


# WILD THINGS

NOV/DEC  
2021

A large illustration featuring a fluffy brown stuffed sloth sitting in the center. To its left is a large green stylized Christmas tree, and to its right are two smaller ones. The background is a blue sky with white snowflakes and a white ground surface.

**Special holiday promotions and ideas!**  
*Look for the insert inside this issue.*

A close-up photograph of several blue, flexible, cylindrical tubes or pipes, arranged in a circular pattern.

**05** *Blue Tube Mystery*

A photograph of a winter holiday event. People are walking on a snow-covered path, and there are colorful lights and decorations in the background.

**08** *New Holiday Event*

A photograph of a blue jay perched on a thin branch, facing right. The bird has blue, white, and black feathers.

**12** *Caring for Wild Birds*



NOV 6

DEC 4

# A ZOO TREAT



## Family Free Day

Sponsored by North Shore Bank  
Media sponsor: FOX6

Parking fees still apply, except for Zoo Pass Plus and Platypus Circle members.

Treat yourself and/or the family to a day at the Zoo. You don't have to tell them it's free when you come Nov. 6 or Dec. 4. Family Free Day is an opportunity to see animals from around the world. There are plenty of cold loving animals to see – the snow leopards, red pandas, camels, caribou, otters and more. Plus, you can always go into the animal buildings and see lemurs, snakes, fish, birds or all of the above.



Photos by Bob Wickland

## MEMBERANDA

**Zoological Society office hours:**  
9 a.m.–4:30 p.m. daily

**Zoo Hours through Oct.:** 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

**Zoo Hours starting Nov. 1:**  
Check [milwaukeezoo.org](http://milwaukeezoo.org)

Admission gates close 45 minutes prior to posted closing time.

**Society Office Holiday Hours:** The Zoological Society offices will be closed on Nov. 26 for Thanksgiving, on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. The office will remain open from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 24. Visit us online at [zoopass.com](http://zoopass.com) anytime.

**Payment Information at Zoo Admission Gates:** The Milwaukee County Zoo staff does not accept checks for Zoo Pass purchases or renewal payments at the Zoo's admission gates. Please contact our office at 414-258-2333 if you would like to schedule a time to pick up or purchase a Zoo Pass or Sponsor an Animal gift package.

### Tax-deductible Portions for the Zoo Pass Categories:

Individual (Basic: \$90, Plus: \$106)	Family +2 (Basic: \$141, Plus: \$153)
Individual +1 or Couple (Basic: \$105, Plus: \$120)	Family +3 (Basic: \$157, Plus: \$166)
Individual +2, Family or Single Adult Family (Basic: \$115, Plus: \$135)	Affiliate (Basic: \$189, Plus: \$192)
Family +1 (Basic: \$135, Plus: \$144)	Benefactor (Basic: \$253, Plus: \$255)

A gift Zoo Pass is fully tax-deductible for the donor.

**Reciprocal Zoos and Aquariums:** We update our list of zoos and aquariums that offer reduced or free admission to our members with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums each year. We only reciprocate with AZA-accredited facilities and reserve the right to not reciprocate with zoos and aquariums located within close proximity of the Milwaukee County Zoo. Please be sure to contact our offices prior to your travels at 414-258-2333, or visit [zoosociety.org/reciprocalzoos](http://zoosociety.org/reciprocalzoos), if you have any questions.

**Moving?** Please call us when you change your address or name. The call saves us money because when the post office returns your mail with a forwarding address, we pay twice for mailing: to the old address and the new. If you've changed your address on your identification, replacement cards may be purchased with the new information for \$5.



### WILD THINGS

Issue No. 155, Nov.–Dec. 2021

Wild Things is a membership newsletter published by the Zoological Society of Milwaukee five times a year.

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Designer: Scott DuChateau

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10001 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226  
Phone: 414-256-5412 Web: [milwaukeezoo.org](http://milwaukeezoo.org)



This publication is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

Cover photos | Tubes and blue jay stock photos; Wild Lights provided by RWS Entertainment Group

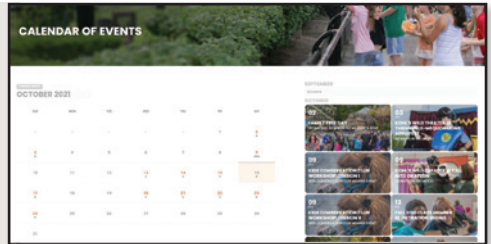


# NEW LOOK & FUNCTION

**We are excited to launch a new look and feel to our website [zoosociety.org](http://zoosociety.org).**

The menu features easier navigation to find what you are looking for. Whether you are looking to buy or renew a Zoo Pass, sponsor an animal or book an education class, your journey should be clear and easy. Take a look at some of these features:

**Calendar of Events:** Don't miss out on any Zoo or Zoological Society events. Our calendar can be found on the homepage and under Things to Do. As events start to ramp up again, we want to make sure you know what's available.

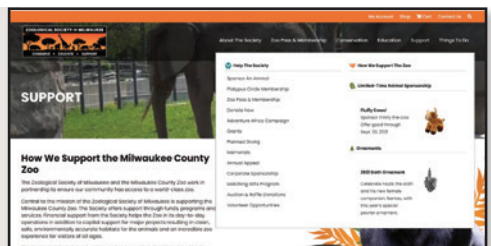


**Zoo Pass:** Not sure what kind of Zoo Pass fits your life? There are many options to choose from, but our system will guide you along the way.



**Looking for other ways to get involved?**

Check out Support on our menu. Read up on how we support the Zoo and how you can help support us through volunteering, donating or sponsoring an animal.



**If you encounter a problem on the new site, click on Contact Us and fill out our fast and easy form.**

# COOLING OFF THE HOT SPOTS



**Scruffy is a 22-year-old male hyena.**

Photo by Garrett Hopkins

When humans aren't feeling well, they can generally tell someone and find a solution. But at the Zoo, zookeepers have to read the signs and be the voice for the animals. Inside Big Cat Country, when male spotted hyena Scruffy developed "hot spots," it was up to the keepers to find out why they were appearing and a solution to make him feel better.

Even though the hyenas, Scruffy and Nyota, are in the big cat building, they are neither cats or dogs. They are in a family of their own called Hyaenidae. But some may say they have characteristics of both. For example, it's not uncommon for a domestic dog or cat to get hot spots on its skin; however, it is more common in dogs. A hot spot is a skin irritation that can be itchy and get infected. Fur and skin are often missing from the area. Keepers were able to treat Scruffy's hot spots with a cream. However, the hot spots were getting worse and lasting longer. That's when an allergist came into help.

Scruffy was given the same allergy test given to Midwest domestic dogs. The results ... he's allergic to everything! Some examples of his allergies include grass, molds and pollen. Once the cause was found, it was time to start treatment. The allergist created a medication for Scruffy in the form of an oral spray. Each morning, keepers need to get him to come to the mesh and open his mouth to receive three sprays. It could take a while before keepers start seeing results but relief for Scruffy is on the way.



**Scruffy's allergy test showed he is allergic to virtually everything.**

Photo provided by Katie Kuhn.



# TOTALLY TUBULAR

## DOZENS OF TREES

inside the Zoo are feeling blue. No, that doesn't mean they're sad; it means they are getting some extra power and nutrients to grow big and strong. Inside the Zoo, you may have noticed tall, skinny, blue tubes among the trees. Inside the tubes are saplings. These blue tubes are specifically designed to filter the sunlight and give the trees more concentrated blue light resulting in stronger stems and roots and eventually a heartier plant.

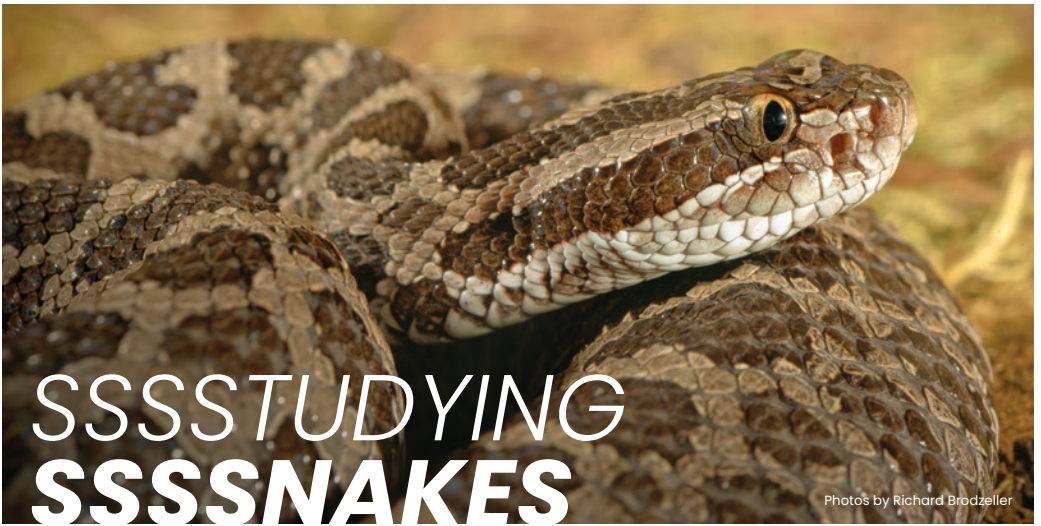
Ryan Fenley, the head of forestry at the Zoo, started using the tubes for the first time this year.

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He first saw them at the Urban Ecology Center and began to do his own research. He is using them to grow basswood, river birch, bitternut hickory, bur oak, sycamore, tamarack and American hazelnut. "[The tubes] protect the trees from the wind. Wind will dehydrate a plant so these tubes will keep them hydrated longer," Fenley explains. They also keep wildlife from eating or killing the young saplings and help Fenley keep an inventory of where trees are planted.

Fenley planted a variety of trees in five different locations throughout Zoo. Some are visible from the train; others are near walking paths. While reforestation is always a goal, these trees will also hopefully keep buckthorn from growing. Buckthorn is an invasive plant that doesn't allow native plants or trees to grow, plus it can give birds diarrhea. "It's a huge problem at the Zoo. So, we are slowly getting rid of it and replacing it with mostly Wisconsin native trees," says Fenley. The tubes will stay on these trees for at least three years. Fenley will plant more trees in new blue tubes next year.





Photos by Richard Brodzeller

# SSSSTUDYING SSSSNAKES

**E**ach year the Zoological Society of Milwaukee helps pay for zookeepers to conduct conservation field work. This year, one of the trips involved the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. Zookeeper Amy De Leon explains her work on the trip.

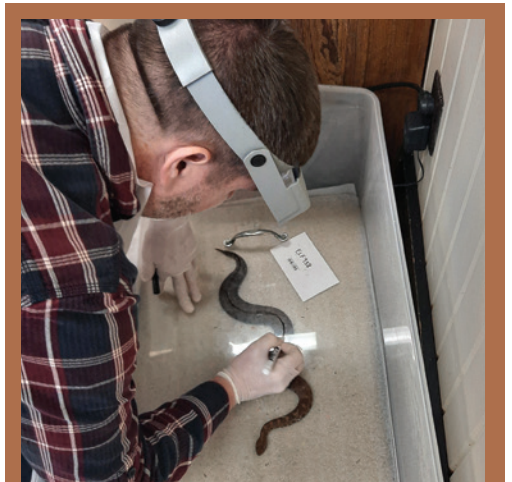
Since 2009 the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Species Survival Plan® (SSP) has gathered at Big Rock Valley near Cassopolis, Michigan to collect data on the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes (EMRs). The Edward Lowe Foundation owns and manages the 2,000 acres of woodlands, wetlands, and prairies. The EMR prefers living and hunting in the low wetlands near rivers and lakes, which is about 500 acres of land.

From May 11 to 16, 34 snakes were found on the property. Of those snakes, 16 were new individuals that have never been captured before and 18 were snakes that had been captured at least once in the past 12 years. The data that is collected from each snake is extensive. First, the time, date, wind speeds, cloud cover, precipitation, humidity, GPS waypoints and ground temperatures are collected. The ground temperatures are recorded both where the snake is on the surface and about 6 inches into the ground to help determine what internal ground temperature the snakes are reaching before coming out of hibernation. Then, finally, the snake's temperature is collected on its head, mid-body and tail.

When all the environmental data has been collected, the snake is quickly grabbed with a pair of snake tongs and put into a pillowcase, scanned for a microchip, and then secured inside of a bucket to ensure that no one is accidentally bitten. When the EMR is brought to the Eco Lab, it gets a brief exam and a blood draw for DNA research; then a microchip is implanted in the last 1/3 of the body.

Once all the samples/data are collected from the snake, it is brought back to the exact spot it was taken from. The GPS waypoints and a flag/marker that was placed at the site of capture help searchers find the exact location from which each snake was taken. Searchers do this to ensure the snake is returned to a familiar area, so it knows where to find its resources.

In 2021 there were 21 SSP attendees that searched nine hours a day for five straight days. The most interesting part of EMR SSP this year was one of the EMRs that was recaptured was 10 years old! EMRs live on average to be 18-19 years old in human care, so to find a 10-year-old in the wild is really awesome. All of this information helps determine if the population of EMRs at Big Rock Valley is stable or in trouble. Plus, during this trip I learned some habitat changes that we are going to try out in the exhibit here at the Zoo like different grasses that we are hoping our EMR will enjoy.



**Eric Hileman from Mississippi State University draws a line on the clear plastic so he can measure the snake without having to try and hold it.**



**Zookeeper Amy De Leon  
finds a wild eastern  
Massasauga rattlesnake.**



**Researchers have a  
good eye to spot the wild  
snakes camouflaged  
among the brush.**

**How fast can you  
find the snake?**



# WILD WINTER

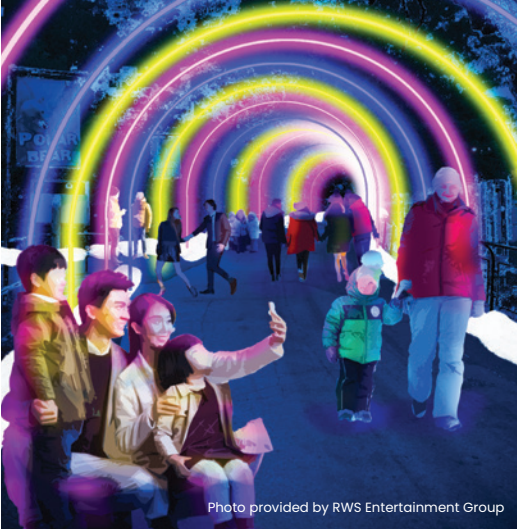


Photo provided by RWS Entertainment Group



## ONLINE TICKETS:

**Adult: \$18; Child: (3-12) \$16**

**Child: (2 and under) FREE**

\*Zoo Pass members receive \$2 discount with code **GoWild** and member ID.

Tickets go on sale soon at [milwaukeezoo.org](http://milwaukeezoo.org).

## DEC

1-5, 8-12,  
15-23 &  
26-31

## Wild Lights

*Sponsored by We Energies*

**5:30-9:30 p.m.**

New this year, the Zoo will be transformed into a brilliantly illuminated world of penguins, flamingos, monkeys, polar bears, sea creatures and more! Eleven holiday-themed zones will delight guests of all ages and will showcase what we all love about the Zoo and this time of year. Guests can soak in the beauty during the 1-mile walk around the Zoo. Refreshments will be available on the route.

**Reserve your spot and save more when you buy your tickets online!**

## Wild Lights Zones



**1. Polar Point**

**2. Flamingle All the Way**

*Sponsored by Habush Habush & Rottier S.C.®*

**3. Jungle Bells**

*Sponsored by Mad City Windows and Baths*

**5. aROARa**

*Sponsored by Meijer*

**6. Winter Woodland**

*Sponsored by Meijer*

**7. ROARchestration**

*Sponsored by Prairie Farms Dairy*

**8. ButterFlight**

*Sponsored by American Transmission Co.*

**10. Starry Safari**

*Sponsored by American Transmission Co.*

**11. Uniquely Vibrant**



# ADVENTURES

DEC  
1-31

## Fantastic Forest

*Sponsored by Hawks Landscape*

During the day and night, be sure to check out trees carefully decorated by dozens of local youth groups. Each youth group is given a different animal theme and instructed to hand-make dozens of ornaments. The creativity is always inspiring as water bottles turn into pigs, or paper plates and construction paper showcase a big cat. The trees, donated by Hawks Landscape, are on display throughout the Zoo and can be seen during regular Zoo hours and most can be viewed during the evening Wild Lights event.



Photo by Bob Wickland



Photo by Richard Taylor



Photo by Stacy Kaat

# CELEBRATION EVENT

On Sept. 29, the Zoological Society of Milwaukee brought together some of its most generous supporters. Members of the Platypus and Serengeti Circles, capital campaign donors, board members and county leaders gathered to celebrate major milestones and talk about plans to complete the final phase of Adventure Africa with a new home for the rhinos and central pathway.



**Ray Wilson was awarded the Emu Egg, one of the Society's highest honors. Wilson's valuable leadership has helped the organization grow stronger through the years. Since 1998, Wilson has served on the Associate Board and Board of Directors and was the board chair from 2017 through 2020.**



**Rich Tennessen and Gina Peter, along with Karen Peck Katz who was unable to attend, are honored by Society President and CEO Jodi Gibson for their work on the capital campaign to create Adventure Africa. The three served as campaign co-chairs since 2016.**



**Guests of the event were able to get a tour of the state-of-the-art filtration system that keeps the hippo habitat clean.**



**Bob Dohmen checks out the Kohl's Wild Theater hippo puppet used during a summer musical.**



**We would like to thank the following people and businesses that decided to support the Zoological Society by joining the Platypus Circle. These new members joined between March 12 and September 30.**

- |  |  |                                    |                             |                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Association of Community Empowerment                     | Joyce and Joseph Diliberti               | Friends of the North Shore Library | Lakeview Community Library  | Steele Solutions Rawson Street     |
| BluePearl Specialty & Emergency Pet Hospital - Milwaukee | Lori Domzil                              | Robert Gardenier                   | Rachel Lauber               | SURG Restaurant Group              |
| Karen Brown  | Penny Eberhardt                          | GCI                                | Peter and Jill Martin       | Karin Swartz and Dominic Fee       |
| Friends of Cambridge Community Library                   | Elkhart Lake Public Library              | Generac Power Systems Inc.         | Russ and Mary Anne Martiny  | The Home Depot #4912 - North Shore |
| Cedar Grove Public Library                               | Franklin Public Library                  | Germantown Community Library       | Jennifer Miller             | Trinity Construction Company, Inc. |
| Sheila Cotton  | Friends of the Hales Corners Library     | Hales Corners Library              | Muskego Public Library      | James and Sabrina Ward             |
| Curative Care Network                                    | Friends of the Mukwonago Library         | Denise and Jessica Haussy          | North Shore Surgical Suites | West Bend Community Library        |
| 10 Didion Inc.   | Friends of the New Berlin Public Library | Beth and Fred Heller               | Pewaukee Public Library     |                                    |
|  |  | IFF - Beloit                       | Slinger Community Library   |                                    |
|  |  | Jonco Industries                   |                             |                                    |



# TRAVELING LESSONS



**K**ohl's Wild Theater could be headed to a city near you! Performances within a 60-mile radius of the Milwaukee County Zoo are completely free of charge thanks to a partnership with Kohl's. Schools, festivals, community groups and others are encouraged to book their performance now.

Kohl's Wild Theater tackles subjects such as conservation and wildlife in a fun and entertaining way. Each show is age appropriate and written for children at the grade-school level. For schools, it's a great way to reinforce lesson plans or connect to students in a different way.

## **Available shows now include:**

### **The Legend of the Trash Monster and Other Silly Scary Stories**

This performance is only available virtually. Campers gather around a fire to tell scary stories, such as the kid who threw trash on the ground, the bodybuilders who wasted food, or the royal badger and his selfish king. "Reduce, reuse, and recycle" are the lessons at the heart of this family-friendly variety show.

### **Monkeys in the Middle**

This performance is available in-person or virtually. Monkeys in the Middle includes the story of Captain Superfantastic and his journey to learning how recycling our electronic devices can defeat the villainous Coltan. Then, kids will meet two internet sensations, Chet the Grumpy Cat and Phoenix the "Doge," as they learn valuable lessons about internet use and appropriate animals for pets.



Photos by Paul Ruffolo

**New shows are starting in January and are available now for booking. To book a performance or to see the public performance calendar, go to [wildtheater.org](http://wildtheater.org).**

# CARING FOR WILD BIRDS



Photos by Garrett Hopkins and Auriana Donaldson

## Wondering where the bird feeders are spread out inside the Zoo?

Aviary pond

Curators House *(not publicly accessible)*

Small Mammals Building

Bird Boardwalk  
near Lake Evinrude

Adventure Africa opposite  
the Giraffe Building

Family Farm Area

Peck Welcome Center Boardwalk



**T**he Zoo is filled with animals from around the world and locally. Guests can see them in buildings or their outdoor habitats. But the Zoo and Zoological Society also take care of wild animals in a sense. Through the Wild Birds Program at the Zoo, wild birds are fed, counted and monitored as they come and go from the Zoo. This program is a partnership between the Zoo’s aviary staff, the Zoological Society’s conservation department and Zoo Pride volunteers. “Volunteers fill the feeders rain, snow, or shine throughout the year, and clean and maintain the liquid feeders in the migratory summer months,” says conservation programs coordinator Auriana Donaldson.

Feeders were thoughtfully placed in seven locations around the Zoo. Donaldson says one of the busiest feeders is nestled into the wooded area across from the giraffes. As we go into winter, volunteers need to make sure the birds that don’t migrate such as jays, woodpeckers, house finches and cardinals have a safe place to eat. They use black oil sunflower, finch seed, nyjer and suet and fill the feeders three times a week.

“In the summer months, feeders may account for 10% of overall diet, but in the winter months the feeders can provide life-saving food for birds,” says Donaldson. “This schedule was developed by aviary staff and Zoo veterinarians at the beginning of the bird feeder program, and it has been successful in maintaining clean, healthy and busy feeders!”

In addition to maintaining the feeders, volunteers provide valuable information during two annual bird counting events in the winter. One is in December, the other is in February. “Volunteers counted over 400 birds during the February 2021 count, even amidst negative degree weather!” boasts Donaldson. Bird counts help experts track patterns, trends, breeding, migration and populations. The Zoo also has 35 nesting boxes around the grounds to support and monitor wild breeding and fledglings. Zoo Pride volunteers help monitor the activity and report to a nationwide database. “It’s a lot of work and we couldn’t do it all without our dedicated volunteers!”



**In the summer, volunteers use a liquid nectar** – one part sugar to four parts water – for the hummingbird feeders. They also put out oranges and grape jelly for the orioles. These feeders are cleaned and refilled three times a week.

### **Here’s a helpful tip:**

The Zoo team uses hot pepper suet squares as part of their feed. This is because the spicy flavor deters squirrels from eating the suet but it doesn’t bother the birds! This is something you can also use at home in your feeders, but be careful to not touch your eyes after putting the hot suet out.



**Interested in making a donation for this program?**

**Contact Auriana Donaldson at [aurianag@zoosociety.org](mailto:aurianag@zoosociety.org).**

# Learning Adventures

The Zoological Society's Conservation Education Department is offering in-person experiences for schools and families.

**There is something for almost everyone!**



Photo by Paul Ruffolo

## Want to give the gift of a Zoo Class?

Consider buying a gift card. Zoological Society gift cards can be used for a Zoo Class or Camp, Zoo Passes and Society fundraising events.

Go to [zoosociety.org/giftcard](https://zoosociety.org/giftcard) to buy one today.

## **SCHOOLS**

Teachers can book a field trip with an added school program to help supplement their lesson plan. The Society offers classes for children in grades K3 to 5. Classes include topics such as which animals are super athletes or how some wildlife use their super senses to survive.

These programs are just more than an hour and can complement your lesson plan and your field trip. If schools can't come to the Zoo for a field trip or class, teachers can book a virtual class with an educator!

## **PARENTS OR GUARDIANS**

Zoo Classes are available for parents with their child, child only and families. Each class explores a different topic and includes a walk out into the Zoo to see the animals. This fall, kids and families can learn about bats – what it's like to be a bat and why they are so important to our ecosystem. There are also classes about caribou, fish, reptiles and even fossils!



Photo by Stacy Kaat

**Class offerings and sizes are smaller to ensure everyone's safety. If classes are booked, be sure to check out our spring offerings. Registration is expected to open in December.**

**Check [zoosociety.org/education](https://zoosociety.org/education) for any updates.**

# JUNGLE BELLS



Jingle all the way to the jungle when you sponsor western lowland gorilla Nadami for the holidays. Nadami is the youngest of the three gorillas at 11 years old. Zookeepers say she is the first to try and get the other two in her family to play. Her family consists of group leader and male Oliver and a second female named Dotty. The trio came from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and are considered excellent matches for breeding.

This \$50 limited-time offer includes a plush-toy gorilla, certificate of sponsorship, Sponsor an Animal decal, invitation to a behind-the-scenes event at the Zoo and more!

*Cost includes shipping and handling.*



## **SPONSOR NADAMI**

or another animal by  
visiting [zoosociety.org/  
SponsorAnimal](https://zoosociety.org/SponsorAnimal)  
or call 414-258-2333.

Photo by Garrett Hopkins

**Animal sponsorships help the Zoological Society of Milwaukee fulfill its mission in supporting the Zoo.**

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Milwaukee, WI  
Permit No. 4073



Zoological Society of Milwaukee  
10005 W. Bluemound Rd.  
Milwaukee, WI 53226-4383

**DATED MATERIAL  
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY**

## QUICK FACT:

Gorillas communicate using auditory signals, visual signals and odors.

**Sponsor Nadami  
for yourself or a gift.  
See page 15 for details.**



# WHAT'S HAPPENING

Due to COVID-19 and health and safety guidelines, the Zoo and Zoological Society have had to make changes to events. For the most up-to-date information about these and other events, visit [zoosociety.org/events](https://zoosociety.org/events).



### Nov. 6

Family Free Day, sponsored by North Shore Bank & FOX6\*

### Nov. 25

Thanksgiving Day, the Zoo will be closed

### Dec. 1-5, 8-12, 15-23, and 26-31

Wild Lights, sponsored by We Energies (pre-register)

### Dec 1-31

Fantastic Forest, sponsored by Hawks Landscape

### Dec. 4

Family Free Day, sponsored by North Shore Bank & FOX6\*

### Dec. 25

Christmas Day, the Zoo will be closed

### Jan. 1

New Year's Day, the Zoo will be closed

### Jan. 8

Family Free Day, sponsored by North Shore Bank & FOX6\*

### Jan. 16

Samson Stomp (pre-register)

\* Zoo Pass members get free regular Zoo admission with their Zoo Pass. Those with Zoo Pass Plus also get free parking for one vehicle per membership per day. Platypus Circle members receive free admission and parking with their card.

## CONNECT WITH US!

 [facebook.com/ZooPass](https://facebook.com/ZooPass)

 [twitter.com/ZooSocietyMKE](https://twitter.com/ZooSocietyMKE)

 [instagram.com/ZooSocietyMKE](https://instagram.com/ZooSocietyMKE)

 [youtube.com/ZooSocietyMKE](https://youtube.com/ZooSocietyMKE)

 Milwaukee Zoo Pass App



The Zoological Society is proud to bear Charity Navigator's highest rating of four stars.



The Zoological Society of Milwaukee is recognized for our transparency with GuideStar's Gold Seal.