

AN INSIDER MAGAZINE FOR ZOO PASS MEMBERS

SPRING 2024

A LIVE





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



Photo provided by Milwaukee Business Journal

We are looking forward to spring at the Milwaukee County Zoo. Pollinator Rest Stops buzzing with life, attractions entertaining guests and animals enjoying the sun. A teenager mimics a bear stretching, a parent holds a child while she watches a De Brazza's monkey do the same, a Zoo Pride volunteer smiles at his favorite animal as they emerge for the first time in months.

But with change and growth comes making room for some new spaces at the Zoo. This spring kicks off construction on a new Humboldt penguins' habitat which you can read more about in our January-April issue of Wild Things. Be assured that although their homes are in transition, the animals are getting the care they need behind the scenes. These spaces will be an improvement and we appreciate you pardoning our dust as we expand. I am also incredibly proud to announce that Phase III of Adventure Africa, dedicated to rebuilding the Rhino habitat, is now in progress. This multi-year, multi-million-dollar investment was made possible in part by generous donors, Zoo leadership and support from the Milwaukee County Executive and County Board supervisors. The Zoological Society of Milwaukee has shared the cost in this epic campaign by contributing more than \$25 million for new homes for elephants, African hoofstock, hippos and soon rhinos. Whether it was five or five million dollars donated, we are immensely grateful to our donors. Read more in the Coming Soon section on Page 3.

With this new year comes new partnerships and we are proud to share that the Zoological Society of Milwaukee is a member of critical Saving Animals From Extinction® (SAFE) programs like North American songbirds, Jaguars and Orangutans. You can read more about what Orangutan SAFE looks like in action on Page 4. Over the past year, our Community Engagement department actively participated in nearly 40 community-based programs, including the expansion of community science initiatives. Learn more about the sunfish monitoring program in collaboration with the Milwaukee School of Languages on Page 6. When it comes to conservation, there is plenty to talk about; read about our flagship global conservation program, Pat Gives Back, on Page 8 or the exciting hatching of critically endangered tortoises on Page 11.

To our members, thank you for joining us in our mission to educate, conserve and support the Milwaukee County Zoo. We could not be more hopeful and excited for the future – and this issue of Alive is one of the ways we keep you in the know and say 'thank you' for your dedication.

Jodi Gibson

Zoological Society President & CEO

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All photos taken by Carolyn Lewis unless otherwise noted.

COMING SOON

Rhino Habitat Construction Begins in Spring

The final phase of Adventure Africa promises an immersive and modern space, transporting visitors across the world.

When asked what guests can expect from the new habitat, Amos Morris, Director of the Milwaukee County Zoo, spotlights the enhanced indoor space, stating it will be "the best view of rhinos outside of a wildlife park."

This design speaks to the intention of this new habitat, a snapshot of an animal in a park-like setting. Inspiring awe and empathy

with this African species that call savannas and shrublands home in the wild.

The new space combines the former rhino habitat (currently home to the yaks) and the former elephant habitat (currently home to the oryx). The new habitat will include a dedicated indoor area for hippos and a redesigned central pathway for Milwaukee County Zoo guests. Like the Elephant Care Center, this new habitat is designed around the care of the animal who calls it home.

Behind the scenes, this new space is specifically designed for breeding, featuring five distinct stalls that offer a comfortable home. Flexibility and use of space are crucial for rhinos who are solitary in the wild.

While plans for a rhinoceros feeding area are being finalized, guests can look forward to this engaging experience.

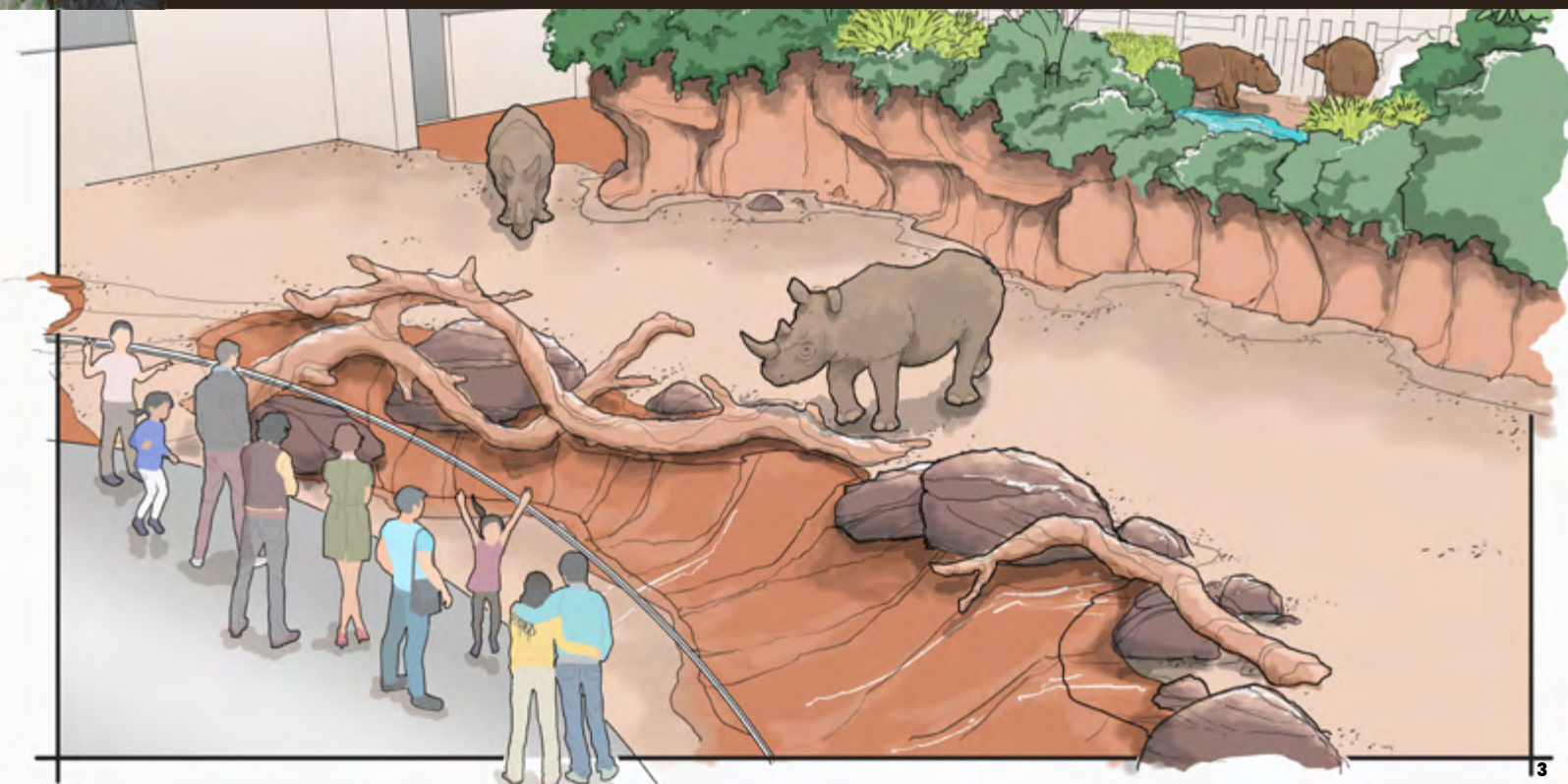
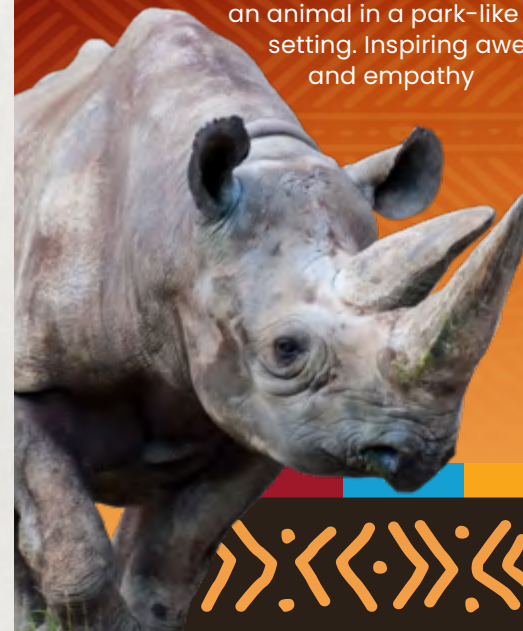
As the final phase of Adventure Africa nears, we reflect on its success as a testament to the robust public-private partnership between the Milwaukee County Zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee. Together, we will have transformed 25% of the developed footprint of the Zoo.

Construction on the new habitat is scheduled to begin in Spring 2024; the project aims for completion by Fall 2025.



"The best view of rhinos outside of a wildlife park."

- Amos Morris, Director





SAFEGUARDING RANGUTANS

The Milwaukee County Zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee are program partners in the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' Orangutan Saving Animals From Extinction® (SAFE) program, directly aiding orangutan conservation.

Patricia Khan's career in primate care first began with hand-rearing a young macaque. Her passion led her to the Milwaukee County Zoo in 1993, where she became an orangutan keeper, later advancing to the role of Curator of Primates/Small mammals. She also serves as Secretary on the Orangutan SAFE committee.

Sumatra to meet partners in the field and learn about what can be done to save the species. Khan joined Zimmerman again in 2023. This international trip, facilitated by the longstanding relationship between the Zoo and Orangutan Outreach, was made possible by funding through the Zoological Society of Milwaukee.

Khan's visits to various conservation organizations supported by Orangutan SAFE, including the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program (SOCP), Borneo Nature Foundation (BNF) and Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), were enlightening. "Personally, it was a huge experience. I always try to bring something back to the Zoo," she says.

As an Orangutan SAFE committee Secretary, Khan took many pictures to share her firsthand knowledge on programs OSafe supports. Khan speaks about the exclusivity and how "it is an incredible gift to be invited to join Orangutan Outreach and experience these sanctuaries."

During her visits, Khan witnessed the relocation efforts for non-releasable orangutans at SOCP's "Haven", including an inspiring moment with Leuser, a completely blind adult male adapting confidently to his new island environment.

Leuser, had ventured out of his night house (where sanctuary orangutans sleep) and onto an island habitat built for him, only four days prior to Khan's visit. He traversed a bridge to reach his manmade island, then skillfully made his way to a rope, guiding himself towards the structures at the center of his lush new home. Khan observed him adeptly scale the ropes between the towers.

Overwhelmed, Khan expresses how impactful this moment was for her to see, "He felt rain and wind. He problem solved. To see him looking comfortable? To see him outside? Amazing." This was an incredible animal that had been severely injured by humans, and due to his injuries, had spent almost his entire life in a mesh enclosure. It was a testament to

SAFE
SAVING ANIMALS
FROM EXTINCTION

Khan's involvement in conservation expanded through a collaboration with Richard Zimmerman, Director of Orangutan Outreach, a non-profit organization that works to protect orangutans and their habitat. Khan and Zimmerman collaborated on an annual awareness campaign at the Zoo called Missing Orangutan Mothers (M.O.M.s), aimed at educating guests about orangutan conservation. The program developed through the years and eventually included messaging about palm oil farming and its negative impact on orangutans.

This partnership was built on a strong foundation and in 2018, Orangutan Outreach invited Khan on a trip to Borneo and



Making enrichment for BOSF Nyaru Mentang orangutans. From right to left: Trish Khan (MCZ), Rich Zimmerman (Orangutan Outreach), Debbie Clemens (Orangutan Outreach), Lealan (BOSF)

the commitment and dedication of SOCP and the Haven and those who support their work who never gave up on Leuser or the other non-releasable orangutans.

However, for those deemed fit for release, threats such as forest fires pose significant challenges. To combat this, OSafe and Orangutan Outreach both support funding for reforestation projects. Khan spent a morning with the Mawas Conservation team, a program of BOSF, in Central Borneo.



Leuser the orangutan on new island at SOCP "Haven"



Planting a durian tree in forest at Samboja Lestari BOSF. Orangutans love durian fruit!



Orangutan on a pre-release island at BOSF. Did you know Orangutan means "person of the forest" in Malay? This orangutan is taking that seriously!

The Mawas Program initiatives involve training locals to cultivate seedlings, subsequently bought back by conservation organizations. Villagers actively contribute to transporting, planting and safeguarding these seedlings. This fosters a sense of ownership and sustainability within their communities. The project also involves children and elders in eco-bag weaving to plant trees.

Khan's journey, supported by the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, continues to mold the conservation culture at the Milwaukee County Zoo, showcasing the potency of collaboration and unwavering dedication in safeguarding endangered species.

Saving Animals From Extinction® (SAFE) initiative by:

**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

INSPIRING TOMORROW'S CONSERVATIONISTS:

FIELDWORK PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

Getting field work experience was not easy for Milwaukee School of Languages AP Biology students to add to their curriculum. But with the help of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee Outreach department, the future is promising.



Not long ago, a small population of Northern long-eared sunfish was transplanted to the Zoo from the Mukwonago River. This population of fish is annually monitored for genetic bottlenecks and overall population health. For the past year, Milwaukee School of Languages had been involved with the sunfish monitoring project under the leadership of Isabelle Bieser, Manager of Innovation & Community Engagement here at ZSM. This year **Paul Vandermeuse, ZSM's Middle and High School Programs Coordinator**, took over the logistics. We spoke with Vandermeuse about the success of this year's work.



ZSM: What data did the population survey capture?

Vandermeuse: They had to identify male, female, juvenile and then size. Students got excited when they got a particularly large sunfish or a female because the pond does not have a lot. It was neat to see that real time connection and investment in the work.

ZSM: Who was involved in the monitoring?

Vandermeuse: Shawn Miller Aquatic & Reptile Curator at the Zoo and Dr. Michael Pauers UWM at Waukesha Professor. I think it is important for students to see these careers in action, it's something that may inspire them to go into this line of work. Shawn also mentioned that handling animal components is becoming increasingly more relevant in the medical field.

ZSM: What options do high school teachers have for hands-on field work experience?

Vandermeuse: For high school teachers, even dabbling in fieldwork can be difficult. Unless you leave the classroom or have the natural space, it is hard to get started. As a teacher doing it on your own, that knowledge or background to go out and teach fieldwork is very daunting.

ZSM: How does it feel to engage high schoolers in this work?

Vandermeuse: When you teach high schoolers, there is a chance of general restlessness and disinterest. But we saw none of that, they all got involved by the end. Some of the kids did not want to touch fish to measure them or to take the tiny fin clip. You saw students encourage each other. Near the end, they're practically experts. It is a dramatic transformation in that short amount of time. And I absolutely love seeing it. It is really neat.

ZSM: What do you hope for the future of community science programs for high school age children?

Vandermeuse: I would love to see more fieldwork type experiences on Zoo grounds. There's a large amount of natural area here that is perfect for wildlife monitoring. Even if it's landscape or plant based. I enjoy working with schools in the county to monitor, survey and improve the landscape.



ZSM: What is the goal of engaging this age in field work?

Vandermeuse: To develop an understanding of wildlife and some of the environmental challenges the planet faces. As inspiring as an African elephant may be, once you leave the Zoo, there is a disconnect from that animal because we do not live with them. To monitor and survey native species is nice.

NEW!

"Introduction to Animal Science Field Work"

Schools can add this Zoo Class for high school age students to their teaching curriculum. This class satisfies science guidelines from Next Generation Science Standards and Wisconsin State Standards. It offers animal behavior charting, local species cataloging and other hands-on field work experience.



Northern long eared sunfish were caught using a special net (seine). If a genetic bottleneck is spotted, a new group of fish will be needed to bolster it.



BUILDING CONSERVATION CAPACITY IN BELIZE

Pat Gives Back is officially a flagship conservation program of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee (ZSM) and the Milwaukee County Zoo (MCZ). Let's dive into the context of Pat the Great Cat's legacy and the history of our involvement with jaguar conservation in the Central American country of Belize, specifically with The Belize Zoo (TBZ).



The Who + What

When TBZ rehabilitated a wild jaguar who was suspected of killing cattle on local farmland, they discovered he could not be released back into his wild range of rainforest in Belize. But there was hope; a home in Milwaukee was waiting and Pat came to MCZ in 2008. The MCZ team who cared for Pat wanted to give back and did so by proposing a program to Zoo leadership. The program was called "the Belize thing" for a while; trips to assist the Belize Zoo team

with needs that funding did not reach – veterinary support, animal behavior training. MCZ staff were immediately invested in this international work. In 2019, the program was formally named Pat Gives Back.

Expanding beyond animal care, Pat Gives Back was fueled by regional partnerships with the Runaway Creek Nature Preserve – Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Ya'axche Conservation Trust and The Belize Tapir Project. The preservation of wild jaguars began by addressing human-jaguar conflicts and filling gaps where grant funding falls short. One example of an underfunded need addressed by Pat Gives Back is salary support for Wildlife Officers who work collaboratively with communities in this crucial area.

The Why

Wildlife Officers manage critically important wild spaces, placing camera traps to learn about wildlife, monitoring human activity and responding to wildlife conflict. New this year, a wildlife officer has been hired to work in the Maya Forest Corridor; the largest intact land north of the Amazon rainforest, and also a critically important habitat bottleneck. Our partners work in this region to address human-wildlife conflict, helping the forest, the communities and wildlife all thrive in the landscape.



Heading to Belize! L to R: ZSM's Auriana Donaldson, Isabelle Bieser, and MCZ's Sheri Robb-Guay.



Ryan Taylor (MCZ) participates in bird banding with the Foundation for Wildlife Conservation at the Runaway Creek Nature Preserve.



A sign at the Belize Zoo details the story of Pat the Great Cat and his contributions to jaguar conservation.

The How

Annually, the Pat Gives Back team hosts Zookeeper training workshops at TBZ around January. The workshops primarily concentrate on enhancing veterinary care and advancing research within the designated areas of focus. Alongside this, our staff directly supports field work in Belize like bird banding and tapir collaring. Last year, MCZ Zookeeper Ryan Taylor assisted researchers

studying migratory and native birds in Belize and helped deploy Motus tracking devices. Motus nanotags designed to detach over time, are detected when they pass close to a Motus antenna. This new technology marks an advancement in migratory ecology studies.

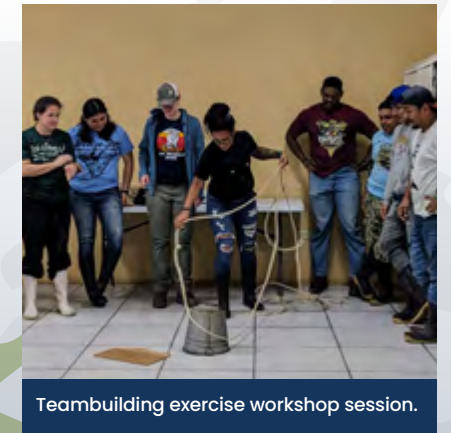
Learn more at motus.org. One of the tagged Northern Waterthrush was observed migrating from Belize all the way to Saskatchewan!



Working on building the trust relationship between tapir and keepers during the Workshop.



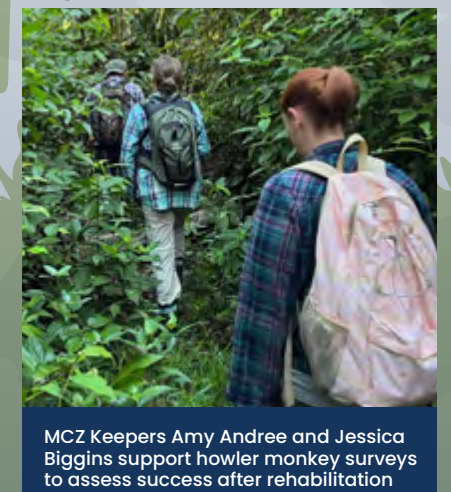
This jaguar was brought to the Belize Zoo as a result of human-wildlife conflict and is an ambassador for his species, like Pat.



Teambuilding exercise workshop session.



Belize Zoo staff and the Pat Gives Back team celebrating the end of the workshop week.



MCZ Keepers Amy Andree and Jessica Biggins support howler monkey surveys to assess success after rehabilitation and release in the Runaway Creek Nature Preserve.



SPIDER TORTOISE

PYXIS ARACHNOIDES BRYGOOI

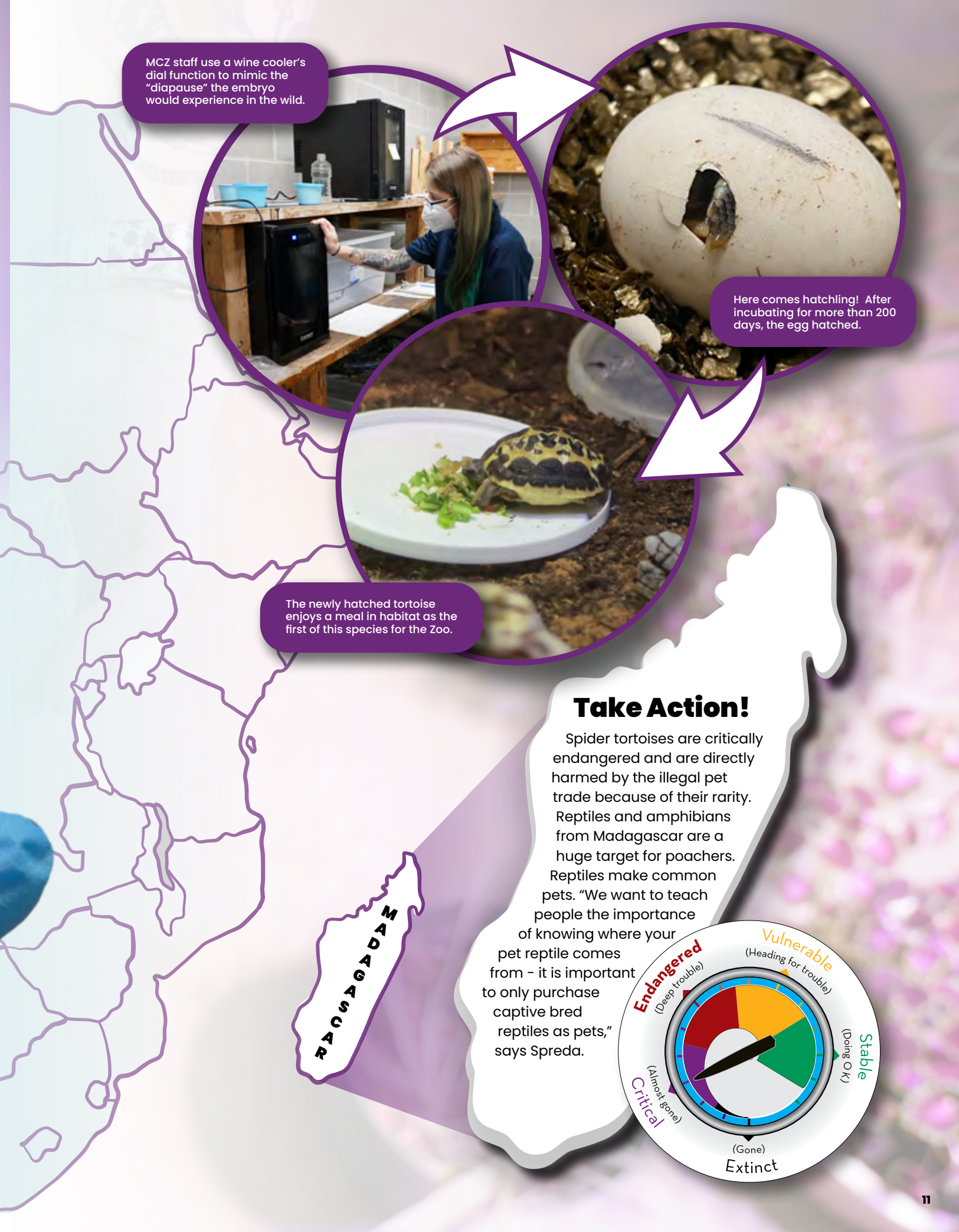
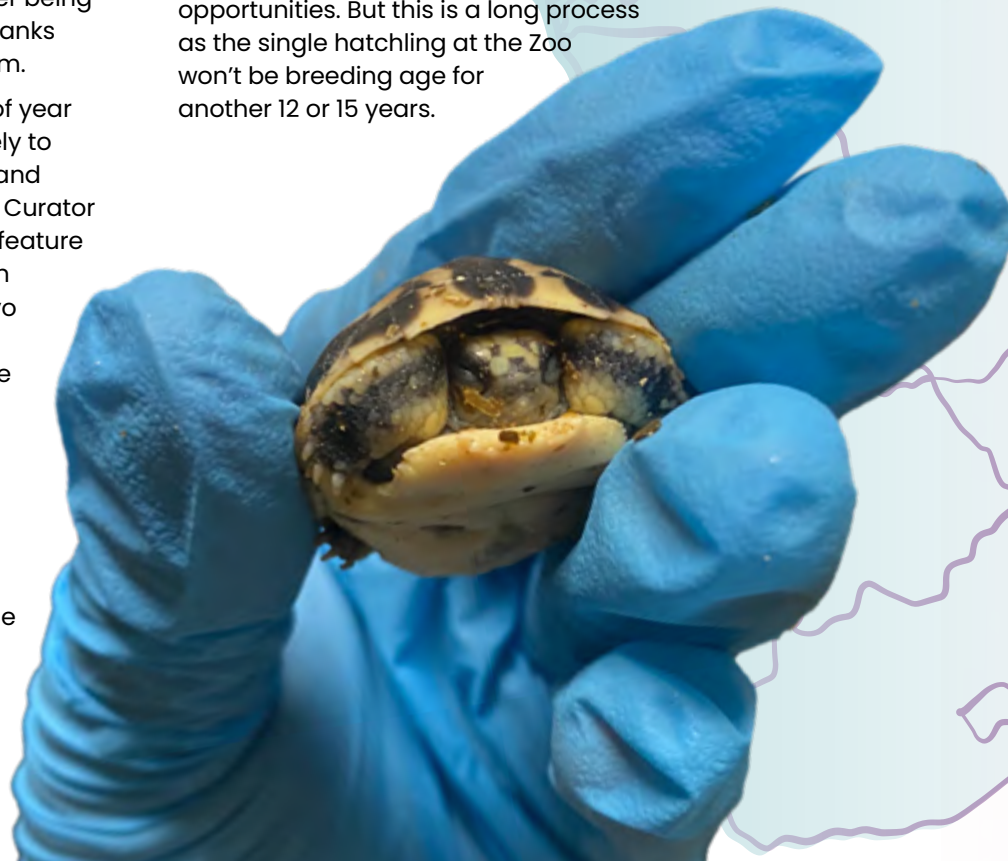
This tiny but mighty male and female tortoise pair will continue to bolster the fragile population of the world's smallest species of tortoise. There are less than 250 of them in AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums. Very few facilities house the northern variety, seen here at our Zoo. You may have heard that the Milwaukee County Zoo's spider tortoise laid her first egg after being here for only a few months. This hatching was thanks to great effort and care by Zoo's reptile care team.

In the wild, spider tortoise eggs hatch at a time of year when hatchlings can find food and are more likely to survive – but here at the Zoo that meant a long and delicate process. Shawn Miller, Aquatic & Reptile Curator bought a wine cooler! Why do you ask? The dial feature is important for the slight increase or decrease in temperature to mimic the "diapause" the embryo would experience in the wild. Recently, Miller acquired a second wine cooler to accommodate the eggs at various stages: one in the warming phase, the other in the cooling phase.

When it comes to turtles, the Zoo has staff who have depths of knowledge, but it takes a community to make it work when a new species arrives. Miller reached out to Matt Evans at the Smithsonian National Zoo for an incubation guide he worked on. Evans had done work with the other species of spider tortoise several years ago. The ability to share research helped the success of raising these tortoises. Almost like a

relay race. "To get it right on the first try was great!" says Aquatic & Reptile Center supervisor Melissa Spreda.

The Zoo has one hatchling right now but there are two more currently incubating that are due to hatch and leave by mid-March. The tortoises hatched at our Zoo may go to other accredited zoos for additional breeding opportunities. But this is a long process as the single hatchling at the Zoo won't be breeding age for another 12 or 15 years.



MCZ staff use a wine cooler's dial function to mimic the "diapause" the embryo would experience in the wild.



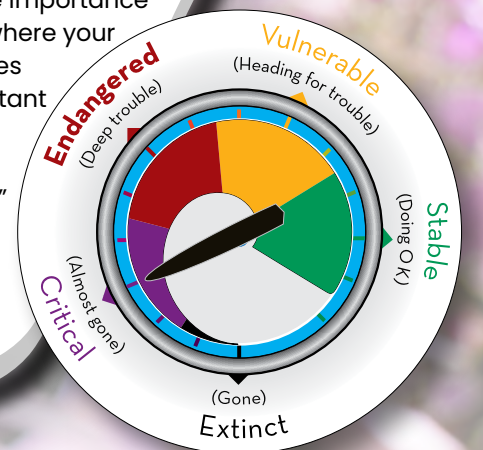
Here comes hatchling! After incubating for more than 200 days, the egg hatched.



The newly hatched tortoise enjoys a meal in habitat as the first of this species for the Zoo.

Take Action!

Spider tortoises are critically endangered and are directly harmed by the illegal pet trade because of their rarity. Reptiles and amphibians from Madagascar are a huge target for poachers. Reptiles make common pets. "We want to teach people the importance of knowing where your pet reptile comes from - it is important to only purchase captive bred reptiles as pets," says Spreda.



Orangutans

Chalk Drawings

MATERIALS

- Chalk
- Sidewalk or Driveway
- Printed Orangutan Hand Outline
- Scissors
- Your Imagination!



Scan here to download Orangutan Handprint outline for this activity!



Orangutan Hand

DIRECTIONS

1. Print out the page that contains the orangutan handprint.
2. Cut out the orangutan hand.
3. Trace the orangutan hand picture with chalk onto the sidewalk.
4. Place your hand inside the orangutan hand chalk drawing and trace around your hand with the chalk.

ASK THE CHILD:

Is your thumb the same size as an orangutan's, or smaller?

Try to pick up a piece of chalk without using your thumb. Can you do it?

Orangutan Arm Span

DIRECTIONS

1. Trace or copy the orangutan hand picture with chalk onto the sidewalk in a place where there is plenty of room.
2. Now measure 8 feet across from that hand picture and draw another orangutan hand.
3. Lay down in the middle of the space between the orangutan hands, with your arms stretched out.
4. Have someone trace around both of your hands as your arms are stretched out.

ASK THE CHILD:

Are the orangutan's arms longer?

What might orangutans use their long arms for?



Mango Yogurt Bark

Wild orangutans find their food in trees! Orangutans have a map of the forest in their minds and know when different trees bear fruit. This way, they save their energy and don't wander around looking for snacks that aren't ripe yet. While orangutans feast on all sorts of forest goodies, their absolute favorite is fruit—including lychees, mangosteens, mangoes and figs.

Let's make a scrumptious Mango Yogurt Bark together! Here's how:

INGREDIENTS

- 32 oz. container of Non-fat (vanilla) Greek yogurt
- Zest from some ginger and 1 lime
- About 1/2-3/4 cup mango puree
- Chopped mangoes
- Optional: Sliced almonds and dried figs

DIRECTIONS

1. Line a baking tray with parchment paper.
2. Spread the Greek yogurt evenly on the tray (this may not use the entire container)
3. Zest some ginger and a lime over the yogurt.
4. Drizzle the mango puree on top.
5. Use a chopstick or toothpick to swirl it around for a fun design.
6. Sprinkle chopped mangoes, sliced almonds and chopped dried figs on top (if using).
7. Gently tap the tray to ensure all the toppings settle on the yogurt.
8. Freeze the tray overnight.
9. Break into pieces and enjoy this tasty treat!



This bark stays fresh for up to a month in the freezer. Enjoy this snack inspired by the orangutan!



Orangutan Family Fun

Ways to Play: Use the Word Bank at the bottom of the page to help you answer the questions about orangutans. The Answers to the questions are also the words you will find in the Word Search. Have fun!

1. Orangutan infants are in constant contact with their mothers for the first _____ of their lives.
2. Orangutan kids are dependent on their mothers longer than any mammal other than _____.
3. Wild orangutan fathers do not live with their infants. But in zoos they can be lots of fun for infants to _____ with.
4. Mothers create a _____ between branches with their bodies to help their infant cross gaps in the tree canopy.
5. Orangutan mothers only give birth to one baby at a time and only every six to eight _____.
6. Orangutan kids may enjoy _____ with other orangutan kids when their mothers come together to eat fruit from the same tree.
7. _____ are the only arboreal ape. Arboreal means living in the trees.
8. Orangutan kids live with their mothers until they are _____ to ten years old.
9. Orangutan means _____ of the forest.

Answers: 1. Year 2. Humans 3. Play 4. Bridge 5. Years 6. Playing 7. Orangutans 8. Eight 9. Person

Word Search

H U D P L A Y V N Y
 B R I D G E J L P E
 F F I H N E D W T A
 U J Y V Y A I B M R
 D P L A Y I N G R S
 P E R S O N X L H Q
 Z H U M A N S Y H T
 T Y P V O O N E H L
 O R A N G U T A N S
 B X V Y M V M R E Z

Word Bank

Bridge
 Eight
 Humans
 Orangutans
 Person
 Play
 Playing
 Year
 Years



GREEN NEWS



**FAREWELL TO
 THE STEAM
 ENGINES.**

**All DIESEL TRAINS
 SPRING 2025**

NEW ZOO TRAIN ENGINES

In 1958, the Milwaukee County Zoo Railway's rich history began. Guests watched habitats and buildings rise, becoming part of the Zoo's foundation. Decisions about the North Shore Bank Safari Train are always made with utmost care.

With this in mind, we share the announcement that the Zoo's two steam engines are retiring. The Zoo's 1916 locomotive will leave on April 1, 2024, and the 1924 locomotive will follow on October 31, 2024. Both steam engines will go to Riverside and Great Northern Museum (R&GN) in the Wisconsin Dells. The proceeds of the sale of the locomotives to R&GN will fund two brand new diesel engines for the Zoo.

The first new engine, arriving in fall/winter 2025, aligns with EPA tier 4 regulations, reducing particulate emissions

by 90%. This aligns with Milwaukee County's vision of becoming the healthiest county in Wisconsin, and further supports the Zoo and the Zoological Society of Milwaukee's mission of conservation.

Since 1992, the Zoo has operated four locomotives, two steam (No. 1916, No. 1924) and two diesel (No. 1958 and No. 1992), to carry more than 400,000 visitors annually. This created cherished memories for generations. The retirement of the 1916 and 1924 steam locomotives is a bittersweet yet exciting moment in time.

We join the Zoo in looking forward to an eco-friendly journey aboard the new custom-built diesel locomotives!

Visit milwaukeezoo.org for more information.

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Membership Benefits

Use Your Zoo Pass to the fullest!

As a member you directly impact our mission of wildlife conservation, education and supporting the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Your Membership Benefits

Year-Round Access: Free regular admission for an entire year.

Attraction Coupons: Already electronically added to your Zoo Pass, e-coupons to be used on the North Shore Bank Safari Train, the Penzeys Carousel or the special summer exhibit.

Valid for your current Zoo Pass duration.

Gift Shop Discounts: Exclusive discounts for members.

Priority Access and Discounts: Enroll in Zoo camps, classes and Society special events with priority registration and member discounts.

Reciprocal Access: Discover reduced or free admission at other zoos and aquariums.



Exclusive Member-Only Events

Join us for magical summer nights during our FREE member-only events in June and July.

Nights in June, sponsored by Habush & Rottier S.C.®
June 4-6 from 5-8:30 p.m.

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July 9-11 from 5-8:30 p.m.

Need Assistance or Considering an Upgrade? Feel free to call us at 414-258-2333, available seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our team is here to assist you.

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