used on hoof-stock, the leg bands for birds also have numbers and/or colors associated with them for cross-referencing information from a main database. When placing the band, zoos will usually designate one leg for males and the other leg for females.

The newest, and for some, most popular method of animal identification has been the use of microchips which are surgically implanted under the animal's skin and are virtually undetectable without a special scanner. Once the chip has been implanted, a special hand-held scanner can be waved over the area, and the registered microchip number will appear on the scanner allowing for positive identification. This system became extremely popular in the pet trade when show quality animals and rare exotics became targets for theft. Micro-chipping provided an excellent way to permanently identify an animal without any obvious marks which could be removed or tampered with. As technology improved, the system became less costly and is now in widespread use. Metrozoo uses the microchip technology for many of its animals, especially reptiles. Most recently, our new litter of African Cape hunting dogs were "chipped" to help ensure their positive identification when they eventually go to other facilities and, we hope, start families of their own.



microchip



Photos by Ricardo Stanos

# We Will Miss our Beloved Damien Kong



**T**he Zoological Society of Florida and Miami Metrozoo suffered a great loss as a result of the sudden death of a friend and colleague, ZSF Education Director Damien Kong. He passed away at the age of 37, on April 20, 1999.

Throughout his short life, he exhibited great joy in teaching and learning about wildlife. Damien's friends and colleagues admired his powers of observation, his sense of wonder and fascination with living things – even, as a long time friend recalled, with a leech that became attached to his leg while he was dredging a river bottom to collect animals. His research interests were many, but the endangered iguana of his Jamaican homeland and the Florida Banded tree snails at Miami Metrozoo had a special place in his heart.

Damien was passionate in his dedication to the causes of wildlife preservation and conservation education. He was an inspiring teacher, awakening his audiences to the magic world of animals and to the threats of endangered species. Whether he was talking with students on Zoo field trips, children in ZSF's Zoofari camp, the Education Department's teen volunteers or college interns, he imparted both knowledge of, and commitment to, the cause of wildlife.

Damien is survived by his wife Susan, a lead bird keeper at Metrozoo, his son, Devin, and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Laddie Kong. The ZSF and Metrozoo family joins them, not only in mourning his death, but even more in rejoicing in his life. Damien's family, in honor and memory of his life, established the *Damien Kong Memorial Fund*, and ask that donations be mailed to the Zoological Society of Florida.

## GRAND OPENING...

### The Andean Condor Exhibit

**A**pril 30, 1999 was the date of the sneak preview of the Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*) exhibit opening. The event started with a lovely wine and cheese reception along with entertainment by Inca Spirit. A tram ride to the exhibit was followed by a presentation by Eric Stephens, Miami Metrozoo Director, Ricardo Stanoss of ZSF, and zoological supervisor Carl Burch. The exhibit opening was very exciting and consulate staff from Bolivia, Columbia, and Argentina made a visit to see the beautiful birds in their new habitat. Others that made it to the special event were staff from the local Universities.

Also present were many interested members and guests from around the country, as well as some of the donors of the wonderful pieces that were on display. Thanks to the help of the wonderful staff and volunteers here at Metrozoo, this event was a complete success!



Photos: Carmen Fernandez

## THE ZOO IS THE COOL PLACE TO BE THIS SUMMER!

### COOL ZOO HAPPENINGS

**W**ear your bathing suit and enjoy misters all throughout the park and extra shaded areas. Kick off for the Cool Zoo Experience will be on the July 4 weekend, starting with an evening of cool jazz with harpist extraordinaire Roberto Perera at Metrozoo's Amphitheater on July 2. The time is 7:30 p.m. and there will be free refreshments for the concertgoers. Seating is limited, no assigned seats are available, and prices are \$12 for ZSF Members, and \$15 for Non-Members. Tickets are available at the Membership Booth outside Metrozoo's entrance.

### MEET COBBER, OUR NEWEST KOALA

Story and photos by Madelyn McClean

**C**obber is a 3-1/2-year-old Queensland koala; in May I was sent to the San Diego Zoo to pick him up and bring him back to Miami. He was born in Redwood at Marine World in California. "He is a trouble-maker with an attitude!" I was told by the koala keepers. After spending some time with Cobber, I had to admit they were right.

Koalas are nocturnal marsupials (not bears!) from Australia that feed mostly on Eucalyptus leaves. They spend their time in the trees and are very agile when it comes to moving around from branch to branch. Koalas can grow up to 3 feet long, but most are usually two feet long. They can weigh between 10 and 30 pounds.

During my week-long stay in San Diego, I participated in the daily routine of caring for over twenty koalas. Joining me there were keepers from other zoos around the country who also came to pick up "their" koalas. San Diego Zoo has over forty koalas with about half on loan to other zoos.

On the day of our departure we loaded Cobber into a special kennel with an upright branch bolted in the center so he could sit on it and hang on to it. Both of us flew as passengers on a special plane that flies animals and people together. This way I could keep an eye on him at all times and make sure he was doing okay. After a successful trip, Cobber has adjusted well and is doing fine here in his new home. Cobber looks forward to your next visit in the Australia section of Metrozoo. Just don't expect him to be awake!!



Photo: Madelyn McClean

**Members' Photo Corner**

Thank you for the wonderful shots sent in. Keep the amazing pictures coming. 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 the zoo!



\*Excellent shot of a baby chimp by Joyce Eyles



**METROZOO SCAVENGER HUNT**

Thanks again for your responses. Here's another teaser. On your next trip to the zoo read the signs located at all of the exhibits and see if you can answer these questions. The answers can be found throughout the zoo. Hand in your answers at the reception desk of the Zoological Society of Florida, or mail them in. One lucky winner will receive a special prize.

1. Which species is the largest of the duikers?
2. This animal is named because of the cloud-like markings on its body.
3. Which are the largest of the living birds?
4. Which is the champion jumper of all antelopes (8-10 feet vertically while covering 30 feet in a single bound)?
5. Name one species of rhinoceros that has two horns.
6. Which is the most primitive of the antlered deer?
7. This animal can jump up to 30 feet.
8. Which species is the largest of the lemurs?
9. Which are the most common and gregarious of the great apes?
10. This African antelope, because of its oily and poor tasting flesh, is generally avoided by predators in the wild.

**ANSWERS**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_



The winner of the first Toucan Talk Scavenger Hunt, Samuel Lee, with his ostrich egg

Photo: Ricardo Stanoss

**ZOOCAMP IS BACK AND IT IS BETTER THAN EVER!!!**

**"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 opossum look like up close? Why do porcupines have quills? Plus many more to satisfy hungry minds!

**Kindercamp Session A: Ages 4-6**

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

**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 siblings or;
  - \$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 fee.

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 child

**FOR CAMP REGISTRATION PLEASE CALL: 305-255-5551 EXT.123**



**TOUCAN TALK**



**Zoological Society of Florida**  
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