

SPECIAL EVENTS: RADIO DISNEY BIRTHDAY BASH, BALL OF THE WILD, BIG CAT-NAP CAMPOUT, EGG SAFARI

# TOUCAN TALK

FEBRUARY-APRIL 2006



**IN THIS ISSUE:  
GIANT ELAND, PYTHONS,  
BALL OF THE WILD 2006**

# NEW at the ZOO

## Births, Hatchings & Acquisitions



PHOTO: DOLORA BATCHELOR



PHOTO: RON MAGILL

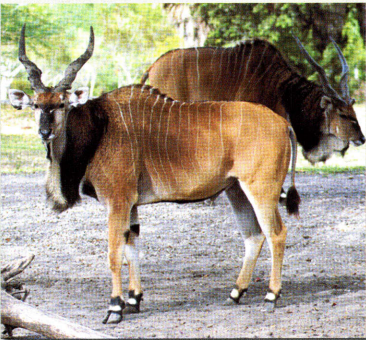


PHOTO: RON MAGILL



PHOTO: RON MAGILL

### BIRTHS AND HATCHINGS

1 Female Grant's gazelle .....	December 14
1* Yellow-backed duiker .....	December 14
7* Crested wood partridge .....	December 13, November 26
3* Nicobar pigeon .....	December 1, November 30, 29
2* Cairo spiny mouse .....	November 23
3* Greater Madagascar hedgehog tenrec .....	October 13
1 Female Addra gazelle .....	September 23
1 Male, 1 Female, 1* Greater kudu .....	September 11, 6, August 24
1 Female Chestnut-bellied tree partridge .....	September 6

### AVIARY HATCHINGS

2* Chestnut-breasted malcoha .....	October 14
2* Lesser/Indian whistling duck .....	October 4
3* Javan pond heron .....	October 2, 1
1* Bartlett's dove .....	October 1
5* Red-throated parrot finch .....	September 16, 14
7* Banded rail .....	September 16, August 23
2* White-crested laughing thrush .....	August 29
1* Pied imperial pigeon .....	August 27
1* Black-crested bulbul .....	August 22

### ACQUISITIONS

2 Male Giant otter .....	December 9
1 Female American crocodile .....	December 7
1 Male Florida box turtle .....	December 7
1* Green-winged macaw .....	November 29
1* Blue-and-yellow macaw .....	November 29
1 Female Northern lesser bushbaby .....	November 29
1 Male, 1 Female Warthog .....	October 31
2 Female Giant eland .....	October 31
1* Blue crowned pigeon .....	October 21
1 Female Chestnut-fronted macaw .....	September 15
1 Male Matamata turtle .....	September 14
1* Fly River turtle .....	September 12

\*Gender undetermined



PHOTO: SHERRIE AVERY

Photos, counter-clockwise from top right:  
Matamata turtle; Greater Madagascar hedgehog tenrec ;  
Giant eland; Warthog; Greater kudu

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## On the Cover:

Jourdan Pflieger (age 11) holds a Scarlet macaw on her right shoulder while Sean Bonner (age 9) and Jonathan Pflieger (age 4) each hold a Dumeril's boa from Madagascar. The parrot, snakes and more than 25 other animals can be seen at the Wildlife Show in the Amphitheater three times a day. The three youngsters are the grandchildren of Jeanie and Jack Pflieger, longtime Zoo supporters and this issue's cover-page sponsors.

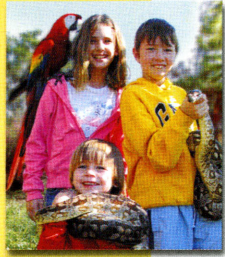


PHOTO: WILLIAM B. TUTTLE



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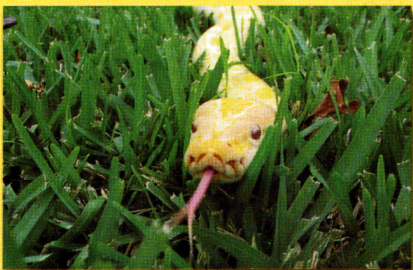
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# TOUCAN TALK

FEBRUARY-APRIL 2006 VOLUME 33, NUMBER 1

*Our mission is to encourage an appreciation for the world's wildlife and to help conserve it for future generations.*

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## Dear Friends and Supporters:

Since the currently cool South Florida weather attracts more Zoo visitors like you, we're bringing in new things to make the most out of your day. If you haven't been on our **AeroBalloon** at the front entrance or the **Wild Earth African Adventure Ride** in Dr. Wilde's World, you've been missing out! Weather permitting, the helium-filled balloon is open the first half of the day, everyday. For \$12 a person, five adventurers can rise 350 feet above the ground to catch views of the entire Zoo, the Everglades, downtown Miami and even Biscayne Bay. At \$5 a person, the Wild Earth African Adventure Ride simulates a real

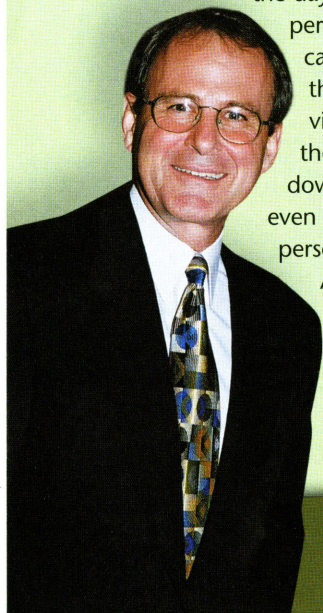
safari in an all-terrain vehicle. Daring riders encounter cheetahs, elephants, zebras and other exciting wildlife. While one person drives, the other takes pictures that they both can take home! Both of these attractions are here for a limited time.

**Ball of the Wild 2006** is right around the corner, so don't wait too long to get your tickets. They are limited to the first 600 Zoo guests and it is the party of the season. **Dave Barry** as the Master of Ceremonies and **Ron Magill** as the 4th annual recipient of the Wildlife Ambassador Award will definitely make it a night to remember.

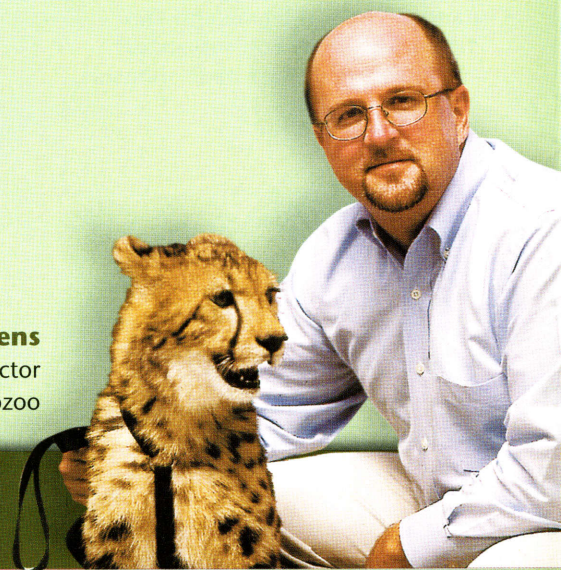
We're also looking forward to the return of **Venom Week** during Spring Break. That week, the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Anti-Venom Unit shares their collection and knowledge of deadly snakes with visitors and spring campers alike. Spring is also the opportune time to reserve space for your younger Zoo fans in the wildly popular summer **Zoo Camp**.

Important additions to the animals you all come to see are a new male Okapi, a relative of the giraffe with zebra-like markings and two new female Giant Eland, the largest of all antelope. All three animals are located in the African section of the Zoo.

Your Zoo offers many ways to interact with animals and to enjoy the time you spend here with your families. Check out all the ways you can choose to be more involved by visiting [www.miamimetrozoo.com](http://www.miamimetrozoo.com) or by calling us at (305) 255-5551.



**Glenn Ekey**  
President & CEO  
Zoological Society of Florida



**Eric Stephens**  
Director  
Miami Metrozoo



## Meet Our New Chairman of the Board, David Konfino

David Konfino, elected Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Zoological Society of Florida, began his two-year tenure in October 2005. Konfino, who was the Acting Chairman since July of last year, is overseeing the activities of the ZSF together with the Board of Directors, over which he presides. Konfino is also heading all meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee.

As a Director on the ZSF Board since October 1996 and Chairman of the Board Service Committee since 1999, Konfino is also President of Regions International Banking, a division of Alabama-based Regions Financial Corporation. Konfino manages a team of nearly 100 professionals, many of whom are located in Miami, which provide a range of international products and services to domestic and foreign customers across the Bank's 16-state franchises and around the world. Regions International Banking, the only major regional bank to have its international activities headquartered in South Florida, is among the leading issuers of trade and standby letters of credit and a leading provider of trade finance products, such as EXIM Bank loans, Structured Finance products, Correspondent Banking services and Wealth Management products.

Konfino is a native of Elberton, Georgia, having emigrated there as a young teen with his parents from Israel. As a graduate from New York University, he moved to Miami in 1993 and now resides in Coral Gables with his family. He is the past president of The Florida International Bankers Association (FIBA) and continues to serve on the board of the same organization.

Eland are the largest of the antelope and this species (also known as Derby's eland, *Taurotragus derbianus*) is indeed massive. A male giant eland can weigh over a ton and stand nearly six feet at the shoulder. As if size alone were not impressive enough, a large black dewlap (loose skin) hangs from neck to chest and a hefty pair of spiraled horns sprout from the top of the head. Females sport horns also, but they are smaller. This trait places them in the family known as spiral-horned antelope along with kudu, bongo and nyala.



its first few days hiding in the brush (a behavior we call "tucking") and periodically nursing. After that it is better able to run and keep up with the herd. If it survives all of the potential hazards of disease, predators and people, it will become mature in three to four years.

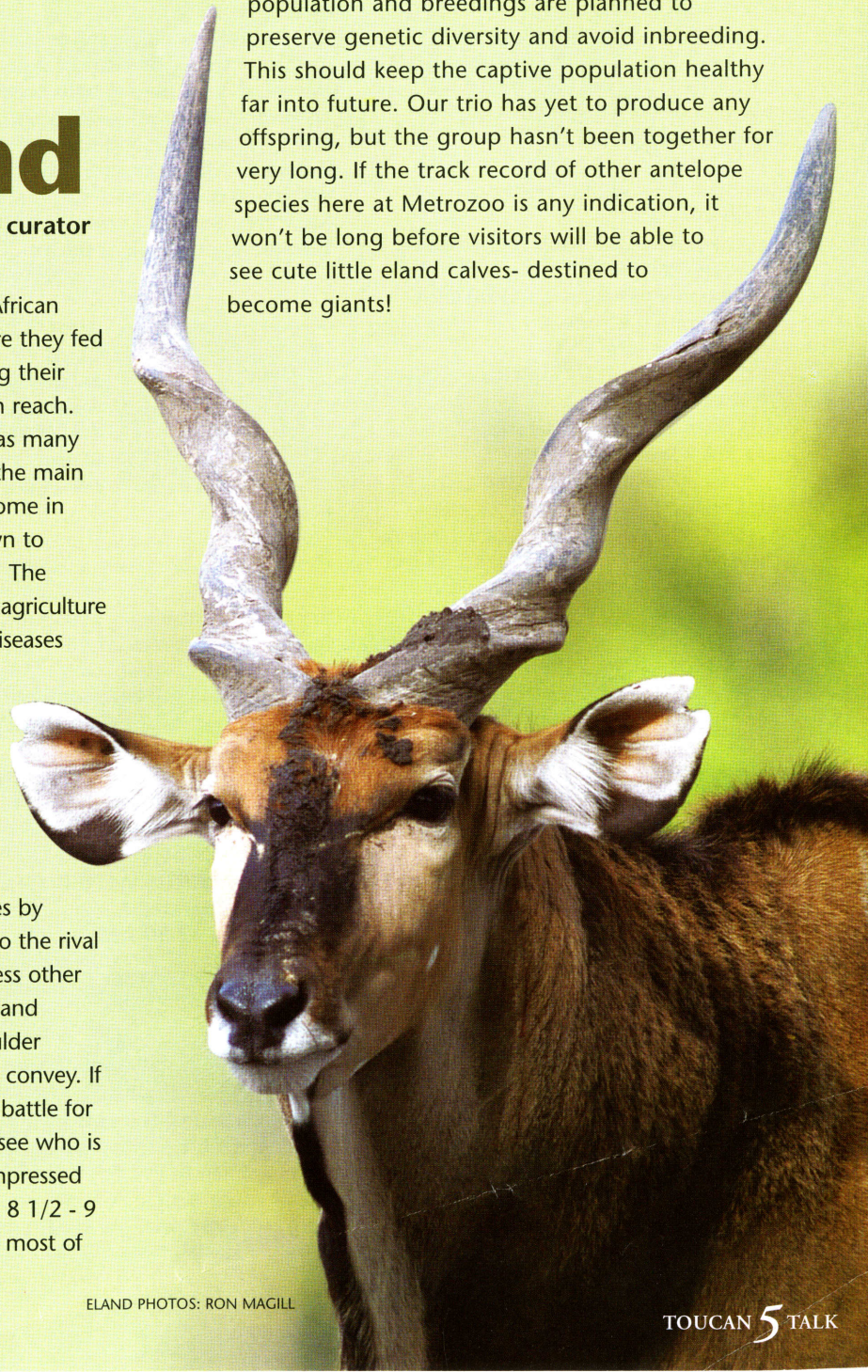
# mighty giant eland

by steve conners, general curator

This species once ranged widely through the dry African woodlands located south of the Sahara desert. Here they fed on grasses, herbs, leaves and fruit, sometimes using their horns to break tree branches to bring leaves within reach. Females and their young live together in herds of as many as 60 animals. Defense of the young seems to be the main purpose of these herds. The horns of the female come in handy for this job also, since they have been known to chase off predators such as leopards and cheetahs. The range of the giant eland is now intensively used for agriculture and grazing. Through loss of habitat, exposure to diseases from domestic livestock, and hunting, giant eland populations are now much reduced and fragmented. Healthy populations can still be found in parts of Senegal, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and Sudan, but the species is considered threatened.

Male eland will display to each other and to females by strutting and presenting a side view of their body to the rival or potential mate. The process is intended to impress other eland with their individual sheer size and strength, and therefore fitness. The large dewlap, horns and shoulder hump all accentuate the "look" that males want to convey. If two males are evenly matched the result may be a battle for dominance involving locked horns and shoving to see who is strongest. If the display is for a female and she is impressed and in season, mating is likely. Giant eland have an 8 1/2 - 9 month gestation period. A newborn calf will spend most of

Our giant eland, Thomas, Zoey and Wilma (no relation to the hurricane) arrived here from the Cincinnati and Los Angeles Zoos. Miami Metrozoo is one of only seven collections in North America currently holding this species. All the animals are managed as one single population and breedings are planned to preserve genetic diversity and avoid inbreeding. This should keep the captive population healthy far into future. Our trio has yet to produce any offspring, but the group hasn't been together for very long. If the track record of other antelope species here at Metrozoo is any indication, it won't be long before visitors will be able to see cute little eland calves- destined to become giants!



ELAND PHOTOS: RON MAGILL

# Zoo Education Programs

## ZOODLER ACADEMY AT MIAMI METROZOO!

**Bring your toddler to meet gentle animals and enjoy an hour of fun, crafts, and learning!**

**Wednesdays from 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM**

Adults are encouraged to join in the fun in this parent-and-child program. Visit our Zoo classroom and we will entice your toddler with art, books, and close encounters with some of our most endearing zoo animals. In the new and improved Zoodler program, exciting activities that will be taken home as keepsakes take the spotlight, replacing the majority of the cart tours. Toddlers ages 3 to 5 will be fascinated with the animals, artifacts and stories featured in our engaging program.

Members: One adult & child pair:  
\$12.00 per class

Non-members: One adult & child pair:  
\$15.00 per class

All additional participants: \$5.00 each  
Pre-registration is required.

## WILD NIGHTS

**Fridays and Saturdays from 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM**

Have you ever wondered what the Zoo looks like at night? Check out some of your favorite animals on this 2-3 hour Behind-the Scenes walking tour of the Zoo. Adults and children over the age of six are welcome. Guests enjoy a pizza dinner before their trek into the wild!

Minimum of 15 people.

Program varies according to animal availability.

Members:  
\$20 per person

Non-members:  
\$25 per person

Pre-registration is required and children must be at least 6 years old and in first grade to participate.

Select a special date for your group by calling the Education Department.

## WILD NIGHTS (Continued)

Would you really like to come to a Wild Night, but don't have enough people? Sign up any number of people on one of our Open Wild Nights. For available dates, please visit our website at [www.miamimetrozoo.com](http://www.miamimetrozoo.com).

No minimum number of people required but everyone must be at least 6 years old.

## ZOO INNS

**Fridays and Saturdays from 6:00 PM – 9:00 AM**

Bring your scout group, school group, or just your friends to spend the night at the Zoo! In this sleepover program, you'll have a personalized Behind-the Scenes walking tour of selected Zoo exhibits, sleep in an air-conditioned building, and enjoy a special morning activity.

Zoo Inns are available for adults and children at least six years of age and include a pizza dinner, light breakfast and a souvenir. Program varies according to animal availability, and pre-registration is required. Minimum group size is 15; maximum group size is 30.

Members: \$40 per person  
Non-members: \$45 per person



## JUNIOR REPTILE CLUB

**Saturday, February 25, 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon**  
**For children ages 6 and up.**

Calling all reptile lovers! The Junior Reptile Club is back. Come have a great time checking out the native and exotic reptiles at the Zoo, and share cool information about these fascinating creatures.

Members: \$18 per child with one adult  
Non-members: \$22 per child with one adult

All additional participants: \$5.00 each  
Pre-registration is required.

## MAKING FRIENDS WITH BUTTERFLIES

**Saturday, March 11, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM**



**Recommended for children ages 4 and up accompanied by an adult.**

Bring your family to enjoy these fascinating insects in our Butterfly Garden, and learn from an expert what plants will attract them to your yard.

## BUTTERFLIES (Continued)

Members: \$18 per child with one adult  
Non-members: \$22 per child with one adult

All additional participants: \$5.00 each  
Pre-registration is required.



## ZOO CAMP AT MIAMI METROZOO

**Spring Camp April 10 – April 14, Monday - Friday 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM**  
**For children ages 4 - 11**

During this spring break your children will have an amazing time enjoying the Zoo animals while exploring fascinating animal facts!

The topics for each day are: Animal Facts and Feats; Cats and Dogs; Bees and Butterflies; The Bear Family; The Ape Family

Members: \$140 per week per child  
Non-members: \$160 per week per child  
Extended care is available at a nominal extra cost.

Registration will begin on March 1st.  
Pre-registration is required.

## Summer Camp

**June – August, Monday - Friday 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM**  
**For children ages 4 – 10 and two weeks for children ages 11-13**

Mark your calendar for your children's summer fun with the Zoo animals! They will have a phenomenal time watching wildlife presentations, visiting animal exhibits and talking to keepers, preparing special treats for animals, doing art projects, riding the monorail, enjoying sprinkler playtime, and a lot more!

Members: \$140 per week per child  
Non-members: \$160 per week per child  
Extended care is available at a nominal extra cost.

Registration will begin on April 17.  
Pre-registration is required.

# For more Information or to Register...

Registration forms can be downloaded from our website @ [www.miamimetrozoo.com](http://www.miamimetrozoo.com) or, to receive a form by fax or mail, please call the Zoological Society of Florida at (305) 255-5551.

**PROGRAM EVENTS AND DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**



# At the Zoo

## RADIO DISNEY AM 990'S SIXTH ANNUAL BIRTHDAY BASH

**Sunday, February 19th  
12:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

Come celebrate Radio Disney AM 990's sixth birthday at Miami Metrozoo. Your favorite DJ's and the Radio Disney Fun Squad will be celebrating with all kinds of awesome games, musical and variety acts, contests, prizes and other exciting, interactive entertainment.

## BALL OF THE WILD Saturday, March 4th 7:30 PM – Midnight

Support the Zoological Society of Florida and Miami Metrozoo by attending our black-tie gala, one of the premiere social events of the season. The seventh annual fundraiser will benefit Miami Metrozoo's education and conservation programs. Tickets are \$500 per person. Tables range from \$5,000-\$25,000. For more information please visit [www.ballofthewild.com](http://www.ballofthewild.com).



## 3RD ANNUAL BIG CAT-NAP CAMPOUT

**Saturday, March 18th  
6:00 PM – 8:30 AM**

Get ready to sleep out under the stars on one of our own "grasslands" for a real camping experience. Bring your tent, flashlight and friends to enjoy a Behind-the Scenes tour and nighttime activities complete with sound effects (provided by Zoo animals)!

*Pre-registration is required by March 10!* Children must be at least 6 years old and in the first grade to participate. Fees and registration materials are available at our website.



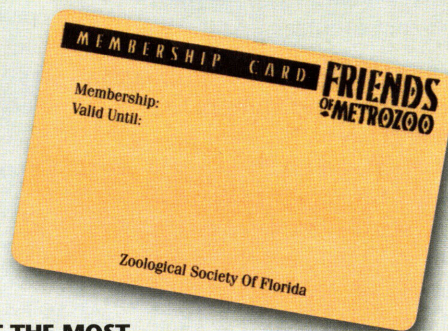
## THE GREAT MIAMI METROZOO EGG SAFARI

**Saturday, April 15th &  
Sunday, April 16th  
11:00 AM – 4:00 PM**

Enjoy this beautiful weekend at Miami Metrozoo with continuous egg safaris for kids ages 12 and under. Located at the Picnic and Special Events fields, kids can get their faces painted, make arts and crafts,

## THE GREAT MIAMI METROZOO EGG SAFARI (CONTINUED)

jump in a bounce house, rock climb, play a game of water tag, enjoy Radio Disney AM 990, take their photo with the Easter Bunny and much more!



## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ANNUAL ZOO PASS

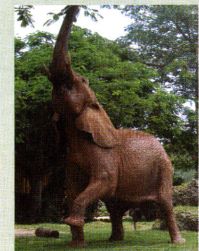
Your Annual Pass entitles you to unlimited admission to Miami Metrozoo 365 days a year. It also gives you free or discounted admission to over 180 zoos, aquariums and wildlife centers throughout the U.S. and Canada, including Hawaii. So don't leave home without it!

With your Zoo pass in hand, be sure to visit the following local attractions at a 20% discount off general admission: Butterfly World in Coconut Creek; Flamingo Gardens in Davie; Miami Children's Museum; Miami Museum of Science & Space Transit Planetarium; Miami Seaquarium; Parrot Jungle Island; and the Wings Over Miami Air Museum.

Additional values are offered at: the Gold Coast Railroad Museum located next to the Metrozoo allows two children in free with one paid adult; Monkey Jungle gives \$2 off adult tickets and \$1 off children's admissions; Vizcaya Museum & Gardens removes \$3 off the price of general admission.

A complete list of the reciprocating institutions is available on our website.

Miami Metrozoo is NOT RESPONSIBLE for changes in reciprocity agreements from any of the participating institutions. Unfortunately, what may be listed when you join Miami Metrozoo (or any of these other institutions) could at any time change, and Miami Metrozoo's members must comply with said changes when they occur. There will be no refunds for memberships because of a change in any reciprocity agreement during the term of an annual zoo pass.



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305-255-5551, ext. 124
- Group Sales**  
305-251-0400, ext. 244
- Birthday Packages**  
305-233-8389
- Email:** [info@zsf.org](mailto:info@zsf.org)

We'd like to thank those members that have sent us their e-mail addresses! We hope that you enjoy receiving our Zoo news via e-mail, too. We continue to update our records, so if you haven't sent us your e-mail address, please send it to [members@zsf.org](mailto:members@zsf.org).

CALENDAR EVENTS AND DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. For more information, please call the Zoological Society of Florida at 305-255-5551 or Miami Metrozoo at 305-251-0400.

You can also visit us at [www.miamimetrozoo.com](http://www.miamimetrozoo.com)

These days python sightings in homeowner's backyards are quite common. You may have heard of them roaming the Everglades or even eating a stray cat or two. Being a Zoo, we often get asked many questions about these snakes so we thought we'd answer the most important two: "Why are these snakes out there?" and "How do they thrive in South Florida?"

# pythons in paradise

photos and story by adam stern



The exotic pet trade is the primary reason why we have numerous pythons in the areas that surround us. Vendors don't invest much time in asking their customers' questions related to owning a pet snake and end up selling them to people who know little about reptiles.

Currently, Burmese Pythons are the most popular snake being sold to the public.

They usually sell for \$50 - \$200, depending on coloration. Burmese Pythons, prolific breeders in captivity, can lay more than 50 eggs in a single egg clutch. The baby snakes are sold when they are only a few weeks old and about two feet long. At this size they are easily kept in a small enclosure and fed small prey, mostly mice. Unfortunately, most people don't consider the size of an adult python, the cage size it will require, its life span, or the kinds of food it will need in order to be maintained properly. Since these animals can live more than 20 years, a commitment is important.

There are many costs that should be considered before the decision is made to own a snake. A small Python can cost around \$60.00, a cage may run about \$40.00 and feeder mice are \$1.00 each. When the snake is no longer satisfied with mice, you will need to buy it rats, \$2.50 each. Now that it's eating more it will also grow significantly, resulting in the need for a larger enclosure, about \$200.00. Your

snake's appetite and size will continue to increase. Its rapid growth will have you purchasing a larger cage or a custom built enclosure and more food, up to four to five rats a meal. Not long after, you'll be buying rabbits, at a cost of \$7.00 to \$9.00 each, just to keep your snake full.

We hope that you can understand how someone might be unprepared for a responsibility this great, not to mention owning a potentially dangerous animal. Once this animal has outgrown the owner's expectations, it becomes too difficult to care for resulting in abandonment by many people. Metrozoo receives many calls each year from people wanting to donate their pet pythons. Space and collection needs prevent the zoo from accepting these animals.

The good news for the pythons in South Florida is that our subtropical climate year-round makes survival possible. Pythons in northern parts of the U.S. can't endure the cold winters. The bad news is their impact on native wildlife. Because these animals are not native to our ecosystem, they can cause a large imbalance to Florida's habitat by feeding on our wild bird and mammal population. These snakes rise to the top of the food chain and along with panthers and alligators as "top predators." They also find mates and reproduce successfully.

It is important to take all aspects of pet ownership into consideration before making the commitment to purchase or accept any animal. A large part of your time, care and money will need to be invested in the animal, thus owning a pet may not be for everyone.



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