

Alive

Zoological Society of Milwaukee County

July 2001



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

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The response has been fantastic. Our members love the Zoological Society's new Zoo Pass Plus membership that includes free unlimited parking. We've received many positive comments, and about 50% of members have signed up for Zoo Pass Plus. We've also had a greater number of new members join from our annual recruitment mailing, thanks to Zoo Pass Plus. Two radio stations - WTKI and WTMJ - even called us to talk on the air about the parking option. We are pleased with the response. We look forward to seeing you at the Zoo.

On another matter, zoos now are looking at ways that they can help save animals by doing more field conservation projects in wild habitats. In April, I went to Tennessee for a meeting of several conservation committees of the American Zoo and Aquarium Association. In the next 10 years, the organization's goal is to quadruple the number of field-conservation programs that AZA institutions are conducting, from 800 to 3,200. We also want to double the number of countries in which we conduct conservation programs, to 102. Eventually, field conservation programs could be one of the criteria for AZA accreditation.

Of course, the Zoological Society and the Milwaukee County Zoo already are leaders in field conservation work. Long-term penguin field research in Chile by our zookeepers is supported by the Society. Surveying and protecting endangered bonobos in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been a major initiative of the Society and its conservation partner, the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Inc. (FWC). Studying birds in Belize and at three field sites in Wisconsin is a long-term, joint project of the Society and the FWC. The Society also has supported zookeepers and Zoo staff doing fieldwork on piping plovers in the Midwest, hornbills in Thailand, koalas in Australia, and rattlesnakes and turtles (see page 17) in Wisconsin, just to name a few projects. Our overall goal is to save animal species.

Gil Boese, Ph.D., President
 Zoological Society of Milwaukee County

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features

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It's time to get closer to the animols with this summer's new Zoo exhibits: Big Cot Encounter (featuring closeup viewing of the lions and cheetahs), the Holz Family Impala Country (with an overlook now going directly into the African Savonno and Bongo Exhibits) and Ameritech's Reptiles: Real & Robotic featuring the White Alligator (which gives you a chance to get close up to a rare white alligator in a bayou setting, to giont robotic reptiles, and to smaller live animols in a Meet the Reptiles presentation).

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If you want to become a zoo veterinarian or veterinary technician, the best way is to get experience at a zoo. The Milwaukee County Zoo offers a remarkable array of such experiences for students and for veterinary residents - thanks to the Zoological Society.

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Zoological Society researchers discover a rare jabiru stork nest in the Central American country of Belize. They find it on a preserve owned by the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Inc., while doing research for the Society's and Foundation's joint project, Birds Without Borders - Aves Sin FronterasSM.

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"Whatever happened to..." is a frequently asked question about animals we've featured in Alive. Now you can catch up with the prairie dogs, the wolf cubs, the baby moose, the piping plovers, the orphaned brown bears, and more.

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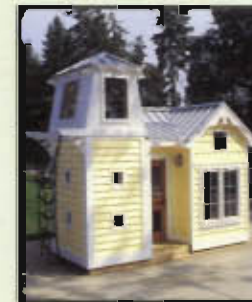
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Amon Ra, the Zoo's male lion



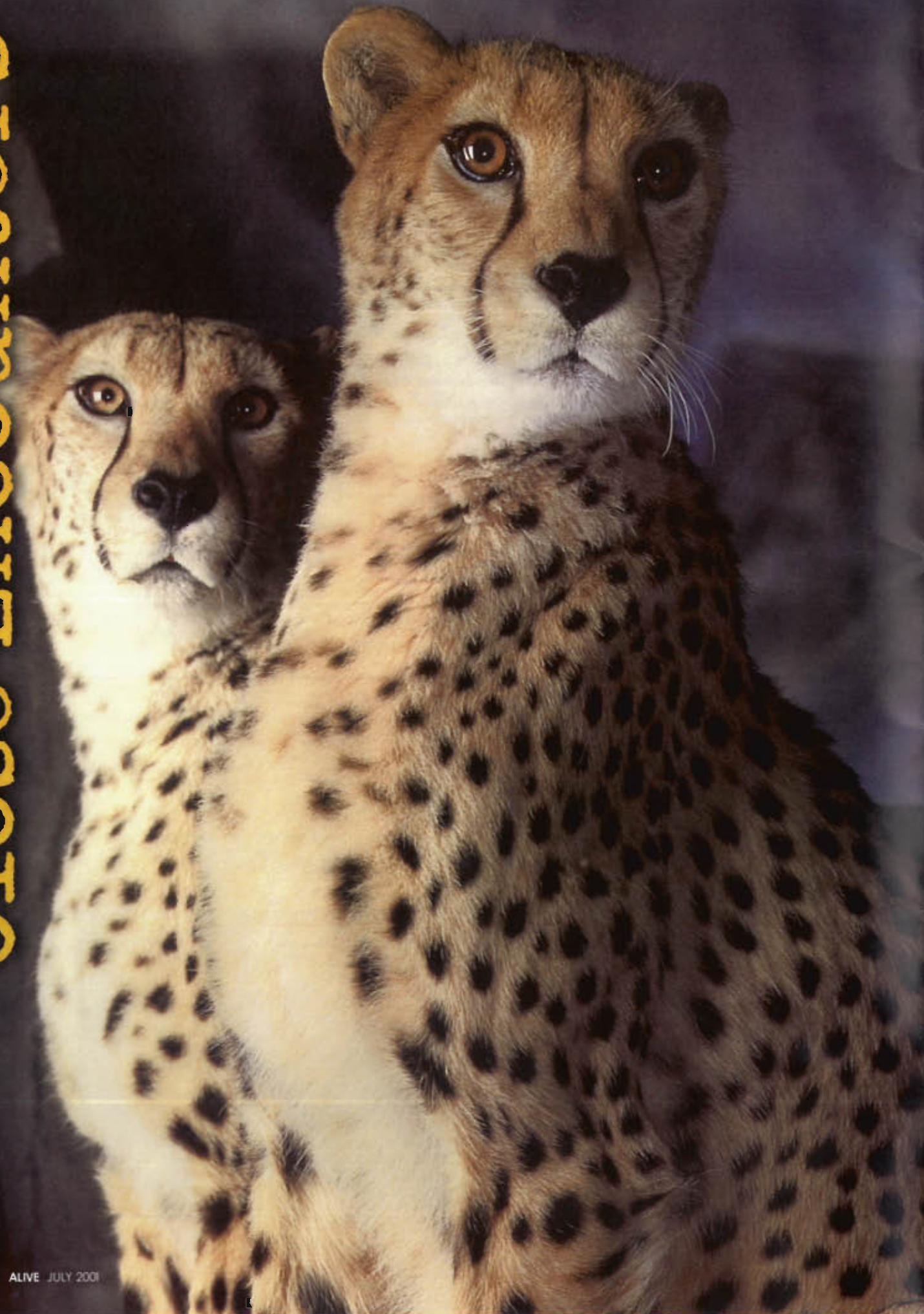
Habitat 2001

You can win one of eight children's playhouses on display at the Zoo from Aug. 16-29 during Northwestern Mutual Foundation's Habitat 2001. For more information, call Special Events at the Zoological Society, (414) 258-2333. This playhouse with a sun tower is called Cassita de Sol and was built by Johnson Design Architects/Builders, Inc., of Oconomowoc.



Antoine the white alligator

Close Encounters



BY SANDRA WHITEHEAD

Step up to the glass and stare into the face of a lion, close enough to count his eyelashes. Stroll out over an African savanna where graceful impalas and gazelles graze. Gaze into a Louisiana-style bayou inhabited by an 8-foot-long white alligator.

More than ever, three newly opened exhibits at the Milwaukee County Zoo give you an opportunity to get extremely close to some amazing animals. The Zoological Society and the Zoo teamed up with some generous sponsors and donors to bring you a great summer at the Zoo with these exhibits:

Big Cat Encounter, large covered viewing windows into the lion and cheetah outdoor exhibits. This opens to the public July 14 but premiers to Zoological Society members July 10, 12 and 13.*

Holz Family Impala Country, which opened in June, an overlook into the African Savanna and Bongo Exhibits, and,

Ameritech's Reptiles: Real & Robotic featuring the White Alligator, which opened in May, an unusual temporary exhibit running through Sept. 3 in the Otto Borchert Family Special Exhibits Building.

African animals are a big part of the Zoo's focus this summer. First, there's its new African elephant, Brittanie (see story on page 10). Then Big Cat Encounter will feature African predators: lions, cheetahs and hyenas (which alternate with lions in using the outdoor exhibit). The predators look out over their prey. The lions view kudus and zebras at the African Waterhole. The cheetahs eye the swift impalas and

gazelles in the African Savanna. The Zoo is famous for its predator-prey exhibits, with hidden safety moats in between.

Walk with us to the new northeast entrance of the Feline Building, between the African Savanna and African Waterhole Exhibits. Old windows, guardrails and bushes separating Zoo visitors from the

lions and cheetahs have been removed and replaced with much larger windows that allow expansive, close-up viewing.

"It will feel more like you are stepping into the yard than looking through a window," says feline zookeeper Valerie Werner. Plus, covered outcroppings provide shade and shelter, and reduce glare on the glass.

Impala Amon Ra, the male lion,

is exciting to watch, says Werner. Although he and the female, Sasha, are 16 years old (around 65 in human terms), he's still as strong and energetic as lions half his age. The lions are on the north side of the walkway leading into the building. On the south side are the cheetahs: Ace, Onyx, and Juba. These littermates, or triplet brothers, are 9 years old and hard to tell apart.

Werner knows them well since she helped raise them and still goes into the exhibit with them to check their health (which she can't do with the lions).

Now walk next door, to the Holz Family Impala Country featuring the African Savanna and



Impala

Bongo Exhibits. Thanks to the generosity of the Jerry and Dorothy Holz Family Foundation, a longtime Zoological Society supporter, visitors now can walk out on an observation deck that extends right into the yards. The left (south) side of the deck has a thatched roof, and here you can observe the Zoo's pair of hongos, which are large, forest-dwelling antelopes. They have reddish brown coats with stunning vertical white stripes. Their eyes are highlighted by a white strip that stretches over the nose and under the eyes. Their horns may grow to more than 3 feet tall.

The right (north) side of the deck takes you into the African Savanna, overlooking the impalas and Thomson's gazelles. From the deck, the savanna looks like a scene from a travel magazine of an African grassland. The most visible mammals are the grazing herds of antelope.

Our Zoo has six of the more than 70 kinds of African antelopes: hongos (in their own yard), impalas and Thomson's gazelles in the African Savanna; kudus, eland, and waterbuck in the African Waterhole Exhibit (which also has zebras). The five impalas (including a baby born June 2 named Chevy) and four gazelles graze among African spur tortoises, guinea fowl, and five species of large birds: African ground hornbills, a European white stork (in the wild it migrates to northern Africa), and three types of vultures. The vultures look over a rhino skeleton in the savanna. Impalas and

continued on page 6



This extremely rare white alligator, named Archbishop Antoine Blanc, is at our Zoo this summer.



Sasha, the Zoo's female African lion

gazelles are easy to tell apart. Impalas are bigger with large ears. All but one of our impalas are females that have no horns. Both male and female gazelles have sharp horns with ridges.

Before you leave the African area, head just a bit south (to your left if facing the impalas) to see the African hippos, wartbogs and elephants. When you've had enough sun, walk to Monkey Island and the blue building behind it that is the Otto Borchert Family Special Exhibits Building. Inside you will find Ameritech's Reptiles: Real & Robotic featuring the White Alligator. ACME Production Services of Milwaukee created a portion of a Louisiana bayou as temporary home for a real, very rare white alligator, on loan from the Audubon

Institute of New Orleans.

Here you'll meet Archbishop Antoine Blanc, an alligator named after an archbishop of the New Orleans area. This unusual creature is one of only 14 white alligators in the world today. The 8-foot-long, more than 150-pound alligator was discovered as a hatchling along with 18 others in a single clutch, or alligator nest, in Louisiana in 1987 by a Cajun fisherman. Four years later, a single female was discovered. Some of the alligators have died.

Antoine and the others are not albino, as his bright blue eyes show. An albino would have pink eyes. Rather, he has an even more unusual

genetic mutation called "leucism," in which an unusual combination of two recessive genes produces a white color. The skin of albino alligators is more translucent.

One reason white alligators are so rare is that they are not well-equipped to survive in the wild, especially early in life. They lack the protective black and yellow striping that helps a baby gator blend into its background. Thus they are more likely

to be eaten by birds and other predators. Likewise, when other alligators float near the top of the water, they can sneak up on prey. White alligators are too obvious. Finally, coldblooded gators love to sun, but the white alligators would sunburn; one even died from sunburn.

Our Zoo is one of only a dozen or so places worldwide to have the privilege of displaying this wonder of nature. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee partnered with Ameritech to make this rare opportunity possible.

The reptile exhibit also includes an array of large, moving robotic reptiles designed by Kokoro Dinosaurs of California. Here you will be startled to learn that Nile crocodiles can grow to 25-25 feet long! When you see its robotic equivalent, this croc will send shivers down your back. The huge robots, including one of a western diamondback snake, give you a chance to see reptilian features much larger than normal size. Here, also, you can walk through the history of reptiles and discover what they have in common with humans. Also, observe four live, harmless Wisconsin snakes that often are mistaken for venomous snakes. Meet the Reptiles, a live-animal demonstration by zookeepers, starts at 1:30 p.m. daily. You might start your reptile day at the Zoo at the nearby Aquatic & Reptile Center, where at 11:30 a.m. daily an Animals in Action show features live animals such as turtles, snakes, and a legless lizard. 🐾



Thomson's Gazelles

**Zoological Society members will receive invitations in the mail to the premiere of Big Cat Encounter on July 10, 12 or 13 during Jays and Roundy's Pick'n Save's Kids' Nights. Money raised by donors to the Zoological Society's Annual Appeal makes Big Cat Encounter possible. To donate, please call (414) 258-2333.*



A male and female bongo nuzzle each other.



Photo by Mike Neipper
Dr. Michelle Bowman assists Dr. John Scheels, the Zoo's dentist.

BY FRAN BAUER

As in any medical procedure requiring anesthetic, the atmosphere is tense as the doctor bends over the patient on the examining table, relying on the team of skilled technicians assisting her to monitor blood pressure and temperature, take blood samples and constantly watch for any reaction to the anesthetic.

The setting looks like something straight out of "ER," the ever-popular TV show. The patient, however, is a bird, and this is the Milwaukee County Zoo's veterinary Hospital in a secluded part of the Zoo grounds. The doctor is Roberta Wallace, the Zoo's senior veterinarian who has been a vet here for 12 years. At her side is Andrea Sobon, a student scheduled to graduate from the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Wisconsin Madison in May 2001. Andrea has been spending a month on Zoo grounds under a preceptor program that offers her the rare opportunity to work with the whole array of species, big and small, that resides here.

Taking blood samples and monitoring vital signs is Devon Huning. She says she is very lucky to be the person selected for a coveted internship program offered at our Zoo to veterinary technicians. For five months, Huning has been assisting either Wallace or veterinarian Dr. Vickie Clyde during surgeries and examinations, then analyzing blood samples and reporting back to the vets. Sobon and Huning are in two of four specialized veterinary programs offered at our Zoo by the Zoological Society.

On this day the patient is a king vulture, soon to be sent to a new home at a

Zoo Lab

South Carolina zoo. Before leaving, he's getting a thorough final exam to make sure he's healthy. The veterinarians also use these exams on outgoing animals to pick up signs that potential problems might be brewing in the Zoo's collection. For exam-

ple, a lower than average weight could be a warning sign that changes need to be made in diet or environment for the remaining vultures.

It is this mix of doing surgeries and exams on a wide variety of animals, as well as the chance to do scientific detective work, that makes working behind the scenes with the Zoo's veterinarians so exceptional, say the Zoo's interns and residents. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee provides the funding to bring four types of students onto the grounds to help in the Zoo's complex veterinary work:

• **Vet Tech Internship:**

Huning graduated a year ago from a veterinary technician school in Colorado and worked in a private clinic before starting a five-month internship here learning how to aid vets during exams and to perform lab work. Without actual zoo experience, there's little chance she could get a job in her field. There are not that many full-time vet technicians in the nation's zoos and aquariums. The Gretchen Dawes Endowment Fund provided \$4,000 to the Zoological Society to offer this important training.

• The Gretchen Dawes Endowment Fund also provided \$3,000 this year for the **preceptor program** that Sobon participated in along with Shannon Long and John Wertz. All of them were in their senior year of veterinary school, and they spent

four or more weeks learning the role a vet plays in a large zoo like ours. Each student received a \$500 stipend to help pay for room and board while here. Since 1998, 15 students have completed this program.

• Dr. Michelle Bowman, a veterinarian, is the first student ever to be a resident in **zoological medicine** at our Zoo, which has one of only eight such programs in the nation. As part of her three-year residency at UW-Madison's vet school, she spends



Student Andrea Sobon (with stethoscope) works with Dr. Roberto Wallace (center) and Devon Huning to anesthetize a king vulture for an exam.

three months a year at our Zoo, performing surgery, diagnosing and treating illnesses, and working on preventive health measures. The Zoological Society granted \$5,500 this year to the UW-Madison Veterinary School in return for the work she does in her residency.

• **Pathology resident:** Dr. Kathryn "Casey" Coyle is in a two-year residency in

zoo veterinary pathology at UW-Madison. To gain experience, she comes to our Zoo. She'll track down what caused an animal's illness or death, then share her findings with zookeepers, helping them correct animal problems such as parasites or deficits in nutrition. The Society provides \$41,250 a year to cover her salary, lab processing, and transportation costs.

Many of these students could not have afforded to train here, had it not been for Zoological Society support. Sobon went back to college when she was 30 to get the degree that qualified her to go on to veterinary school. Her hope was to finish vet school training with a preceptorship here, at the same zoo she'd loved as a child. But she already owed \$100,000 in student loans. "You have to pay out of your own pocket for most externships. But this Zoo offered enough of a stipend to pay for my food, gas and other expenses. I commend the Zoological Society for giving students the money to do this work. You're one of the few that do. And the experience you've offered me has been excellent."

Being in a preceptorship herself helped Roberta Wallace understand fully what a zoo veterinarian does. Until going to the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago for six weeks, she had no idea what zoo medicine was really like, she says. After graduating, she spent two years in a residency at the National Zoo in Washington D.C., then worked in Indianapolis as that zoo's first full-time veterinarian before coming to Milwaukee.

'We feel it's very important for students to get out and see firsthand what working in a zoo is all about.'

Dr. Bruce Beehler, deputy Zoo director



Vet tech Devon Huning prepares to give an injection to a bird, with help from Dr. Wallace.

Now Wallace spends much of her time either teaching or observing the students and interns as they work, to make sure no trouble arises and no one gets hurt. "Though it takes time, we're committed to these programs because we know from our own experience how important it is to have mentors," she says. "This training also contributes to the future of exotic-animal medicine."

The Zoo gains in major ways from having students and residents on the grounds. For example, the Zoo cannot afford a staff pathologist, and used to hire a consultant to come in once every

week or two. Now, Coyle, the resident in pathology, is here two days a week, and all her work is supervised by her professors.


Zoo pathology is a very specialized area, Coyle says. You must know a lot about domestic animals to figure out what may be happening in a wild species, where so much still is unknown. Besides the Zoo's collection, she keeps a close eye on free-roaming wildlife such as seagulls, Canada geese and raccoons. If any grow sick or are injured, she examines them. That's how she was able to alert zookeepers to a small distemper outbreak among raccoons last fall. (A few years ago two endangered snow leopard cubs died from catching distemper.)

One of her toughest challenges was figuring out why all the fish in Lake Evinrude died following a big storm in June 2000. She knew strong winds and heavy rain had stirred up oxygen layers in the water, and that the dead fish needed to be removed before they decomposed, removing more of

the oxygen. But only by examining 30 of the dead fish could she rule out any disease and confirm that they had suffocated from lack of oxygen.

If a penguin's egg fails to hatch, for example, Coyle first may "candle" it (hold it in front of a strong light) to examine the shape of the embryo inside. Then she will do a necropsy (exam on a dead animal) to determine if the bird had some infection or other problem. "When you're dealing with endangered species, any little clue will help," she says.

It is work like Coyle's that plays such a critical role in keeping the Zoo's animals healthy, says Dr. Bruce Beehler, deputy Zoo director. Our Zoo is one of very few institutions in the country to offer such a range of vet preceptor and residency programs, he says. "We feel it's very important for students to get out and see firsthand what working in a zoo is all about."

"It's very valuable training for the student, but it's also a real plus for us, since we're getting students and graduate residents who bring us the very latest in learning in their fields. If we didn't offer them some kind of stipend, most of these students couldn't afford to come here. The Zoological Society contributes a very significant amount to make these programs happen. And we all benefit as a result." 



Dr. Kathryn "Casey" Coyle examines the embryo inside a penguin egg in front of a strong light before doing a necropsy.

BIG & Beautiful

BY FRAN BAUER

Two of the biggest animals in the Zoo arrived this spring. A new elephant and polar bear are the first adult large mammals the Milwaukee County Zoo has acquired in two years. "It's the first new African elephant we've had since 1962," says Bess Frank, curator of large mammals. Both new animals are female. Brittanie, a 6,000-pound elephant born in Africa, comes to us from the Greenville Zoo in North Carolina. Chukchi, a hand-raised polar bear with an easy-going personality, was bottle-fed by zookeepers at Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo, after her mother rejected her.

The two face a similar challenge: getting along with their companions.

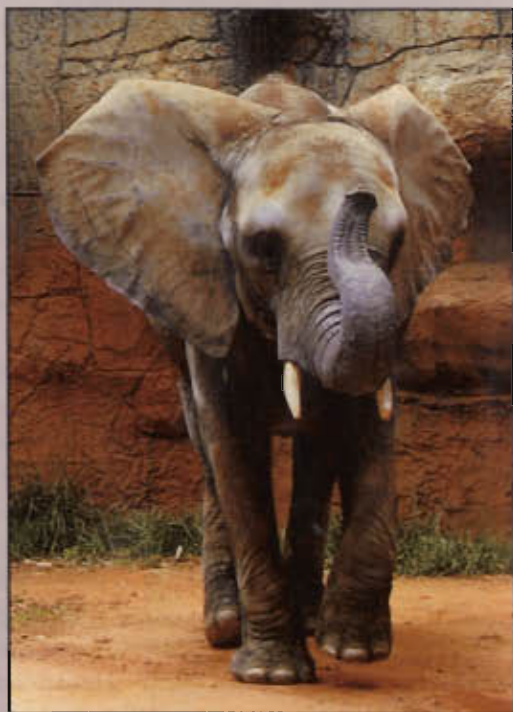
Chukchi arrived Feb. 13 to join her new polar bear mate, Zero, in the North American Polar Bear Exhibit. Zero and his former companion, Aurora, never successfully bred; she has returned to the Cleveland Zoo, where she was born in 1984. The hope is that Chukchi and Zero will produce a

cub. She's already had one cub successfully. So far, Zero and Chukchi are getting along. It's easy to tell them apart because Chukchi, at 650 pounds, is so much smaller than Zero, at 1,000 pounds. She also has a narrower, more delicate face.

Brittanie is filling the shoes of Babe, the elephant that died Jan. 16, leaving her companion of 38 years, Lucy. Babe's death deeply affected Lucy, but by spring Lucy realized that she no longer had to compete with Babe for the keepers' attention, says Bruce Beehler, the Zoo's deputy director. So Brittanie, 20, may have to win over the older Lucy, 43, if they are to become best friends. The two African elephants are being introduced to one another slowly in the first weeks, learning each other's smells and calls before doors are opened so they actually can touch trunks. When they are at ease with each other, they will be able to go out into the yard together.

"Brittanie is very energetic. She's always moving, a little spitfire," says Beth Roszak, her primary trainer, after she returned from visiting Brittanie in North Carolina. There, Brittanie was trained through free contact, where zookeepers went into the exhibit with her. At our Zoo, training is done through protected contact, meaning the keepers are behind barriers, says Roszak. Brittanie will be trained behind a curtain at first, to avoid distractions from the public. Zoogoers can watch

Chukchi the polar bear has taken to her new home at our Zoo.



Brittanie the elephant rooms her exhibit at the Greenville Zoo in North Carolina.


the training on a TV monitor. Only after she has learned to volunteer for daily care and medical exams will she go on continuous public view.

Zookeepers expect Brittanie eventually to succeed Lucy as the center of the Zoo's

elephant program. Once Brittanie adjusts to medical care, the Zoo and the American Zoo and Aquarium Association will consider her for artificial insemination in hopes that she might bear a calf.

Meanwhile, everyone hopes Chukchi will do it the natural way, as she and Zero get closer. Already they have been seen sleeping nose to nose. In the Arctic, their

natural habitat, they would dive into the ocean's icy waters to swim or to hunt seals. Here they can dive into their pool, play with their own pool toys and watch the Zoo's seals from across a safety moat. Chukchi loves to play to the crowd, and is already getting letters from fans who miss seeing her at the Lincoln Park Zoo, says Bess Frank.

This summer observe Chukchi and Zero, and hear a talk about the polar bears and seals every day at 3 p.m. in front of the Sea Lion Exhibit (which has two sea lions and one harbor seal). You can see Lucy the elephant during her training every day at 1:30 p.m. at the outdoor Elephant Exhibit, weather permitting. You can watch Brittanie all day on a TV monitor in the Pachyderm Area mall. 



Baby Camel

It's natural to have two humps if you're Kazmira, the 11th camel to be born at our Zoo. Those humps store fat she could convert to energy if Kazmira

were walking for weeks without food or water, as her ancestors did in central Asia, Afghanistan and northern China. Camels can survive up to four weeks without water, thanks to the way their bodies store fluids. When they drink, they take in as much as 40 gallons of water at a time! With large, soft pads on its feet and long eyebrows to shield its eyes from the sun, a camel is perfectly adapted to walking across arid deserts, says Bob Hoffmann. He is the area supervisor in charge of the Zoo's six Bactrian camels: Katie, Georgia, Rachel, Kazmira and her parents, Moses and Sanchi (Sanchi is in the photo with Kazmira). Camels have very long eyelashes to keep out sand, and a third eyelid works like a windshield wiper, blinking sideways rather than up and down to protect their eyes in a sandstorm. A long, prehensile upper lip lets them strip leaves from tree branches and eat what plants they can find.



Kazmira is learning to crouch, or sit, so she can show off in Animals in Action presentations held daily at 2:15 p.m. in summer across from the Zoo's South American Exhibit. Born March 14, this 4-month-old camel has a good personality but is a bit stubborn when learning her lessons, says Hoffmann.



Whose Tentacles Are These?

The next time you're at the Zoo's octopus exhibit, you might see this strange-looking creature with finger-like tentacles coming out of its face. It's a cuttlefish, a cephalopod cousin of the squid and the octopus. This unusual ocean dweller changes colors when it communicates. It can change from white to brown to black and, as it gets older, even to red.

Cuttlefish are not on exhibit if the Zoo has an octopus. When the octopus dies, the Zoo's four cuttlefish go into the octopus exhibit till we get a new octopus. They can't go in the exhibit with the octopus or it might eat them. So the cuttlefish wait in an aquarium off exhibit in the Aquatic & Reptile Center.

Octopuses have very short lives, and don't live long after laying eggs. Our octopus laid eggs last November, and could die anytime. But at our Zoo, some octopuses have lived a year or so after laying eggs. Cuttlefish normally live 6 to 18 months, and they already are 11 months old. So check out the octopus exhibit and see what you find.

If you see cuttlefish, watch how these 8-inch-long invertebrates (they're really not fish) can grow to 12 inches when they stretch out their tentacles looking for food. See if they use their venom to stun prey. Notice that they don't have a shell on the outside of their body. They have one inside! It's called a cuttlebone, but it's not a bone. It's a round piece of light, chalk-like shell material. When cuttlefish die, the cuttlebone is given to birds to chew on for calcium.



AFRICAN

Antelope Facts

When you come to the Zoo this summer, stop at the new Holz Family Impala Country. This is a wooden pathway that takes you into the African Savanna Exhibit on one side and the Bongo Exhibit on the other. Here you can see three of the Zoo's African antelopes: bongos, impalas and Thomson's gazelles, which graze with the impalas. Antelopes are hoofed mammals, called ungulates. Antelopes also have an even number of toes, which puts them in the scientific order Artiodactyla – along with the hippopotamus, camel, and giraffe. Read on to learn about bongos, gazelles and impalas.

The **bongo** lives in dense forests and is the largest forest antelope. A male can weigh up to 500 pounds. Bongos are herbivores; they eat only plants. They live in the mountains of central Africa from Sierra Leone to Kenya. Both the males and females have black horns with ivory tips that spiral in one complete twist. Bongos have reddish-brown fur and light-colored stripes for camouflage. Their ears move constantly, like antennae, listening for predators. The Zoo has two bongos, a male and female.

The **Thomson's gazelle** is a small, gracefully built antelope. It is also called a Tommy, and it is the most common gazelle in the East African savanna. The females roam in large herds with a single male. Thomson's gazelles are fast and can sprint up to 50 miles per hour. When alarmed, the

Tommy leaps vertically in the air with legs stiff, then continues running. This behavior confuses and frightens predators. Both males and females have horns, but the female's are smaller.

The **impala** is a medium-size, very sleek antelope with a glossy coat. It feeds mainly on grasses and is found in the savannas of southern and eastern Africa. Males have curved horns. Females are smaller than males and don't have horns (see the female below). Impalas can move very fast and are capable of jumping 10 feet into the air, and leaping as far as 30 feet. Predators may lie in wait near water holes at dusk. So impalas drink water during the hottest part of the day, when lions often are asleep.

Predator-Prey Maze

Help the lion, the predator, find its prey, the impala, by going through the maze.



ANIMALS

African Animal Crossword Puzzle

Using the clues below, fill in the crossword spaces to the right with names of the African animals in the word list.

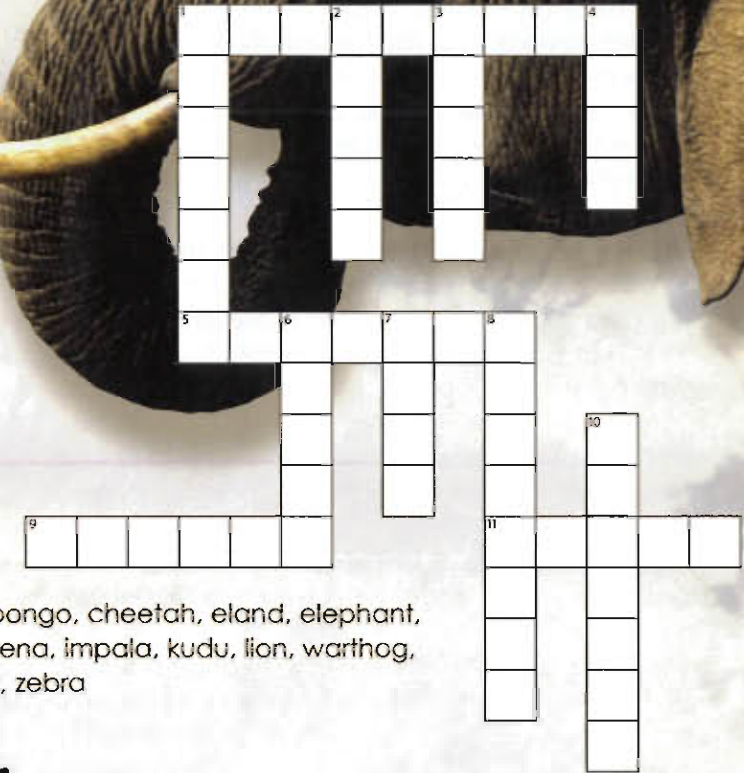
Across:

1. Large antelope that drinks lots of water
5. Small antelope that sprints up to 50 mph
9. A car is named after this fast antelope
11. This animal does not really laugh

Down:

1. African pig
2. Largest antelope; has corkscrew horns
3. Forest antelope; name of a drum
4. Slender antelope with mane
6. Striped. Comes at the end of the alphabet
7. A roaring...
8. Largest land mammal
10. Fastest land mammal (cat)

Word List: bongo, cheetah, eland, elephant, gazelle, hyena, impala, kudu, lion, warthog, waterbuck, zebra



Spotted-Cat Quest

Cats of all kinds have beautiful coats. The color and pattern of the coat help them blend into their natural surroundings. Below are three patterns of spots found on big cats. Visit the Milwaukee County Zoo's Feline Building to find out which pattern goes with which spotted cat, and write in the cat's name.

1. This cat has spots arranged in circles (rosettes) and an added spot inside each rosette.

Answer: _____



2. This cat has rosettes but lacks a spot inside each rosette.

Answer: _____



3. This cat has individual spots, not rosettes.

Answer: _____



Answer to Lizard Quest, April 2001: Mexican beaded lizard

Zoo Career With Cats

By Kathy Mangold

Do you think it would be fun to care for really big cats? Ask feline zookeeper Chris John, and he will say yes. Then he'll juggle his keys and add, "but only if you're careful."

Being a zookeeper in the Feline Building is one of the most dangerous jobs in the Zoo. "These are dangerous animals, not pets," John says. "If one of us zookeepers messes up, someone could die."

He and the other two full-time keepers must be cautious. When one of them opens a door to let the cats outside, another zookeeper double-checks to make sure the door is locked. "Security is our biggest issue," he says.

John has been a zookeeper for 15 years, 10 of them spent with the big cats. He is particularly fond of the babies: six litters of snow leopards, two litters of Siberian tigers and, last winter, three caracal kittens. Caring for young, endangered felines is his small part in the effort to keep the species from becoming extinct. He doesn't just clean cages and feed the building's 20 cats and three hyenas. He watches their health, gives them medicine,

keeps records of what they do, and creates the right environment so that the cats can have young. "I'm proud of the conservation I've been involved in," he says.



John and other keepers try to make sure the animals get outside regularly and don't get bored. Keepers sometimes stuff meat inside hard plastic balls that have holes. Valera the jaguar, for example, might get such a ball so she can "hunt" for her food. Keepers make scratching posts out of wood for the cats, and once a week give them bones to gnaw on. As an added dash, they will sprinkle a pinch of spice into a corner of an exhibit to give the cats a new odor to sniff.

John has always loved cats and once owned four house cats. But he didn't consider a career as a zookeeper until his last semester in college.

"In middle school, I wanted to be a doctor. Then in high school I wanted to be a fighter pilot or truck driver," he says. "In college I dabbled in chemistry and business, but once I hit upon zoology, I found what I wanted to do. I graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee with a bachelor of science in zoology in 1984." Zookeepers must have at least a high school degree, but most keepers hired by our Zoo these days have a college degree, often in zoology (animal science) or biology. They also must have a year of experience handling animals (not their own pets), perhaps at a humane society, on a farm or at a wild-animal rehabilitation center.

Chris John says that while his job centers on animals, he needs good people skills, too. "We need to communicate with other keepers frequently about safety and also talk with Zoo visitors about the animals."



Because John and the other feline keepers have raised the cheetahs, the keepers actually can go into their exhibit and touch them to check their health (see photo at top). The other cats, however, are strictly off-limits. If you put your hand near a cougar or a jaguar or lion, they might tear it off. To break up a fight between tigers, for example, keepers would distract them with water from a hose or with the sound of a fire extinguisher, giving one of the cats a chance to break away into a separate area.

Stork Sighting

BY PAULA BROOKMIRE

It was one of those exciting moments in the lives of field researchers. They're going about their jobs when suddenly they spot a rare bird flying overhead. Is it possible this bird is nesting nearby? They're on the lookout.

In this case, the researchers were four men working for the Zoological Society of Milwaukee down in the Central American country of Belize. They were banding birds in March along the Sibun River on Runaway Creek Nature Preserve, which is owned by the Zoological Society's partner, the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Inc. (FWC). They were studying birds for Birds Without Borders - *Aves Sin Fronteras*, a joint project of FWC and the Zoological Society.

The bird spotted was a jabiru stork, an elegant, 5-foot-tall creature with a black head, a bright red band around its neck, and a white body. With a wingspan of 10 to 12 feet, jabiru storks are the largest flying birds in the New World. Jabirus are threatened or endangered throughout Central America, although they are plentiful in South America. Only a few have been sighted in Belize. Perhaps because of its ability to fly long distances on thermal air currents, this bird was named jabiru, an Indian word for "blown in the wind." The current range of jabirus is from Mexico to northern Argentina.

Researcher Gene Albanese spotted a stork on March 3, 2001. The next morning, staffers Reynold Cal and Mario Teul were checking mist nets (nets used to capture songbirds gently for banding) when they heard loud grunting and hissing noises nearby. While investigating, Cal discovered a huge nest in a ceiba tree, then notified Albanese and Teul, supervisor of the Runaway Creek Nature Preserve study site. They confirmed that it was a jabiru stork

nest with two nestlings. A single adult jabiru was perched close to the nest.

When researchers checked the nest a few days later, two adult jabirus were spotted. The parents were taking turns gathering food such as frogs, then regurgitating in the nest for the chicks. The gray-white downy nestlings were 2½-feet tall (as tall as their nest was wide) and estimated to be 2 to 3 weeks old. On April 17, researchers observed them starting to fly.

Jabiru nests are so large that sometimes other birds such as parakeets and wrens build their nests on the edges of the jabiru nest. They also help warn the storks of approaching danger.

This happy discovery of the nest came about partly because the researchers were prepared. A year earlier three of them (Albanese, Teul and Omar Figueroa, who is Belize coordinator of BWB-ASF) had observed three storks flying into the preserve carrying nesting materials. So, in February 2000, Figueroa organized a plane flight over the preserve. They saw a few storks - but no nests - at an interior lagoon. This year they were on the lookout, and found the nest about 1.5 km from that lagoon.

Observing the behavior of birds is one of the steps in helping protect them. And conserving birds is one of the goals of Birds Without Borders - *Aves Sin Fronteras*, an international project studying migratory and resident birds in both Belize and Wisconsin. The 6,134-acre Runaway Creek Nature Preserve, which also is home to threatened jaguars and spider monkeys, is one of the Birds Without Borders research sites. In addition to the nest on the preserve, only two other jabiru nests are known to exist in Belize. Jabirus are threatened by destruction of their habitat and by humans hunting them for food. These storks normally return to the same nest year after year, but they will abandon



Jabiru stork. Photo: M.P. Kohn / WRO

the nest readily if there is too much human activity nearby.

To see more photos of jabiru storks and their nests, log onto the Belize Zoo's Web site: www.belizezoo.org/zoo/zoo/bird.html. The FWC and National Geographic cinematographers Richard and Carol Foster have produced a one-hour-20-minute film of the jabiru family to help promote conservation programs on Runaway Creek Nature Preserve. 🐾



Animal Catch-up

BY PAULA BROOKMIRE

It's time to catch up on your favorite Zoo-animal soap opera. We don't often get the chance to tune in again on the lives of animals we've featured in past issues of *Alive*. So here's your opportunity to find out: Do those cute wolf cubs that arrived two years ago like their home, and what's the story on the one that squeezed out of the fence? Did the perky prairie dogs that came last summer survive their frozen exhibit last winter? What's this new game that Borealis, the frisky Alaskan brown bear, has developed? From sheep to plovers, here's how the plots are developing:

FROZEN PRAIRIE DOGS?

The 13 prairie dogs that came to the Zoo last summer faced danger from

snow and ice last winter. The large snowfall in December melted in the outdoor prairie dog exhibit, where they had dug tunnels under the earth, and then re-froze in February. Zookeepers noticed that the tunnel holes were frozen. "We feared that they were all dead," says Daron Graves, North American Area supervisor. "Still, we put out food for them." After no sight of them for two months, on March 26 Bess Frank, curator of large mammals, spotted some live prairie dogs. Zookeepers had counted six as of May, and more are believed alive underground. They survived by burrowing into the gunnite walls of their exhibit. Sprite as ever, the prairie dogs in spring were seen challenging geese six times their size that were eating the prairie rodents' food.



Prairie Dogs

Brown Bear

HOT PIPING PLOVERS

Remember the experiment last fall to encourage the Zoo's small piping plover population to breed by letting them "migrate" within the aviary from one exhibit to another, with the females going a week earlier, as they migrate in the wild? "We didn't have much success with that," says Kim Smith, curator of birds, "but it did help relieve the stress the captive birds experience from not migrating." The goal is to find ways to buttress the dwindling plover population in the wild. Keepers have found a clue as to what turns on plovers: aggression. When the plovers were separated into two pairs, they didn't show much interest in breeding. But when two males were put in with one female, the plumage came out and the males got aggressive. By May, the female was discovered building a nest. Trouble is, if she hatches chicks, no one will know which is the father (unless they do a genetic analysis, of course).

THE DIVING BROWN BEAR

Borealis, the orphaned Alaskan brown bear that came to the Zoo in summer 1999, has a new nickname: Free Fall. Six times he has fallen or dived into the netting 15 feet down in the dry moat around the exhibit he shares with Aurora, the Kodiak bear. The first four times, Borealis had to be tranquilized for keepers to get him out of the moat. The fifth time (April 20, 2001), zookeepers again put a ladder into the moat for him to climb out and left him there for a few days. On Sunday, April 22, he climbed out for the first time. Four days later he was back in the moat (pushed this time by Aurora, says a zoogoer who saw it happen), and he climbed out again. Well, after all, they're just playful 2-year-olds.

THE BUTTING DALL SHEEP

You can't miss the strikingly renovated Dail sheep exhibit, with its resurfaced "stone mountain" and elegant new cedar fencing. The thick cedar fence boards were necessary to contain the powerful male. While the remodeling was underway, the Zoo's four sheep lived at the Hospital. "He literally pushed his way through the Hospital's wood holding area," says Daron Graves. So he was moved to a barn elsewhere in the Zoo. Also for security, a new holding area in the back of the sheep exhibit now is covered since one of the sheep, when startled, jumped over the fence last year.

NO LOVER HE

The tale of the two koalas is still a barren one. Taree came to the Zoo last summer to mate with the male, R.T. "They get along fine – just no breeding," says Graves. "He hasn't shown any interest in



One of the timber wolves playfully shows its dominance to one of its siblings.

any females he has been with, either here or at other zoos." R.T. is the one you'll see outside in a tree at the Koala Walkabout. Taree prefers to stay inside.

TREE'S A CROWD

The three moose horn last year were all named after trees: Aspen and Birch (born to Melrose in May 2000), and Willow (born to Linda) in June. The youngsters have never been in the same exhibit together since Aspen was kept in the Zoo Hospital for months because she was so sick. Constant bottle-feeding and care by zookeepers and vets brought her back to health. Eventually she will go to the Miller Park Zoo in Illinois. Willow and Birch have been sent to The Wilds in Cumberland, Ohio.



Moose

WOLF WOODS IS HOME

The now 2-year-old wolves enjoy their Wolf Woods habitat, with its lookout hill, cascading waterfall and picture windows into a log cabin containing animals the wolves find fascinating: human visitors. In fact, when one wolf squeezed through a small hole in the exhibit's fence in April, after being frightened by some landscaping machinery, all it wanted to do was get back

in. It never went more than 20 feet away. What impressed Graves was that a 96-pound wolf could get through a tiny fence hole that was 7 feet off the ground. But then, the wolves are clever, as the Zoo's Wolf Team knows. This is a group of five zookeeper volunteers who go into the yard with the five wolf siblings and train them to accept health exams and go into a kennel when called. "They picked up health problems (such as broken teeth) that we regular keepers wouldn't have," says Graves. The Wolf Team, headed by Earl Conteh-Morgan, consists of Jaqui Mundel-Wachowiack, Dawn Fleuchaus, David Sikorski, and Laurie Talakowski. Some of the wolves actually will come to these keepers when called by name.

ORNATE BOX TURTLES

Zookeepers in the Aquatic & Reptile Center have raised more than 50 of these endangered baby turtles since this conservation program started in fall 1996. Because they are kept warm in winter and fed regularly, the turtles put on about five years of growth in nine months, says Craig Berg, aquarium and reptile curator. "By June they are at a size where they are practically predator-proof." The turtles then go to the Department of Natural Resources, which puts them into a managed prairie in central Wisconsin.

continued on page 18

MORE VAMPIRE BATS

For those of you who love those toothy little, blood-drinking vampire bats in the Small Mammals Building, 10 of them have arrived from the Houston Zoo, five males and five females. That brings the Zoo's collection up to 19.



Acouchi

ACOUCHI GENERATION

Two new acouchis (rain-forest rodents from South America) arrived from the Houston Zoo and are residing in Primates of the World, even though they aren't primates. You may remember their grandpa, Ratso, on loan from our Zoo to Houston. Our only other acouchi, Gervis, lives in the Small Mammals Building and shares an exhibit with his buddy, a douroucouli (a South American nocturnal monkey) named "Old Man." Zookeepers didn't want to disturb that relationship by adding two younger acouchis. So they found room for the youngsters in primates.

UP IN A TREE

Kiama, a female Matchie's tree kangaroo, arrived last winter and was first introduced to Ren, our only male tree kangaroo, in early March. She was scared of him and would not come down from her tree-like perch to get food. Ren ate it all. So out went Ren till Kiama could get

comfortable. Then they reintroduced her and Ren in late March, in hopes that they would breed. Another female, Emily, came here to mate with Ren in 1997, just after he arrived. They bred, but Emily expelled two joeys from her pouch at about 12 weeks of age instead of letting them stay for the normal six months. So she is out of the running.

HAPPY BADGER, HIDDEN PORCUPINE

Scarlet the badger likes the new yard she was moved to last summer, says Daron Graves. It's to the right of the black bear exhibit, as you face that exhibit. "The new yard has dirt (her old one didn't), and she does a lot of digging. I haven't seen her pacing in a long time," he says. Meanwhile, the North American porcupine that arrived last

year is not as pleased with her exhibit, which is next to the Alaskan brown bears. "She's extremely shy. She doesn't come out at all. We're planning renovations to make her yard more comfortable. We'll add more branches, small trees and a patch of dirt to play in," says Graves.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MASKED GUY!

Edo, a masked palm civet, turns 20 on Aug. 13, and is one of the Zoo's oldest small mammals (surpassed by a vampire bat and a sloth). His mate, Hanako, born in 1981, died in 1998. Edo has lived twice as long as he would have in the wild, says Nina Schaefer, small mammals supervisor. "Edo eats better than ever. They put some new trees in his exhibit and a wooden shelf, and he likes sleeping close to the heat duct."



Matchie's tree kangaroo

The Serengeti Circle is an exclusive group of corporations and foundations that support the Zoo and Zoological Society through sponsoring special events, exhibits/attractions, programs and promotions at the \$2,500 level and above. For more information on sponsorship opportunities at the Zoo, please call Patty Harrigan, (414) 302-9485.

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Sponsors and grantors committing dollars and in-kind gifts after May 21, 2001, will be recognized in the next issue of *Alive*.

Habitat 2001: Eight children's playhouses will be raffled off to benefit the Zoological Society again this year, thanks to Northwestern Mutual Foundation. This one, called Fun Farm, was created by Peter Schwabe Design/Build of Big Bend. Northwestern Mutual Foundation's Habitat 2000 raffle raised \$51,000 last year to help the Society. This year's playhouses will be on display at the Zoo Aug. 16-29. You can buy raffle tickets starting July 16. For more information, call Zoological Society Special Events, (414) 258-2333

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"I've enjoyed my many years as a volunteer leader for the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Working with the education committee and the Board of Directors has provided me the opportunity to get other people involved in the wonderful things the Milwaukee County Zoo has to offer. Whether it has been seeking support for the Zoological Society's education and conservation programs or introducing other community leaders to the opportunities at the Zoo, my volunteer experiences have been extremely fulfilling. Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped make the Zoo one of the best in the country."

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- 5-year Platypus Society Member in bold (updated each fall)
- Friends contributing to the Platypus Society after May 24, 2001, will be recognized in the next issue of *Alive*.

NEW MEMBERS

The Zoological Society welcomes the following new Platypus Society members as of May 24, 2001:

SILVER CORPORATE I
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PATRON II
\$1,500-\$1,999

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PATRON I
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- Carla & Neal Butenhoff
- James & Betsy Williamson

The Zoological Society is very grateful to those Platypus Society members who are volunteer leaders. We can never thank you enough for your undying support to this organization.

The Zoological Society recognizes its major donors through membership in the Platypus Society; those members include over 385 area foundations, businesses and individuals contributing more than \$468,000 annually in unrestricted support. In appreciation for their generosity, Platypus members have the option to receive exclusive VIP benefits. If you would like to more information about the Platypus Society, please contact the Zoological Society's Development Director, Joan Rudnizki, at (414) 276-0843, email 217.



Three Caracals

Born: February 8, 2001
Feline Building

They may look like cute little house cats, but the three new caracal kittens – the first born at our Zoo since 1982 – are anything but friendly. Feline area supervisor Neil Dretzka predicts his staff won't be able to catch and weigh these baby wildcats as they grow. The kittens hiss, spit and bare their teeth, just as they would if defending themselves in the savanna and brush country of South Africa, their natural habitat. They weighed less than 1 pound at birth and soon grew the caracal's distinctive tufts of black hair on their ears. By May, it was determined that they were all female. They already could leap and jump with such speed that, in the wild, they could catch a bird in flight for breakfast. Their parents, Mary and Percy, are both age 3 and both came here from South Africa in June 1999. A breeder in that country had urged farmers to catch rather than kill caracals going after livestock. He eventually received about two dozen caracals from farmers. He bred them, and Mary and Percy were among the kittens. This is Mary's first litter. Percy no longer shares the same exhibit with her and the kittens. He's now in his own exhibit near the hyenas.

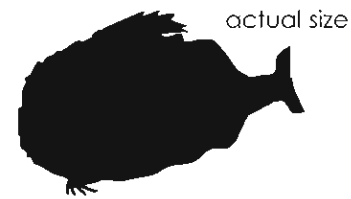


Sugar Glider

Arrived March 3, 2001
Small Mammals Building

How would a rambunctious young male sugar glider born last September get along with the Zoo's mature 4-year-old sugar glider named Watootzie? These tiny, nocturnal marsupials (distantly related to kangaroos) usually live in groups and don't welcome strange individuals. But Watootzie had been alone for two months. So when this "odd couple" were introduced to each other April 7, zookeeper Rhonda Crenshaw in the Small Mammals Building watched closely. "They were just sniffing each other at first," she said. "Then they started licking each other."

Everything seemed OK. So she went away for an hour. When Crenshaw returned, she said, "they were both cuddled together in their hollow log." When they're not there or in their nest box, the two are darting about their exhibit from limb to log. These mammals cannot fly, but they can glide more than 100 feet between trees in the forests of New Guinea, Australia, and nearby islands, their native habitat. They can control the direction, speed, and height of their glides precisely. A membrane of skin extending from the forelegs to the hind legs acts as a wing. The tail is used to steer during "flight." Some people buy sugar gliders as pets until they discover how costly it is to feed them fresh fruits. You can tell the Zoo's two gliders apart by their color: Watootzie is bigger and her back is a light tan while the male's is darker gray.



Spiny Lumpsucker

Arrived: November 16, 2000
Aquatic & Reptile Center

What's in a name? The spiny lumpsucker has such a hilarious name that a brewery on the West Coast even named a beer after these very personable little fish, says Craig Berg, aquarium and reptile curator. In real life, spiny lumpsuckers blend so well into their surroundings that you may have trouble finding the two on exhibit in the Puget Sound exhibit. Look closely for these golf-ball-size, bubble-shaped fish. You may see them clinging to kelp, thanks to suckers on their bellies that they use to stick to things. Or watch as they swim toward you, the fins on their tummies heating up and down like the whirl of a propeller. It's also fun to watch them bob up and down like fish bobbers. These tiny creatures are natives of the cold waters of the Pacific Northwest. They survive because their suckers hold them in place on a rock, even when the water is churning all around them. Their prickly spines discourage bigger fish from even trying to eat them. They'd also be pretty hard for most fish to swallow, thanks to their round body. Spiny lumpsuckers like to lay their bright cherry-colored eggs in the shallows, where as many as 200 eggs will adhere to the rocks until hatching.

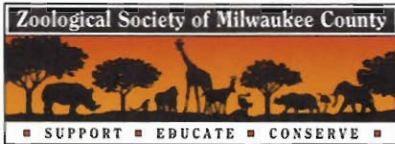


Sun Bittern

Born: March 21, 2001
Herb & Nada Mahler Family Aviary

A charming little sun bittern chick named Dawn is the first live birth for her 18-year-old mother, which is old for a bird to have her first chick. The mom came to the Milwaukee County Zoo in March 2000 to breed with our 10-year-old male. She had never bonded successfully with a male before. "Because she has no previous offspring and no siblings, she is one of the most genetically valuable females in the population of captive sun bitterns," says Kim Smith, curator of birds. Her genes add diversity to the gene pool. So the birth was important in the zoo world, and it was the first sun bittern born at our Zoo in a decade. "Typically sun bitterns are not the best first-time parents. Other zoos recommended that we supplement the food the chick's parents were giving

it to ensure its survival. Both parents were doing such a great job tending to the chick from day one that the staff decided to monitor the chick but not interfere," adds Smith. In the wild the birds eat frogs, fish, insects, and crustaceans. The chick has the same brown-orange, round "sun spots" on the outer edges of her wings as her parents. These spots, which show only when the birds spread their wings, make them look bigger and startle predators. They also get attention during courtship. The brown and black variegated pattern in their feathers helps the birds blend into their South American habitats, which are threatened due to deforestation. You'll find the sun bittern family in the first tropical exhibit to left as you leave the aviary's wetlands exhibit.



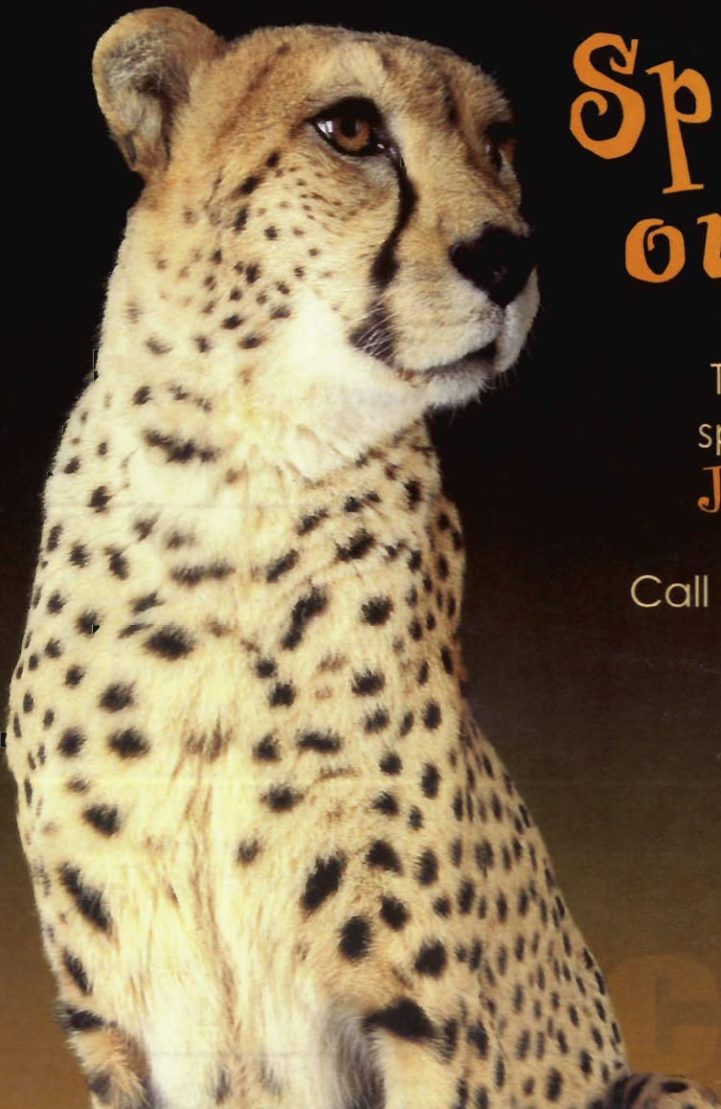
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