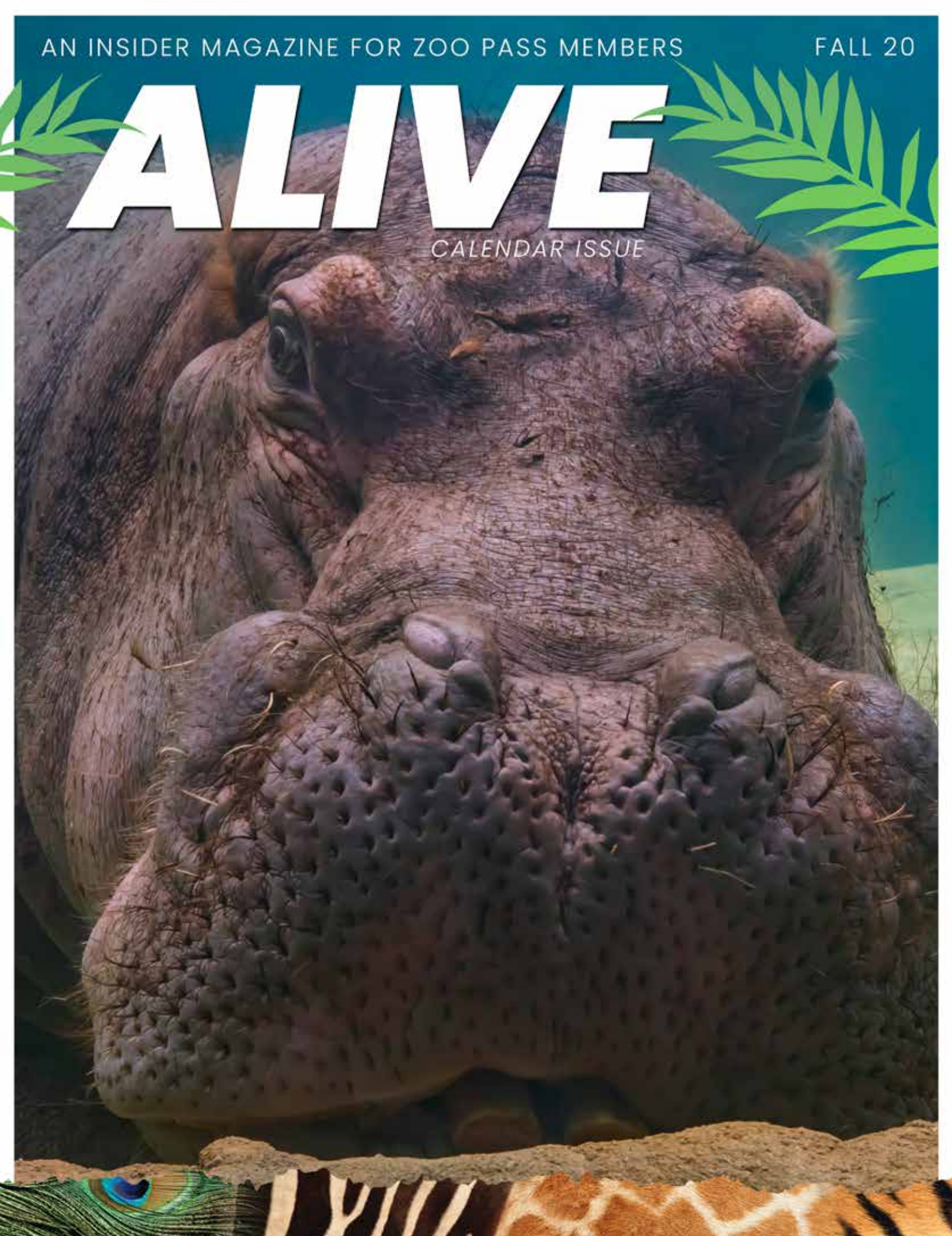


AN INSIDER MAGAZINE FOR ZOO PASS MEMBERS

FALL 20

# ALIVE

CALENDAR ISSUE





The mission of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee is to conserve wildlife and endangered species, educate people about the importance of wildlife and the environment, and support the Milwaukee County Zoo.

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# CEO's Letter



When we put together last year's Alive calendar, we had no idea what kind of year was in store. It's been tough going at times, but we've nearly made it to the end of 2020. With that in mind, we present our 2021 calendar, filled with stunning animal photos from around the Milwaukee County Zoo. Given the current uncertainty about public events, we chose not to include Zoo and Society events in the calendar. Instead, we're giving you bonus animal photos in the blank spaces

of the calendar. Stay tuned to our website, [zoosociety.org](http://zoosociety.org), and our Facebook page, [facebook.com/ZooPass](https://www.facebook.com/ZooPass), for event news throughout the year.

One highlight of 2020 was the opening of the Dohmen Family Foundation Hippo Haven. The habitat includes a 60,000-gallon pool and, for the first time, underwater viewing of the hippos. The Zoological Society is proud to have funded half of the cost of the exhibit as part of our capital campaign for Adventure Africa including a generous lead gift from Robert Dohmen and the Dohmen Family Foundation. On page 6 you will find photos of Happy the hippo and Zoo guests enjoying the new space. On page 5, you can learn more about the complex filtration system that keeps the hippos' water clear and the technician who keeps the system going.

We at the Zoological Society have been hard at work adjusting to the new normal so we can continue to conserve, educate and support the Milwaukee County Zoo. Turn to page 4 to learn more about our Education Department's plans for virtual classes and offerings this school year. We hope to see you online and at the Zoo this winter. I wish you a happy and healthy 2021!

*Jodi Gibson*

Zoological Society President & CEO

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facebook.com/ZooPass    twitter.com/ZooSocietyMKE  
instagram.com/ZooSocietyMKE    youtube.com/ZooSocietyMKE

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**ON THE COVER:** Happy the hippo enjoys his new pool.

Photo by Joel Miller



Milja  
was born  
May 11,  
2020.

# BIG EFFORT FOR A *LITTLE* CUB

❖❖ The cub spent the first few months of her life behind the scenes as she bonded with her mother, Orya. All photos by Joel Miller

**E**very healthy baby animal at the Milwaukee County Zoo is a victory for Zoo staff, but the new snow leopard cub, Milja, is particularly so, requiring years of patience, careful planning and a bit of luck.

To understand, you have to go back to 2015. That's when the Greater Milwaukee Foundation donated funds to allow the Zoo to acquire a male and female snow leopard in honor of the foundation's 100th anniversary. The male, Asa, arrived later that year from the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse, N.Y., and the female, Orya, arrived the next year from Zoo Zurich in Switzerland.

But it wasn't love at first sight, as the leopards had starkly different personalities. Orya was raised like a typical snow leopard in human care, with limited human interaction to help her keep her big cat instincts. Asa was born by C-section and his mother rejected him, so he was hand-raised by keepers. As a result, he loves humans and doesn't know how to act around other snow leopards.

"Getting them together for breeding was no easy task," says Katie Kuhn, big cats area supervisor. Typically, a keeper would remain present during animal introductions in case the animals don't get along. "But Asa focused on keeper staff when we were

in the holding area, essentially ignoring Orya." Instead, the Zoo installed a camera system to watch them remotely, hoping to encourage them to behave normally around each other. But they still didn't successfully breed until this year.

The keepers and Zoo veterinary staff monitored Orya's pregnancy until she gave birth in May. Keepers continued to monitor the cub by video. They saw her playful personality as she started to stalk Orya. She was shy at first with keepers but eventually came out of her shell, Kuhn says.

The Zoo let the Greater Milwaukee Foundation name the cub. The organization chose Milja (pronounced MEE-lah) in honor of her maternal grandmother, Dshamilja. Dshamilja was born in the wild, introducing a new genetic line into the zoo snow leopard population. Wild snow leopards are almost never brought into captivity today, making Milja's genetics especially valuable.

Milja could stay with her mother for one to three years, depending on Orya's attitude, Kuhn says. If Orya wants to breed with Asa again, she might stop tolerating Milja's presence, indicating that it's time for Milja to join another accredited zoo. Until then, you can see Milja and her mother in the snow leopard exhibit outside Florence Mila Borchert Big Cat Country.

❖❖ Keepers limit their contact with the cub, but they weigh her regularly to make sure she's growing as she should.

❖❖ As Milja gets older, she shows her playful personality.





Julia Petersen, senior director of programs, participates in a filming session for ZooConnect virtual programming.



The virtual programming may include visits from Kohl's Wild Theater puppets.



The Zoological Society team films video for its new virtual programming, ZooConnect.

# CONNECTING THE ZOO TO YOU

One of the best things about the Zoological Society's classes and camps has always been their location on the Milwaukee County Zoo grounds surrounded by thousands of animals. So what do you do when you can't hold classes at the Zoo?

The answer is to bring the Zoo to educators and learners, wherever they may be. The Zoological Society has been working hard to create brand-new, virtual programming that activates curiosity, expands knowledge and fosters empathy. The new ZooConnect programming comes in a variety of formats, from single classes to packages to live animal encounters.

"It was of utmost importance that we serve our community during this difficult time and keep people connected and engaged to our Zoo," says Julia Petersen, senior director of programs at the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. "We concentrated on exciting and fun ways for learners to continue their education in a non-traditional environment, while also meeting state and national science and conservation standards."

The offerings work around a monthly theme. For example, in October kindergarteners through second graders are learning about invertebrates, grades three to five are exploring ecosystems, and grades six to eight are learning about biodiversity and endangered species. High school content will be offered starting in November. "We are excited to provide live experiences, supplemental videos, and all the fun you've come to love from our in-person classes," Petersen says.

The Zoological Society plans to make virtual programming a permanent part of its offerings, Petersen says. "Whether in-person or virtual, we remain committed to supporting the Zoological Society's mission – conserving wildlife and endangered species, educating people about the importance of wildlife and the environment, and supporting the Milwaukee County Zoo."

**For educators** looking to schedule programs for a group of children such as a community center or school, we offer developmentally appropriate, standards-based opportunities such as single class offerings, a two-month package and numerous three-month packages. These packages include a free Kohl's Wild Theater performance, for grades kindergarten to five, upon request. Visit [zoosociety.org/school](https://zoosociety.org/school) for more information.

**For parent educators** looking to register a single learner for a program, we offer virtual animal encounters and age-appropriate, standards-based experiences that can supplement your child's learning, sponsored by the Corners of Brookfield. Visit [zoosociety.org/fall](https://zoosociety.org/fall) for more information.

**Check** our website, [zoosociety.org/education](https://zoosociety.org/education), and your email inbox for updates about programming in November, December and beyond. Contact the Zoological Society at **414-258-2333** to be added to our email list.

**With** the generous support of Kohl's, schools in need can apply for funding through the Zoo Learning Experience. For more information, visit [zoosociety.org/learningexperience](https://zoosociety.org/learningexperience). We are committed to serving metro Milwaukee by providing students an opportunity to learn about science and the environment and feel empowered to take conservation action.

# CLEAR H<sub>2</sub>O FOR THE HIPPOS

If you know anything about hippos, you probably know they poop a lot. Keeping that poop out of the new hippo habitat at the Milwaukee County Zoo is complicated stuff. So complicated, in fact, that the Johnson Controls Water Conservation System occupies 7,500 square feet in the basement of the former elephant building and requires its own staff member to monitor it.

Erik Carlson's official title is "life support technician." "The focus of my position is to ensure that the water quality of the hippo exhibit remains optimal for the hippos and for the public's viewing pleasure," he says. That means maintaining the filters and ozone equipment and troubleshooting any problems that arise. He also maintains the ozone equipment for the otter habitat and the Pacific Ocean and Lake Wisconsin exhibits in the Aquatic & Reptile Center.

Because hippos create so much waste, the water would become cloudy and dirty within a day or two without filtration, Carlson says. In the old habitat, the Zoo drained the pool and refilled it each day. The new system allows the same water to be cycled through the exhibit all year long, saving millions of gallons of water per year. The water in the hippo habitat turns over three times an hour.

The ozone system is key. Ozone breaks down organic molecules, including compounds that discolor the water and cause odor. It also disinfects and kills bacteria and viruses that could harm the hippos. "This filtration system would allow us to house multiple hippos in the same exhibit, while keeping the water clear and the hippos healthy," Carlson says.

## HIPPO WATER FILTRATION

- 1** The dirty water leaves the outdoor habitat and passes through the two monoscreen filters, which help separate the large solids (hay and debris that blow into the exhibit) from the water. The water then is pulled into the three main pumps.
- 2** The water is forced by the pumps through five large sand filters. The sand filters collect suspended solids in the water. This includes small debris like algae, small pieces of hay and other material that makes it through the monoscreens.
- 3** The water goes through a disinfection process by ozone. Ozone is used to disinfect and kill harmful bacteria and viruses that could accumulate in the outdoor exhibit if left untreated.
- 4** The water passes through the degas tower to draw out the ozone, and then flows back into the outdoor exhibit. The entire process through the habitat and filtration system takes 35-40 minutes.



Monoscreen filters remove larger solids from the water returning to the pump from the outdoor exhibit.



▲ The system includes five sand filters that remove fine solids from the recirculating water.



A press squeezes the water out of the waste to allow for the removal of a lighter product.



▲ The three main pumps push the water at a rate of approximately 2,640 gallons a minute.



The jet pumps are set on a timer to turn on and scour the bottom of the outdoor exhibit to remove debris.

All photos by Joel Miller

# HIPPO HEAVEN

The official name of the new hippo habitat is the Dohmen Family Foundation Hippo Haven, but it's hippo heaven for Happy, the Milwaukee County Zoo's 39-year-old hippopotamus. He loves his new exhibit, with its 60,000-gallon pool, so much that keepers had trouble getting him out of the pool at first. Around this time of year, he will switch to the indoor pool since hippos can't tolerate cold weather, so enjoy these photos of Happy relaxing in the outdoor habitat and an interview with one of his keepers, Ray Hren.

**Q** What is Happy's favorite activity or behavior in the habitat?

**A** He enjoys swimming laps or taking a snooze.

**Q** Has anything surprised you about the exhibit or Happy's interaction with it?

**A** It was interesting watching his reactions to seeing people through the pool glass for the first time. He looked truly fascinated and would sit there motionless carefully studying people. Now that he's acclimated, he seems comfortable with the public and is even seen posing for selfies now.

**Q** Any chance we will see the female hippo, Patti, in the pool?

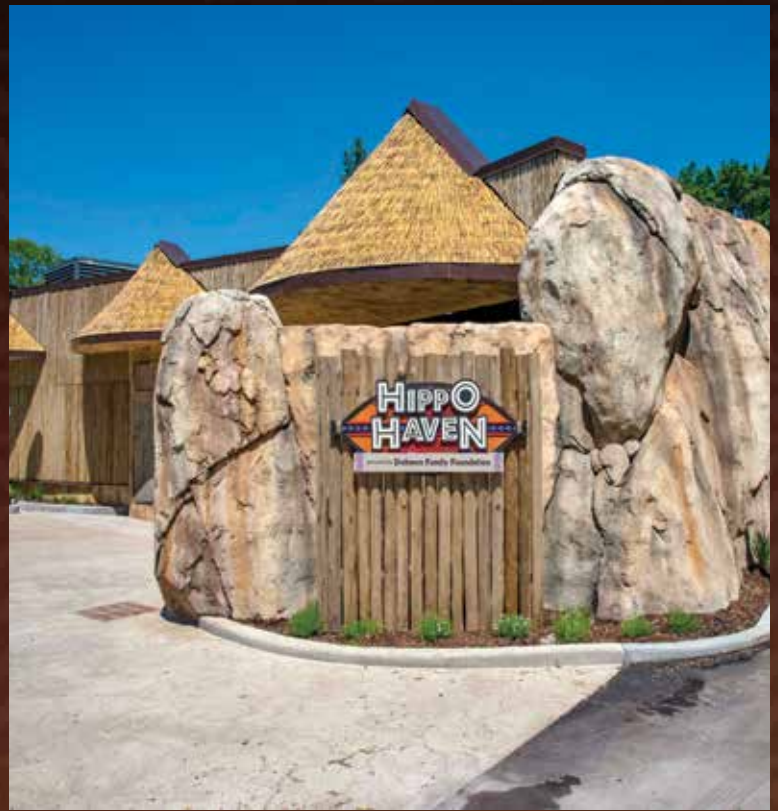
**A** Patti has not shown any interest in going out. We will continue to work with her and give her opportunities to visit the new exhibit, but at her advanced age of 51, we are focused on letting her do what she wants, and she's very comfortable inside.

**Q** How does it feel, having worked so long on this exhibit, to now see it open?

**A** It's a great feeling and relief to see how much Happy has acclimated to the new exhibit and that the public enjoys it so much.



◆ The habitat includes a sculpture of a hippo mom and baby that kids can climb on for photo opportunities. Photo by Joel Miller



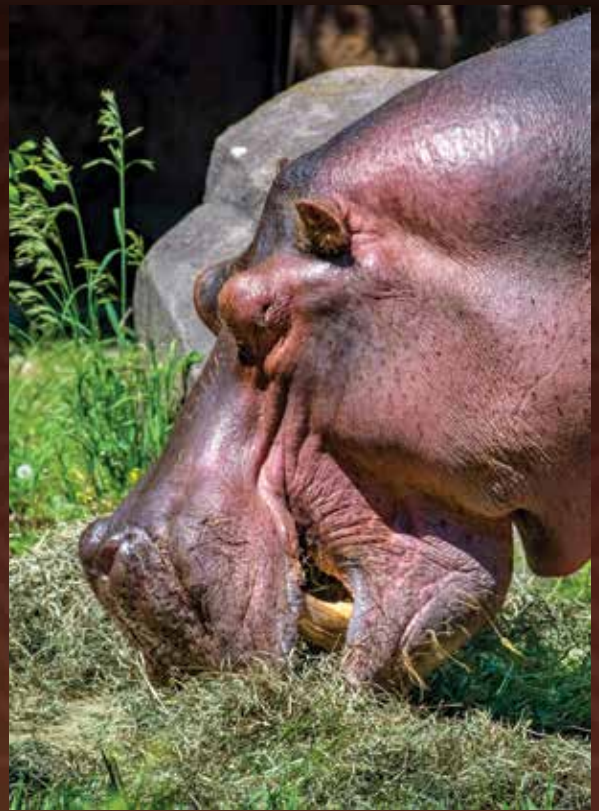
◆ The Zoological Society's Creative Department designed graphics for the habitat to match the theme of Adventure Africa. Photo by Joel Miller



(Above and right) Families enjoy watching Happy in his exhibit, and he seems to enjoy watching them. Photos by Garrett Hopkins



◆ Hippos don't swim but instead bounce along the bottom of the water.  
◆ Photo by Garrett Hopkins



◆ The new habitat includes a large beach area where the hippos can graze. Photo by Joel Miller



Photo by Peter Zuzga

**Next** it's the rhino's turn! The Zoo is in the design stage of the final phase of Adventure Africa, a new rhinoceros habitat for Jozi the Eastern black rhino. As with the elephant, African hoofstock and hippo habitats, the Zoological Society will fund 50% of the cost. Visit [Win2Wild.com](http://Win2Wild.com) to learn more and donate.





# January 2021



At 36 years old, Snow Lilly is considered the oldest polar bear in human care in North America. Polar bears only hibernate if they are pregnant, so you can spot her outside all winter long.  
Photo by Kevin McIntosh

Sunday

Monday


Tuesday

Wednesday


Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**North American river otters**   
Photo by Joel Miller



**Caribou**   
Photo by Bob Wickland



**1** **New Year's Day**

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**18** **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

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**31**



# February 2021



The groundhog famously predicts each year if we will have an early spring or six more weeks of winter. Gordy the groundhog is almost 2 years old and was hand raised. Keepers even take him on walks on a leash and harness. Photo by Joel Miller

Sunday

Monday





Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 Presidents Day	16	17 Ash Wednesday	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 Purim begins at sundown	26	27
28	 <b>Emerald monitor</b>  Photo by Garrett Hopkins	 <b>Prehensile-tailed porcupine</b>  Photo by Bob Wickland				

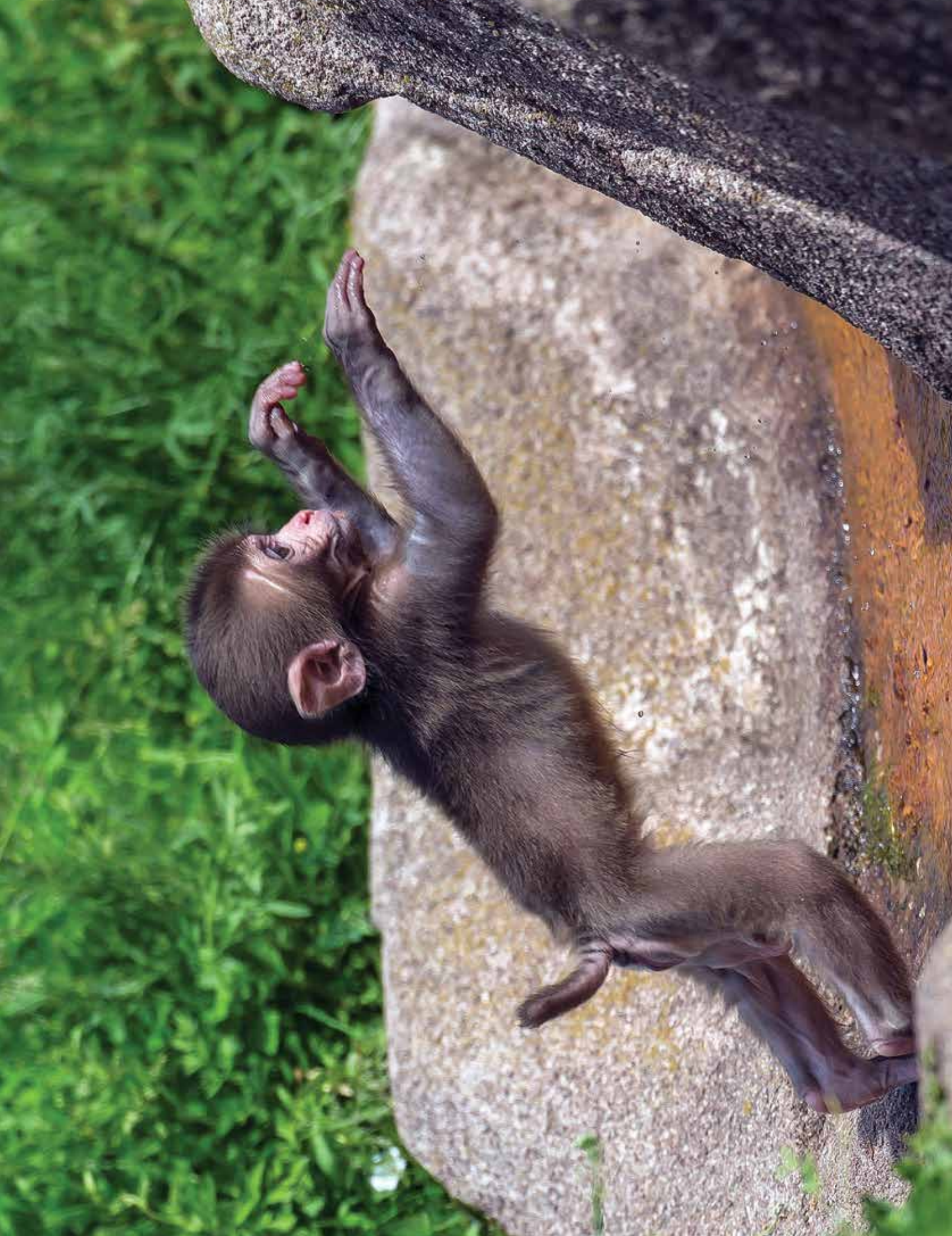


# March 2021



Cape thick-knees, found in southern Africa, can fly but mostly stay on the ground in shallow nests. To protect its young, a parent bird will sometimes flop on the ground and fake a wing injury to lure away a predator. Photo by Peter Luzzga

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Daylight Saving Time begins	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27 Passover begins at sundown
28 Palm Sunday	29	30	31	Snow leopard Photo by Joel Miller 		



# April 2021



Macaque babies stay close to their mothers for the first few weeks but then get increasingly braver, as Daisuki is demonstrating. Daisuki, or Suki for short, was born in May 2019. Another macaque, Nikko, was born in May 2020.  
Photo by Peter Zuzga

Sunday

Monday


Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**Anaconda**   
Photo by Bob Wickland



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Easter

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Ramadan begins  
at sundown

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Earth Day

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World Penguin Day

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# May 2021



Giraffe Ziggy nuzzles her calf, Desmond. Born in July 2019, he is the third calf for Ziggy and the fifth for father Bahatika. Photo by Peter Zurzga

Sunday

Monday


Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**African elephant**   
Photo by Garrett Hopkins



**White-bellied stork**   
Photo by Joel Miller



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Mother's Day

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Eid al-Fitr begins at sundown

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**29**

Memorial Day

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# June 2021



Happy has never been more deserving of his name since he moved to his new habitat in summer 2020. Guests are happy too since the habitat includes an underwater viewing area, allowing them to see Happy underwater for the first time. Photo by Peter Zuzga

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**Prairie dog**  
Photo by Garrett Hopkins



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Flag Day

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Juneteenth

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Father's Day

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**Zebra**  
Photo by Joel Miller





# July 2021



This young greater kudu doesn't have horns yet, but eventually he will sport spectacular spiral horns of up to 6 feet. He was born in May 2020 and is named **Katavi** in honor of Katavi National Park in Tanzania. Photo by Peter Zuzga

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

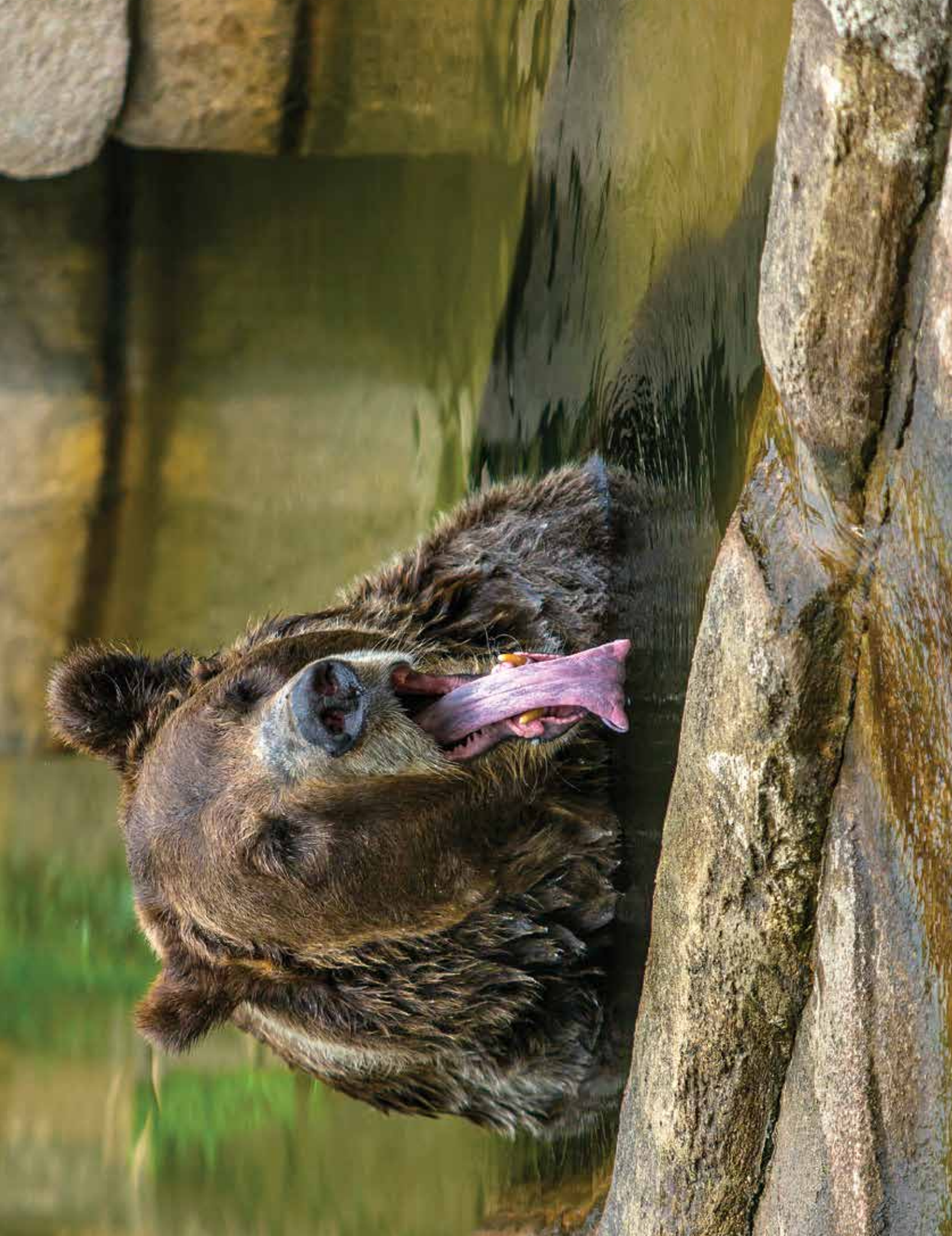
Friday

Saturday

**Hoffmann's  
two-toed sloth**  
Photo by Rhonda Crenshaw



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
Independence Day				<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>



# August 2021



There's nothing Boris loves more than a dip in his pool on a hot summer day. Alaskan brown bears like Boris are some of the biggest carnivores on land. Photo by Peter Zuzga

Sunday

Monday



Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12 World Elephant Day	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31	<b>Sandhill crane</b> Photo by Garrett Hopkins ➤➤		<b>Mongoose</b> Photo by Bob Wickland ➤➤		





# September 2021



Cheetahs Kira and Imara have a strong bond, even though they aren't related. They were born in 2004 and came to Milwaukee together in 2014. Photo by Peter Zuzga

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

**Reticulated giraffes**

Photo by Garrett Hopkins



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Labor Day

Rosh Hashana begins at sundown

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Yom Kippur begins at sundown

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**American avocet**  
Photo by Bob Wickland





# October 2021



Fall is your last opportunity to see the flamingos outside before they return to their indoor home for the winter. The Milwaukee County Zoo has two types of flamingos, the dark pink Caribbean flamingos and the lighter Chilean ones. Photo by Peter Zuzga

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Amur tiger</b> Photo by Garrett Hopkins 		<b>Grizzly bear</b> Photo by Joel Miller 				
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
	Halloween <b>31</b>					



# November 2021



The fantastic leaf-tailed gecko is also known as the satanic leaf-tailed gecko. Can you guess why? Its textured brown skin is perfect camouflage for hiding among the leaves in the rainforests of Madagascar. Photo by Bob Wickland

Sunday

Monday



Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7 Daylight Saving Time ends	8	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25 Thanksgiving	26	27	
28 Hanukkah begins at sundown	29	30	 <p>◆◆ Pekin robin ◆◆ Nicobar pigeons ◆◆ Photos by Garrett Hopkins</p>				



# December 2021



Made famous by the film "Finding Nemo," clownfish are found in the Indian and Pacific oceans and the Red Sea. The clownfish at the Milwaukee County Zoo are behind the scenes in coral reef tanks at the Aquatic & Reptile Center. Photo by Bob Wickland

Sunday

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Thursday

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Saturday

**Red panda**   
Photo by Joel Miller



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25

Christmas

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Kwanzaa begins

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29

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31

New Year's Eve

**ALIVE**



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# 2021 calendar

Zoological Society of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County Zoo



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



September



October



November



December

**Happy is a very happy hippo indeed since the opening of his new habitat in June.**

Photo by Garrett Hopkins