

An insider's view of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

MyZOO

SUMMER 2023

Magazine

AMUR TIGER CUBS BORN

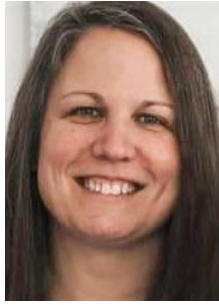
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A Message from the Friends Executive Director

As the warm weather and longer days of summer approach, we couldn't be more excited about the upcoming season here at the zoo. We have a slate of fan-favorite events lined up for the summer, and new animal arrivals will breathe fresh life into these classic celebrations.

We are always proud of our position as a pillar of conservation and education in our community, and we are so happy to share some recent conservation milestones with you. As the stories inside this edition will show, the first half of this year has already been remarkable, and this summer is shaping up to be truly exceptional.

After years of planning, our zoo was able to temporarily acquire two koalas from the San Diego Wildlife Alliance (read the full story on page 3). The koalas aren't the only newcomers to the zoo this summer; in the past few months, we've welcomed penguin chicks, a Victorian crowned pigeon squab, and many lambs and baby goats. Perhaps the most significant births, though, came in late April, when Amur tiger Zeya gave birth to two cubs. This is a truly significant moment for her critically endangered species, and you can read the full story on page 10.

As an AZA-accredited zoo, we're honored to contribute new animals to the populations in our care, many of which are facing population declines and uncertain futures. We are equally happy to play an important role in the lives of the people in our community, too! Our community events, such as LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility, Senior Citizens Appreciation Day, and Dreamnight highlighted the diversity of our zoo family and brought everyone into the fold. In a new and exciting partnership, our Education team welcomed Seven Valleys New Tech Academy students for a celebration of Spanish-speaking cultures on Cinco de Mayo.

And, we're very excited to bring back some of our best-loved summer events like Penguin Palooza, Brew at the Zoo, and Asian Elephant Extravaganza. There's something for everyone this season at the zoo!

With new animals to meet and a wide array of exciting events to attend, this is a great time to visit the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. As always, we are deeply grateful for your support, as it is your continued dedication that makes our work possible. We hope to see you soon, creating lasting memories and sharing the joy of all these amazing animals.

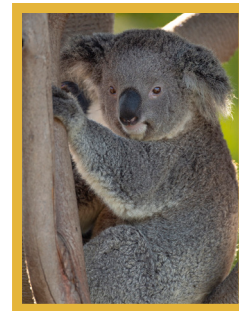
See you at the zoo!

Carrie Large

Carrie Large
Executive Director, Friends of the Zoo

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ON THE COVER:
Koala Kumiri
Photo courtesy of San Diego Zoo

A Bit of Australia Has Come to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo!

This summer, we are proudly hosting extra-special guests from San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance: female koalas named Kolet and Kumiri! We are delighted to be able to provide care for these two tree-dwellers. This was made possible through a collaboration between the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance and the Australian government, and was funded by the Friends of the Zoo. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is one of just 10 zoos in the country entrusted to care for these magnificent animals.

Late in the evening on Saturday, May 13, our animal care team was at Syracuse's Hancock International Airport eagerly awaiting their arrival. Southwest Airlines, our official transportation partner, ensured the safe and comfortable transport of the two koalas and their caretakers.

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Please direct questions regarding this publication to editor@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

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ANIMAL UPDATES

Four Lavender Orpington chickens hatched on May 7.

Did You Know?

Lavender Orpington Chickens were originally bred in the late nineteenth century in southeast England by William Cook of Orpington, Kent. Cook intended the breed for egg and meat production, but the breed soon became a bird of show exclusively. The breed is known for being curious, gentle, affectionate, and very clever.



CREATURE FEATURE: BLACK AND WHITE RUFFED LEMURS

AT THE
ROSAMOND
GIFFORD ZOO:
1 MALE KINTE
1 FEMALE ANDAPA



Three of our female cape porcupines Fennel, Mary, and Jane left for the Phoenix Zoo on January 23.

Our female muntjac Violet left for the Elmwood Park Zoo on January 30.

Male Humboldt penguin Alfredo was hatched to parents Poquita and Veinte on February 4.

Two Luzon bleeding-heart dove chicks hatched on February 14.

Male Moholi bushbaby Pierre was acquired from the Bronx Zoo on February 14. It is fitting that he was acquired on Valentine's Day, as he has been paired with our female Moholi bushbaby, Athena.

Six whitebelly reed frogs left for the John Ball Zoo on February 15.

Male Humboldt penguin Fernando was hatched to parents Rosalita and Wylie on February 19.

Eleven Black Welsh mountain sheep were born between February 27 and April 8. They represent a threatened species of Heritage Breed livestock that originated in Wales and was prized by spinners for its naturally black wool.

Twenty northern seahorses left for the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas on March 10.

A female Inca tern chick hatched in the Diversity of Birds exhibit on March 14.

One female fairy bluebird was acquired from the San Antonio Zoo on March 23.

A male caiman lizard was loaned out to the National Zoo on April 18.

Three Luzon's bleeding-heart doves left for the Oregon Zoo on April 18.

Twenty Northern seahorses left for the Riverbanks Zoo on April 18.

Ten Northern seahorses left for the Mystic Aquarium on April 26.

Three pink-headed fruit doves were acquired from the Toledo Zoo on April 27.

Two Amur tiger cubs were born to Thimbu and Zeya on April 29. The Amur tiger is one of the rarest cats on Earth, with less than 400 remaining in the wild.

Fifteen Touch-Me-Not stick insects left for the El Paso Zoo on May 3.

Two female koalas, Kolet and Kumiri, were acquired on loan from the San Diego Zoo on May 13.

Twenty Northern seahorses left for the Tulsa Zoo on May 17.

Ten whitebelly reed frogs left for the Oklahoma City Zoo on May 22.

A Victorian Crowned Pigeon squab hatched on May 21. This species is classified as Near Threatened by the IUCN. It is native to New Guinea and related to the extinct dodo bird.



Before and After: Victoria Crowned Pigeon squab Motley is pictured (left) in May nesting in his box and looking out at the Diversity of Birds Aviary. Motley has now fledged and is viewable to guests at ground level!

Whose got big, yellow eyes and an even bigger voice? If you guessed black-and-white ruffed lemurs, you're correct! These little creatures boast powerful voices, and frequently fill our Social Animals building with all kinds of chatter.

As their name suggests, black-and-white ruffed lemurs have a distinct color pattern differentiating them from other lemur species. These lemurs are unique for their size, their role in pollination, and their distinct maternal behaviors; mothers use their own hair to construct nests for their babies. They have litters of young, which is rare among primates. As frugivores, black-and-white ruffed lemurs primarily consume fruit, but also eat nectar and seeds.

When we think pollinators, we mostly think of butterflies, bees, birds and other small creatures, but black-and-white ruffed lemurs are the physically largest pollinators on the planet! When these lemurs stick their fuzzy heads into the flowers of the traveler's palm (or traveler's tree) in search of nectar, the flower's pollen sticks to the thick fur of the lemurs' heads. When the lemurs move to the next tree to get more of their favorite snack, their pollen hitchhikers get a free ride to a neighboring flower!

Black-and-white ruffed lemurs have a range of sounds from deep barks to piercing wails, allowing them to defend territory from rivals and signal danger. These lemurs are famously cacophonous, and this penchant for communication allows the lemurs to form large social systems comprised of smaller, subdivided groups of two to five lemurs. If resources are scarce, these lemurs will divide into their smaller groups; when resources are plentiful, these small lemur groups will coalesce into a larger social system.

The black-and-white ruffed lemur is just one of 110 different lemur species on the island of Madagascar, but they may not be around for long. The IUCN estimates that 98% of these species will face extinction in the next 20 years. The wild black-and-white lemur population has already declined by at least 80% since 1998. Logging, mining, and slash-and-burn agriculture have decimated these lemurs, and human poachers have contributed even more to this species' decline. Conservationists are rallying to protect these iconic arboreal animals from extinction, and our institution is proud to be able to play a role in preserving black-and-white ruffed lemurs as we work to create a future for their species.

Fun Fact:

During the warm summer months, you may find our black-and-white ruffed lemurs on exhibit in the Amur leopard corridor – when Amur leopard Rafferty decides to stay indoors in his air-conditioned indoor space!

Acquiring these koalas has been a project years in the making, so as the plane touched down with Kolet and Kumiri aboard, the team felt a heightened sense of anticipation which often accompanies a new caregiving experience.

“Seeing the plane land was an exhilarating moment,” said Carrie Large, executive director of the Friends of the Zoo. “We’ve been working to provide a temporary exhibit for these animals since 2020, but the Covid-19 pandemic threw a wrench in our plans. Sharing koalas with our zoo community has been a goal of the Friends for years, so seeing these plans come to fruition was truly special.”

Of course, our animal staff was more than ready to take on the task of caring for koalas; staff members have been coordinating with San Diego Zoo for months, learning about the ins and outs of koala-care, and participating in regular training sessions well before the koalas arrived.

Lindsay King, San Diego Zoo senior wildlife specialist along with our own Alana Auwae, traveled on the Southwest flight with the koalas, and came to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo to help Kolet and Kumiri acclimate to their new environment. The koalas took to their new exhibit like a joey takes to its mother’s pouch, and were soon camped out in the crooks of the trees in their new habitat.

Even though the koalas looked comfortable, our team wanted to ensure that their transition to our zoo was an easy one. So, staff covered the viewing windows of the koalas’ indoor exhibit for the first week they were here, to allow the koalas to adjust to their surroundings before stepping into the spotlight.

A Collaborative Conservation Partnership

The koalas came to us through the San Diego Zoo’s Koala Conservation and Education Loan Program, which seeks to educate the public and encourage people to care about this amazing species. The zoo began the program in 1983 to foster interest in koalas and awareness of koala

conservation in people throughout the world. Participation in the program helps generate funding to support San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance research and koala conservation initiatives in collaboration with our conservation partners around the world. To date, the San Diego Zoo has loaned koalas to 85 different cities spread across 12 countries.

“We are grateful for the chance to participate in this koala loan program, which is an unparalleled approach to conservation education,” said Ted Fox, executive director of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. “The fact that San Diego Zoo has entrusted us with these koalas is a testament to the expertise, skill and knowledge of our animal care specialists. Thanks to them, we can share Kolet and Kumiri with our community and help tell their species’ story.”

A Rare Opportunity

Koalas are rare in American zoos. Only 10 zoos in the United States are permitted to care for koalas by the Australian government and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. This exhibit represents the culmination of years-long collaboration with the San Diego Zoo and the Australian government. Caring for koalas has long been a goal for our zoo — but after the decline of koala populations sharply intensified in just the past decade, that goal became more important than ever.

Koalas are native to the forests of Australia where their populations are declining rapidly. Once numbered in millions, wild koala populations have significantly decreased to an estimated 43,000-80,000. This decline is attributed to their loss of habitat from deforestation and devastating forest fires in Australia. As arboreal animals, when koalas lose their trees, they lose their homes and will wander in search of food and shelter. This displacement is detrimental to koalas and can cause them to get hit by cars, be killed by dogs or succumb to diseases that further dwindle their populations.

The koala is classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) but in parts of their range in Australia

they are considered endangered. Thankfully, the Australian government is trying to double the wild koala population of New South Wales by 2050. It’s an incredibly ambitious goal, but the World Wildlife Fund and undaunted conservationists are joining the fight Down Under to preserve Australia’s quintessential animals from extinction.

“Wild koala populations were facing many challenges before these historic fires ripped through their habitats,” Fox said. “Now, more than ever, it is vitally important that we all take action to save these iconic marsupials before they are lost forever.”

At the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

Here at the zoo, Kolet and Kumiri have an indoor exhibit in the Social Animals Building, and an outdoor exhibit, Koala Outpost, in the old elephant yard. Both exhibits feature engaging educational signage so guests can learn more about these endangered animals. Throughout the summer, we are hosting daily chats and opportunities to see our koalas dining on their unique diet of eucalyptus leaves!

Zoo guests have been flocking to see the new exhibit, but if you haven’t had a chance to see them yet, don’t worry! The koalas will be on exhibit daily until early September. Keep an eye out for announcements of special events in honor of our herbivores from San Diego!



Koala care specialist Alana Auwae places Kumiri onto her eucalyptus tree in her enclosure in the Social Animals Building.



Alana weighs Kumiri for a routine health checkup.



The zoo team eagerly awaited the nighttime arrival of the koalas at Hancock Airport on May 13 courtesy of Southwest Airlines.



Did you know?

Koalas have a lifespan of around 13-17 years. As solitary, arboreal animals, they spend most of their lives in trees. By living so high above the ground, koalas can avoid predators, and are surrounded by their favorite food: eucalyptus leaves. Koala populations are in sharp decline because of disease, encounters with dogs and vehicles, wildfires, and human destruction of their habitat.

Conservationists are working tirelessly to raise awareness for the koalas, and Friends of the Zoo is raising \$20,000 to support this worthy cause. With your new koala knowledge, you’re ready to get involved, too! The Friends challenge you to give a little to save a lot!



To donate, please text koalacuse to 5129205521 or scan the QR code



Scan the QR code to view our Koala Conservation Conversations video!

The Friends Welcomes Six New Board Members!

Andrew Brazill
Tim Crosby

Melissa Hicks
Suzie Lobdell

Jody Manning
Debbie Messina



Friends of the Zoo Hires Sherry Jones as Director of Finance

Friends of the Zoo hired Sherry Jones as director of finance in February. Jones graduated from the University of Rochester with a degree in political science in 1992, but soon after, changed directions and completed a masters in accounting in 2006 through the University of Phoenix. "I actually did online before online became a thing!" Jones said.

Having worked for nonprofits before, such as Home Headquarters and Abundant Life, Jones was accustomed to the style of philanthropic work that the Friends of the Zoo pursues. "I have a background in nonprofit organizations on the financial side, so it was already tailored to what I knew and was familiar with," Jones said.

Jones had been looking for a new position with a non-profit organization and decided to apply to work with the Friends of the Zoo. When she visited the zoo's website and looked at our annual reports, she was impressed with the variety of activities, fundraisers, and events that the zoo conducted on top of its educational offerings.

Jones has extensive non-profit experience (having worked with churches, home improvement organizations, and more), but has never served in a role quite like this one. The position offered familiar work, but a new, engaging work environment. This was just what Jones was looking for — the work she was used to doing, but in an office like no other.

Since joining the team in early 2023, Jones said that she has enjoyed the process of learning about and organizing the zoo's financials, which Jones described as "fascinating." She also said that the staff has made her feel right at home, but her favorite "co-worker" to visit with is Bambino, the Giant Pacific Octopus.



Chris Omolino Friends of the Zoo Event and Volunteer Coordinator

Chris Omolino joined the Friends of the Zoo in April as an Event and Volunteer Coordinator. Omolino worked in admissions and recruitment for graduate studies at Syracuse University for 25 years and retired from that position a year and a half ago. Since then, she had been trying to figure out where her skills could be most useful. It has always been important for her to work for an organization that cares about the planet, conservation, social justice issues and community, and the zoo is all of that — and more!

"I loved my time there, but I was ready for something new, I just didn't know what that was going to be," Omolino said, "until I stepped foot through the doors of Rosamond Gifford Zoo. This was the fit I was looking for."

Since joining the team, Omolino has enjoyed getting to know and collaborate with both the zoo's personnel, the Friends of the Zoo, and of course, our dedicated team of volunteers.

"I'm starting to get to know the volunteers and their commitment to the zoo's mission and effort, and it's really exciting to see how much they contribute," Omolino said. "I'm glad to be part of this vibrant volunteer system, helping it function and grow, and helping our volunteers along the way."

From avid zoo attendee to new employee, Omolino has maintained her appreciation of the zoo — not just for the vibrant array of animals here, but for the people that keep the lights on, too.

"Just like everybody here, I want everybody to know that this is a fabulous resource for our community," Omolino said. "Anything I can do to spread that message and get people engaged, visiting and supporting the zoo however they can, then that's exciting to me."



Patrick McCarthy joins the Friends as Writer and Content Creator

McCarthy writes what robots can't. Born and raised in Syracuse, his lifelong passion for reading and writing led him to complete a dual major in Creative Writing and American History at Syracuse University.

"Everyone always told me that if you like what you do, you never work a day in your life," McCarthy said. "So, even though it was hard to envision what kind of work these majors would lead me to, I studied classic literature, American history, and creative writing."

He continued his education with a graduate program in magazine, newspaper, and digital journalism at Syracuse University's Newhouse School of Communications.

McCarthy freelanced for a year writing concert reviews for syracuse.com | The Post Standard, contributed stories on labor movements and environmental activism for digital publication TriplePundit, and completed a travel story on his experience biking all 360 miles of the the Erie Canalway Trail.

Freelancing built the portfolio but couldn't pay the bills, so McCarthy was on the lookout for a more solid writing position and leapt at the opportunity to join the Friends' Marketing and Communications department as a writer.

Since he began in 2023, McCarthy has enjoyed working with passionate, conservation-minded coworkers and walking the grounds of the zoo. His favorite part of the job — other than visiting Amur leopard Rafferty and our snow leopards — is the daily education that he receives while researching different species for projects around the zoo.

"Even though I'm not directly interacting with the animals, it is incredibly fulfilling to learn about the species in our care, and inspiring to observe the sense of purpose our animal care specialists exude," McCarthy said.



Yaad and Tukada: An EleTwin Update

The EleTwins are thriving! Miracle Asian elephant twins Yaad and Tukada recently celebrated their half-birthday on April 24, and in the six months since they were born, they've already gained over 350 pounds each! Yaad has overtaken Tukada as the "big brother" at their last weigh-in; Yaad now weighs 598 pounds, and Tukada 588. They're taller and faster, but just as playful as they've always been! Yaad has a penchant for putting straw on top of his head, as if he is wearing a straw hat, while Tukada has been diligently trying to summit a small rock in the Helga Beck Asian Elephant Preserve.

The twins are curious, energetic and grow bigger and stronger each day — and thanks to some guidance from the elder females of our herd, the boys are learning to use their trunks to pick up hay, sticks, jelly beans and more! The trunk dexterity that the EleTwins are developing isn't just for grabbing fun objects — this skill will allow the twins to obtain water, and also to throw dirt on their backs to cool off on hot days. **Yaad and Tukada romp around their pachyderm playground every day at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Come see our little wonders while they're still little!**

JOIN THE OFFICIAL ELETWIN FACEBOOK FAN CLUB!

If you want to keep up with the miracle twins, but can't visit the zoo in-person, we've got you covered! Head over to the Official EleTwin Fan Club on Facebook for free access to daily updates on the twins as they gain weight and height, and develop trunk dexterity. Keep up with the twins' growth and with all their antics! Yaad and Tukada grab sticks, chase bubbles, and explore their seven-acre playground everyday, so visit the EleTwin Fan Club to have a look at the latest Miracle Twin mischief!





Pictured: The view from the live Amur Tiger Cub Cam in the Animal Health Center on May 2.

Amur Tiger Cubs Born to First-Time Mother Zeya

Amur tiger cubs, (one male, one female), were born to mother Zeya and father Thimbu on April 29. The birth of the cubs has been a highly anticipated event, representing over three years of conservation efforts. Zeya arrived at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in late 2020 from Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, after the Association of Zoos and Aquarium's Species Survival Plan recommended she be paired to breed with Thimbu, who came to us from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs in 2019.

Amur tigers are some of the rarest large cats on earth, and one of the most endangered species on the planet. They are native to the Amur region of northeastern China and Siberia, and the Amur tiger wild population is estimated to be less than 400. The birth of healthy

Amur tiger cubs is an invaluable milestone in the recovery of this rare animal's population.

"When Zeya came to us from Connecticut, we had high hopes for this day," said Zoo Executive Director Ted Fox. "It was always our goal for Zeya to have cubs, but so much had to happen before that was a possibility. These cubs represent the work of our animal care team in slowly introducing these massive, complex creatures. Today is a celebration of Conservation in Action."

This was the first time that either tiger became a parent, and the animal care team didn't know what to expect from Zeya and Thimbu.



The female cub, pictured at 3 weeks of age, is lighter in color than her brother and quieter in personality.



The male cub (3 weeks old) is one fierce feline, very playful, expressive and ready to flash his fangs!

In the wild, tigers can act unpredictably toward their offspring if they fail to bond. Zeya was hand-raised, which is why the animal care team was watching her birth so closely. Staff wasn't sure what to expect, given that Zeya never got to witness a mother Amur tiger provide for her cubs. In fact, Zeya's mother rejected her and her sister Reka, leaving animal care staff at Beardsley Zoo with no choice but to hand-rear the little Amur tiger cubs. Unlike her mother, though, Zeya immediately connected with her cubs, and has been an exceptional mother in the days since their birth.

"For Zeya, motherhood was completely instinctual," Dan Meates, zoo curator, said. "It's not often that you get to witness an Amur tiger become a mother, and even rarer to observe a tiger that was raised by humans, raising her cubs herself."

After this successful pregnancy, the zoo has hopes for more cubs in the future. The tiger cubs represent the culmination of almost three years of work for the Amur tiger SSP; when Zeya arrived in 2020, the process of introducing her to Thimbu was long, slow, and unpredictable. Years later, the pair has now welcomed its first litter of cubs, a vital contribution to the precarious Amur tiger global population.

For their health and safety, the cubs will not go on exhibit until they receive all their necessary vaccinations, a process that will be complete when they are 16 weeks old.

Soon, Zeya and her cubs will be on daily exhibit along the Wildlife Trail, but guests who want a closer look can view them daily on a live camera feed at the zoo. The "Tiger Cub Cam" will play live on televisions in the Animal Health Center, and guests can watch the cubs as they play together, sleep with Zeya, and grow larger each day.

The birth of these tiger cubs is a triumph of conservation, and demonstrates the expertise and commitment of the animal care specialists at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Having two of these tigers at our zoo was already special — the chance to provide care to their next generation is truly remarkable. This is a crucial moment for the zoo's conservation mission, and should be celebrated as a critically important achievement for the Amur tiger species.

Names for the tiger cubs will be announced at a later date. Make sure to visit the Animal Health Center this summer to watch the little tigers play around with mom, and visit the Wildlife Trail in late August to see Zeya and the cubs on exhibit!



Libations for Conservation

Friends of the Zoo is always looking to partner with groups in our community to pursue our conservation mission while supporting local businesses. One special partnership is with Critz Farms and Critz Farms Brewing and Cider Co. in Cazenovia, which brewed a limited-release Endangered Species Indian Pale Ale (IPA).



Critz Farms has pledged to donate \$1 per pint sold of the Endangered Species IPA to the Friends of the Zoo's Future of the Red Wolves Campaign!

The red wolf is the most critically endangered species of canine and one of the most endangered animals on earth. It is the only wolf species native to the United States, and known as "America's wolf."

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo and other institutions involved in the red wolf Species Survival Plan are working toward rebuilding the red wolf population with the goal of eventually introducing them into the wild.

The Friends launched the Future for Red Wolves campaign to finance updates and improvements to our red wolf habitat, and the support of Critz Farms will prove instrumental in helping us secure a future for America's wolf.

The Endangered Species IPA is now on tap in the tasting room, but only for a limited time. Stop by to taste it and support our red wolves in the process!





Zoo Run Run Brings 500+ Runners to the Zoo!

Runners of all ages were "running wild" on April 22, as the Friends of the Zoo hosted its second-annual Zoo Run Run in support of animal care and conservation at the zoo.

This crossroads of exercise and conservation brought in companies, families, solo runners, and teams to participate in this 5K walk/run event. The run included a Joey Jog for our young athletes. In total, 549 runners took to the zoo's trails to run in support of our zoo!

Participants had the added benefit of watching our animals as they completed their run (consisting of five laps around the zoo's Wildlife trail). **The run raised \$42,980.15 for the Friends of the Zoo. Making this a successful and fun-filled fundraiser!**

Participants in the Zoo Run Run received a medal on completion of the run, and were granted free admission to the zoo for the rest of the day. Many runners stayed after the 5k to enjoy some well-earned snacks and refreshments, engage with our exhibitors, and take in all the wonders that our zoo has to offer!

Many thanks to Zoo Run Run sponsors Woodlawn Cemetery, Print Solutions Plus, GHD, Empower Federal Credit Union, Blink Fitness, and Girl Scout Troop 60500 GSNYPENN Pathways for making this event possible.

**SAVE THE DATE FOR NEXT YEAR'S RUN:
APRIL 20, 2024!**

Scan QR Code
for race results



Novelis Party for the Planet



Novelis Party for the Planet Attracts Record Crowd

On World Recycling Day, the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo announced a three-year partnership with Novelis, a global leader in sustainable aluminum creation and re-use. Novelis serves as the zoo's Sustainability in Action sponsor. As such, the company is working with the Friends to implement more eco-friendly approaches to our everyday practices.

We want to share these green initiatives with our zoo community whenever possible, and on April 22, The Novelis Party for the Planet attracted more than three thousand guests to the zoo for an unparalleled celebration of Planet Earth and the wonderful variety of life on it.

The event offered a chance for us to promote some eco-education to our guests, such as a Decomposers Talk on composting. Plus, we were fortunate enough to have the Men's & Women's Garden Club of Syracuse present a Pollinator Garden Chat, in which our guests could learn how to implement one of the zoo's sustainability initiatives right in their own gardens!

Bartlett Tree Experts gave away maple tree saplings for guests to take home and plant.

The thousands of guests gathered throughout our grounds were a spectacular sight, made even more special by the fact that there was a conservation cause at the root of this party.

Of course, the main attraction of the zoo was the animals, and throughout the day, guests had access to special Creature Chats around the zoo. Animal care staff offered two chats on our Asian elephant herd, including miracle twins Yaad and Tukada, and also educated guests on our seahorse nursery in the U.S.S. Antiquities Cave, our red wolves on the Wildlife Trail, and our golden lion tamarins in the Social Animals Building.

Thanks to Novelis, we were able to host a fantastic Party for the Planet event that brought thousands of conservation-minded community members to our zoo to celebrate the planet we all call home. We couldn't have set up this event without our sponsors, but the thing that truly made our party a success was the excitement of our zoo family!

In total, 3,451 guests came to our zoo on April 22 to enjoy our celebration of Earth! Thanks to Novelis for hosting a fantastic Party for the Planet, and to supporting sponsor Leaf Guard.



The students of Seven Valleys New Tech Academy in Cortland brought their language talents to our zoo in May. Using the anniversary of the Cinco de Mayo as a jumping-off point, they presented the cultures of the 22 different Spanish speaking countries around the world to zoo visitors.

The celebration represented the culmination of a project spanning this entire past academic year, and the students were delighted to see their work come to fruition. Seven Valleys instructs students through project-based learning, giving the students the opportunity to provide input and help design their own assignments and projects. The success of this format was clear, as students eagerly set up tables in our courtyard to present on their Spanish-speaking research projects.

Some students researched the histories and cultures of certain Spanish countries, while others highlighted the animals at our zoo that are native to those countries. Still other students crafted fictional stories about trips to our zoo, which were written in both English and Spanish. The students also got to show off some of the artwork they completed throughout the year, with some students drawing realistic depictions of zoo animals, and others opting for the abstract, or even self-portraits.

It was a pleasure to be able to host these young creatives, who demonstrate a true zeal for both learning and teaching. We hope to be able to collaborate with the diligent students of Seven Valleys New Tech Academy again next year!



As an institution, we are fortunate to be centered in such a diverse community, and it is important to us that everyone feels welcomed and valued at our zoo. Our LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility held on May 7 gave our zoo the chance to engage, recognize and celebrate our zoo family, which is just as diverse as the vibrant array of animals in our care.

A rainbow of families came to the zoo to celebrate Pride in a safe, friendly, and fun environment! Guests sported all kinds of clothing displaying their pride, and many even wore the zoo's "Penguin Family" t-shirt which honors our first same-sex Humboldt penguin couple, Elmer and Lima, and their hatchling Bruno. This year's flamingo-themed Pride t-shirts were also available for purchase. In total, 2,844 people attended the festivities.

The day was jam-packed with all kinds of events that showcased just how colorful our community is. A DJ in the courtyard got the party started at 10 a.m., and soon after, our schedule of activities kicked off in earnest. Every thirty minutes, our animal team presented a different animal with rainbow-themed enrichment. Some species, such as our blue cranes and meerkats, received rainbow piñatas, while others, such as our Asian elephant herd and Andean bear, received rainbow-colored slabs of ice to help them cool off from the heat.

On top of the enrichment schedule, the LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility also featured medley performances by Peaceful Schools in the Animal Health Center, Storytime sessions at Explorer's Outpost, and two wellness yoga classes in the education classroom. With so many different activities, there was something for everybody, and it was wonderful to be able to host such a joyous event.

Thanks to sponsors Advocates, Inc., ACR Health "Q Center," Camp Beyond Binary, Girl Scouts, Hillside Childrens Center and Nave Law Firm for helping us celebrate pride.

Senior Citizens Appreciation Day



Our second annual Senior Citizen Appreciation Day brought a record number of senior citizens to the zoo on the morning of May 10 giving us a chance to recognize the elder members of our zoo family, some of whom have been zoo members for many years.

Registrants received free admission to the zoo and a tasty continental breakfast from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. They also enjoyed access to senior-specific exhibitors, met Chuch the Mediterranean donkey, and got to learn more about the animals at the zoo.

Our senior guests had the chance to watch the miracle twins Yaad and Tukada playing together at the Helga Beck Asian Elephant Preserve as well as observe a "Caring for Senior Elephants and Elephant Yoga" demonstration, in which our elephant care team explained the routine care that our senior elephants receive. Seniors also attended a creature chat at Penguin Coast and a "Senior Animal Companions" chat on our pair of Colobus monkeys.

Throughout the morning, attendees were able to visit and gather information from exhibitors Nutrifi, Onondaga County Office for the Aging, Men and Women's Gardening Club of Syracuse, Loretto, Catholic Charities, AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Volunteer Program, and Senior Home Care & Alzheimer's Solutions.

More than 340 seniors registered to participate in this event which was made possible by presenting sponsor Hill Insurance Company, LLC with additional support from Humana, United Health Care, Loretto, Nascentia Health, Excellus BCBS, HearingLife, Aetna Medical Solutions, InterFaith Works and State Wide Insurance.



The zoo became a dream come true for many special families on June 2, as we hosted our annual Dreamnight celebration. Originating in the Netherlands at the Rotterdam Zoo in 1996, Dreamnight is an inclusive and educational cost-free evening for children with special health care needs and disabilities to enjoy the zoo. This year, the night was filled with Creature Chats at Koala Outpost and Penguin Coast, as well as musical and ballet performances throughout the zoo grounds.

Since 2008, many Central New York organizations have worked with us to provide children in our community the opportunity to participate in Dreamnight. Free tickets are provided to families served by these organizations and the number is limited to reduce any risk of exposure or overstimulation for the children who attend.

Nearly 700 guests came out to experience Dreamnight and we are grateful to our sponsors who helped make this memorable event possible: Wild Republic, NAVE Law Firm, Mohawk Global Giveback, Jim and Juli Boenheim Foundation, The O'Donnell Family.

Embracing our Community:

"In tandem with our conservation mission, the Friends of the Zoo strives to create a welcoming atmosphere and accessible environment for all who choose to visit and experience our zoo. As a cornerstone of this community, we hope to set an example for a better world – a world without barriers that embraces everyone."

– Carrie Large
Executive Director, Friends of the Zoo



Zoo's Impromptu Efforts Preserve Rare Piping Plover Clutch

Our animal staff practices Conservation in Action every day at the zoo, and sometimes, their expertise qualifies them to participate in spontaneous conservation efforts unrelated to the zoo animals in their care.

Recently, Collection Manager Lucas Whitman had the chance to help save a clutch of rare piping plover eggs from Sandy Creek Island Beach State Park, near Sandy Pond, on Lake Ontario. The clutch was laid by one of only three breeding pairs in the area, but the male of the pair was likely predated, leaving the female incapable of protecting and providing for the clutch.

When local stewards discovered this, they reached out to Bonnie Van Dam, associate bird curator at Detroit Zoo, who helps oversee piping plover conservation in and around the Great Lakes. Van Dam instructed the stewards to request help from local institutions, and the Rosamond Gifford Zoo was on that list.

"As an institution we participate in many ex-situ conservation efforts that are very important," Whitman said. "This was an incredible opportunity to extend our efforts beyond the zoo grounds."



Fish and Wildlife Ranger Tim Sullivan coordinated with Michigan FWS Officer Jillian Farkas to design a plan to get the plovers from Sandy Pond to a hatching facility in Michigan, but they'd need to have a layover in Syracuse. Officer Sullivan then contacted Whitman to ask if our zoo could care for the eggs for a week or so before the clutch would be sent to Detroit Zoo. Whitman eagerly accepted this chance to care for a critically endangered clutch. So, Tim came to the zoo, picked up our egg incubator, then picked up the clutch from Sandy Pond and brought them back to Syracuse. From there, Whitman and his bird team diligently monitored the incubator's temperature, ensuring that it maintained a temperature between 99.5 and 99.9 degrees Fahrenheit.

The keepers checked on the incubator four to five times a day, and once a day, Whitman would "candle" the eggs. Candling is a harmless way to observe the development of an embryo inside an egg. By holding a flashlight beneath the eggs, which created a silhouette of the chicks within, Whitman could see the chicks moving and could even see veins within the eggshell pumping.

Ultimately, three out of four chicks were viable. It is possible that the fourth chick had already perished in the Sandy Pond nest before the clutch was rescued, though there is no way to know for sure. One thing is certain, though — the three surviving eggs could not have survived this ordeal if Officer Sullivan, Whitman, Van Dam, and other conservationists hadn't sprung into action.

After six days of consistent care at the zoo, the three eggs were driven to Pennsylvania, where they joined another piping plover clutch that had been similarly displaced. Both clutches were then driven to Detroit Zoo. After their stop in Detroit, the eggs headed north and reached their final destination in Northern Michigan.

"It is very rewarding to help make a difference for a species so directly, especially with the knowledge that these birds will go right back out into the wild to help their population," Whitman said.

Conservation is an endless labor, however. Before our bird specialists could take pride in a job well done, they received another call, again concerning an abandoned clutch of piping plover eggs in Sandy Pond. Stewards in the area believe that the male of a second piping plover pair abandoned his nest and his mate, and is now nesting with the piping plover female who lost her mate in the beginning of this story.

Officer Sullivan once again drove to Sandy Pond and rescued a clutch of four eggs. These eggs were further along in their development, and only required four days of care before they were driven to their rendezvous in Pennsylvania. The bird team treated this clutch just like the previous, and all four eggs were viable when they left the care of our zoo's bird team and have all safely hatched.

Our zoo is honored to have been able to play a role in the conservation of this endangered species. This experience demonstrates how the actions of a few conservation-minded individuals can truly make a difference in the world.

Specialized Training Sessions Help Animals Participate in Their Own Care

Amur leopards are one of the rarest species on earth – with fewer than 65 living in the wild. So, it is essential that accredited zoos do everything to help preserve this endangered species.

At the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, our animal care staff work daily to train each animal to participate in their own self-care. Our Amur Leopard Team has taught Rafferty to present his shoulder, mouth, hip and tail for routine check-ups, examinations, and vaccination to ensure his health and wellbeing.

Trust is the most essential component of these training programs. Each species requires a unique program with different goals based on the animals' aptitude. For example, primates are more trusting and intelligent than felines who tend to be solitary and suspicious. So, with a cat like Rafferty, the first goal of the program might be something as simple as getting him to approach the training wall.

After rewarding him for accomplishing this, animal staff will direct Rafferty to touch a certain "target" spot on the glass wall of his enclosure. If he does this, he is rewarded with his favorite treat: raw chicken. The training relies on Rafferty's cooperation – if he isn't in the mood for a training session, he doesn't have to participate. By training this shy and elusive apex predator to work with animal staff and participate in his own health care, we can preserve this spectacular species.

Training sessions underscore how "human care" refers to more than just providing food and shelter — by stimulating our animals' natural instincts, we can maintain their physical health while keeping their minds active, too!

Giving the public an opportunity to view these training sessions helps educate them about the work we do for the wellbeing of the animals in our care to ensure their survival. **Watch for announcements during your next visit, and you may just witness one of these amazing training sessions first hand!**

Our miracle twins Yaad and Tukada may be young but have already begun similar training sessions.

Given the emotional complexity, intelligence and strength of a growing elephant, it's vital that the twins learn from an early age to participate in their own care. Once the twins weigh 10,000 pounds each, health procedures and check-ups will become nearly impossible without their cooperation.

The first two years of an elephant's life are critical for its development. It's essential for our animal care team to solidify trust with the twins so that the team can monitor their health through blood samples, trunk washes, and dental checks.

Training has a fun side, too. It's important to make training fun for the twins so that they will continue to engage with the animal care staff as they grow in size and maturity. Yaad and Tukada like to play rough and demolish their enrichment toys like a wrecking crew!



Calendar of Events

Events are free for members or with paid zoo admission, unless otherwise noted. Scan QR code for full event details or visit, rosamondgiffordzoo.org/events



Penguin Palooza Sunday, July 9
Kids of all ages enjoy this ice cream party featuring an incredible array of fun activities, entertainment, free ice cream, kid-friendly foods, music, face painters, and of course, demonstrations with our colony of Humboldt penguins!



Fall Conservation Bash Friday, September 22
Join us for an evening of fantastic food, energizing entertainment and raffles of the most sought-after gifts, all to benefit animal care at the zoo and conservation in the wild. You won't want to miss your chance to win an epic prize!



Summer Harvest Pairing Dinner Friday, July 21
Our ever-popular Gourmet Dinner Series continues this summer with a special celebration of the season. Join us and our exceptional Catering at the Zoo team for an exquisite dinner and wine pairing themed on nature's wondrous bounty and the connection between humans and the natural world.



Zoo Boo Weekends in October
Join us for a "kooky-not-spooky" daytime Halloween celebration. The zoo transforms into a hauntingly fun destination for the whole family with trick-or-treat stations, creepy-crawly animal encounters, keeper chats, games, activities, photo-ops and a costume parade!



Brew at the Zoo Friday, August 4
Make plans now to attend one of the most anticipated events of the summer. More than 100 tastings of craft beers, wines and other adult beverages, live music performances throughout the zoo and a great gathering of food trucks, plus animals on exhibit.



Holiday Nights Fridays and Saturdays in December
Celebrate the season with Holiday Nights at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo! Sing along with holiday carolers, visit with Santa, gather around and warm up by glowing fire pits with family and friends, enjoy festive lighting, ice sculpture carving, animals, and much more!



Asian Elephant Extravaganza Saturday, August 19
Come celebrate the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's Asian elephant herd and the cultural traditions of their native countries in South Asia. Daylong activities include performances of traditional Indian music and dance, demonstrations with our eight-member elephant herd, birthday celebrations for our two eldest elephants, Siri and Romani and more!



Noon Year's Eve Sunday, December 31
Join us for our annual Noon Year's Eve celebration that keeps bedtime in mind – complete with a dance party, noisemakers, countdown to noon and a juice toast!



SPECIALLY FOR OUR SENIORS:

Senior Mornings – Second Wednesday of Each Month
Senior zoo members 62 and older with valid ID are invited to come take advantage of early zoo access beginning at 9 a.m. and enjoy the quiet trails before the zoo opens!

Senior Member Morning dates:

July 12
August 9
September 13
October 11

Entry begins at 9 a.m.
Valid zoo membership card and ID required.

Daily Schedule Starts June 24

10:30 a.m.	Koala Enrichment & Chat at Koala Outpost
11 a.m.	Carnivore Chat Listen for Announcements
11 a.m.	Elephant Twins Viewable
11:30 a.m.	Camel Feeding Wildlife Trail
Noon	Penguin Chat at Penguin Coast Exhibit
12:30 p.m.	Domestic Animal Barn Chat
1:30 p.m.	Koala Chat at Koala Outpost
2 p.m.	Elephant Chat at Helga Beck Asian Elephant Preserve
2 p.m.	Elephant Twins Viewable
2:30 p.m.	Herp/Aquarium Chat at USS Antiquities Cave/Aquarium
3 p.m.	Primate Chat at Primate Park
3:30 p.m.	Indoor Birds Chat at Diversity of Birds Aviary

ECONOTES



The Green Team: Putting Conservation into Action!

LIVING THE MISSION

Friends of the Zoo created the Green Team in late 2022 to pursue eco-friendly innovations to further align ourselves and our practices with our belief in the One Health concept, which states that the health of human beings is interconnected with the wellbeing of our planet and the wellbeing of the thousands of other species that call it home.

The Green Team's primary focus is C.A.R.E., or Conservation in Action, Resourcefulness and Education. Conservation is more than saving forests and caring for endangered animals — for example, refusing to purchase products that contribute to deforestation and poaching is a great way for individual consumers to put Conservation in Action. We are reviewing our use of resources, as an organization and as individuals, to identify how we can waste less, and re-use more. And, we recognize the need to share this information with our conservation-minded zoo family who also care about our planet and the complex creatures that share it with us.

The Green Team is identifying sustainability goals for the zoo, while also working to teach our zoo family how they can become greener in their daily lives. We have already greatly reduced our paper waste and are looking forward to researching new ways to make our institution as planet-friendly as possible. **Here are a few things that we are trying at the zoo, which you can try out at home!**

Pollinator Gardens: Pollinators are paramount to healthy environments but their populations are declining due to pesticides and habitat destruction. So, to beautify your backyard and help out your surrounding habitat, you can grow a garden to attract these pollinators! Monarch butterflies, bees, hummingbird moths and other pollinators play a key role in your surrounding ecosystem, and by supporting them, you are also supporting the health of all the nature around you!

To begin your pollinator garden, you need to choose a good location (many pollinators prefer sunshine, but some prefer the shade); assess your soil to determine what kind of plants can thrive here (is it wet? Dry? Firm? Fertile?); and decide whether you would prefer to grow seeds or small plants (seeds are more expensive and take longer to germinate, but can result in better flowers).

The US Fish and Wildlife Service also recommends investing in perennials for your pollinator garden, as these will save you the trouble of growing new plants each year. **For more information and advice on pollinator gardens, visit: <https://www.fws.gov/story/how-build-pollinator-garden>**

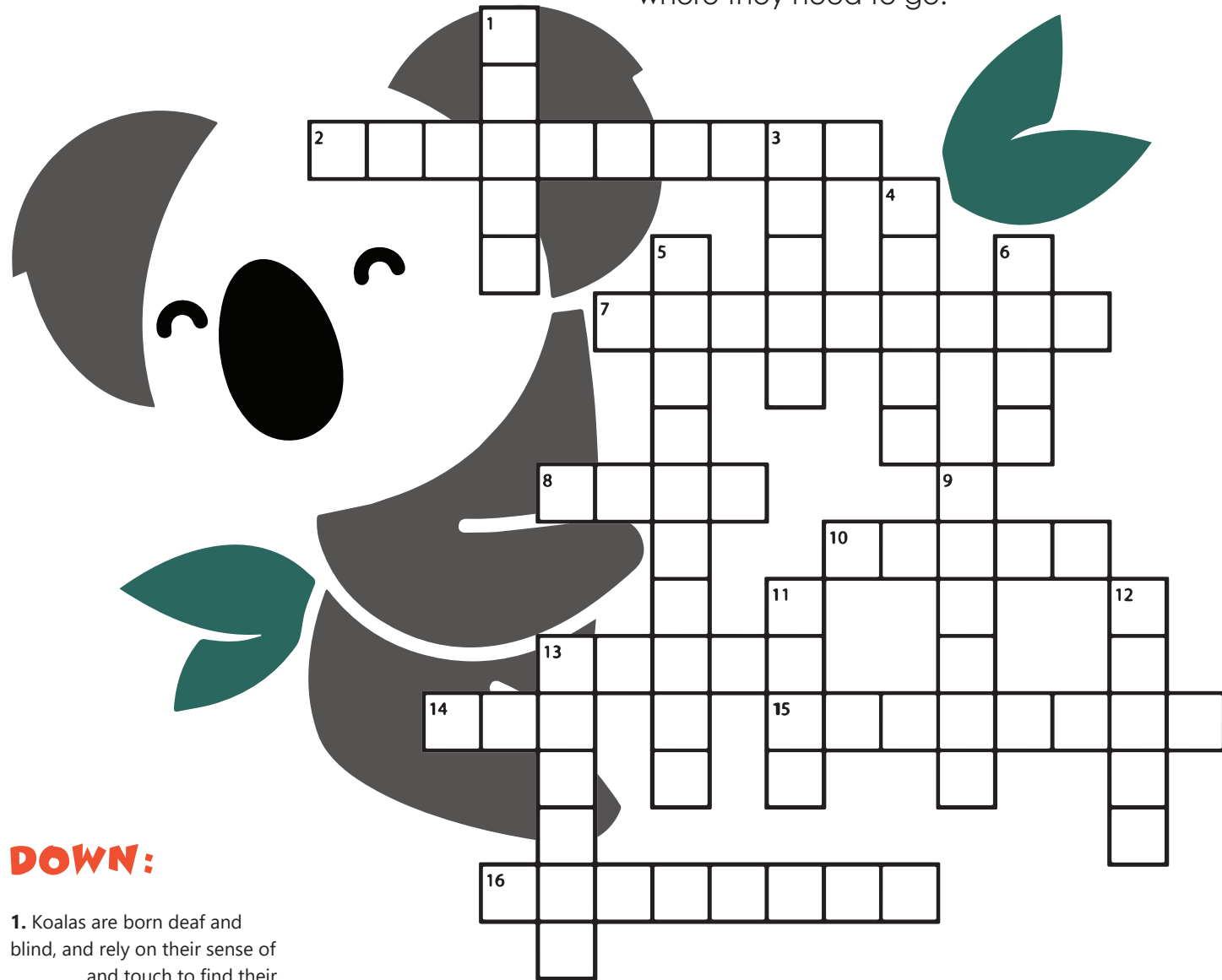
Bug Hotels: Bug hotels are small, simple structures that are best built with resources strewn around your yard: pine cones, sticks, twigs, leaves, roof tiles, rotting wood and more can make for a luxurious stay for minibeast and insects. While the concept of building a home for insects may seem strange, the insects that bug hotels support are not the unwanted pests that many gardeners dread. In fact, you can combat pests such as aphids, which the residents of your bug hotel will snack on! Insects can use the crooks and crannies of your bug hotel for an overnight stay, or hibernate there through the winter. Either way, constructing a bug hotel in your yard can have immediate and significant benefits for your surrounding ecosystem!

Bottle and Can Returns: Our sustainability partner **Novelis**, a global leader in aluminum recycling, is helping us become more efficient and resourceful. We've already phased out environmentally harmful plastic bottles in favor of endlessly renewable aluminum cans. Returning bottles and cans is a great way to practice conservation in your day-to-day life, as the aluminum you return will go directly into a new batch of aluminum cans. **Did you know cans received at recycling facilities can be recycled into new cans and placed back on grocery shelves in about 60 days?**

Moving away from plastic bottles is an easy switch to make at home, too. If you find that cans can't compete with the convenience of a plastic bottle, you can always purchase a reusable bottle to curb your plastic use. Reducing the use of single-use plastic bottles will give you peace of mind in knowing that you are helping to preserve the health of the planet we all share.

KOALA KROSSWORD

Crikey, mate! There's a traffic jam at Koala Crossing, and we need a true-blue animal expert to sort out this mess! Answer the clues to solve the puzzle, and help our cobbers from Down Under get where they need to go!



DOWN:

- 1. Koalas are born deaf and blind, and rely on their sense of _____ and touch to find their mother's pouch
- 3. Australian animal whose name means "no water"
- 4. Koalas use _____ claws to climb trees and grab leaves

ACROSS:

- 2. Koalas hug these to cool off when they are hot
- 7. The only thing koalas eat

- 5. Koalas live in _____ trees
- 6. The koala is sometimes called a _____
- 8. Fossil evidence suggests that the koala was once the size of a fully-grown _____
- 9. The sound that a male koala makes
- 10. Koalas can do this for twenty hours a day
- 11. The color of a koala
- 12. The color of a koala's nose
- 13. Australian animal that is a close relative of the koala
- 13. Koalas sometimes lick _____ off of leaves after rainfall
- 14. Number of thumbs that koalas have on each hand
- 15. Koalas are _____, meaning they spend most of their lives in trees
- 16. Australian marsupials with front-facing pouch

ANSWERS: ON PAGE 22



Adopt
an
Animal 

Koala
Senior Keeper
Special **\$55**

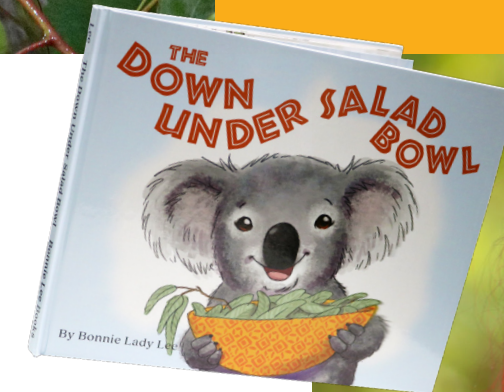
Package includes:

A certificate of adoption, 4x6 color photo of a koala, animal fact sheet, 12" koala plush, an adopt parent gift, copy of *MyZoo Magazine*, and listing in online adopt parent board for one year.



Adopt an Animal online at syracusezooevents.org/shop
Looking to adopt another animal at the regular rate?
Call (315) 435-8511 x8563 or
email giftshop@rosamondgiffordzoo.org

 **The**
 **Curious**
 **Cub**
GIFT SHOP



New! Koala-Themed Items at the Gift Shop!

Check out our new seasonal items including newly arrived koala apparel! Stop in and see our great selection of conservation-themed gift items for the animal lovers in your life next time you visit.

Members Receive 10% Off!

Best of all, your purchases benefit animal care at the zoo and conservation in the wild.



Can't come to the zoo?
Scan the QR code
to visit our online store
or go to syracusezooevents.org/shop





Members, get ready to see a lot more of a familiar face!

Nhojsia ("Sia") White has been the friendly and bubbly face at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's membership desk for the last 5 years—and she has now joined the team full-time!

Sia was promoted to lead membership associate in 2021 and has continued to grow and thrive within the Friends organization ever since. With enthusiasm for her position and an infectious smile, she works with our members and ensures their experiences at our zoo are ones to remember.

"I am thankful to work for an organization that emanates positivity on a daily basis," Sia said.

With so much excitement on the way for 2023, we are thrilled to have Sia on our team in this advanced capacity. Be sure to stop by the membership desk and say hello next time you visit!

Members in Motion!

Don't forget that one of your many perks of being a member at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is discounted admission to our reciprocal institutions!

As an accredited AZA facility, we partner with other accredited zoos and aquariums across the country to offer you discounts on ticket prices for your member family. There are more than 150 institutions to choose from. Some of our local NY partners include Seneca Park Zoo, Utica Zoo, Buffalo Zoo, and the Aquarium of Niagara.



For the current list, scan the QR code.

YOUR MEMBER BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Free admission 362 days a year (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day)
- Discounted admission to more than 150 other AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums nationwide
- Discounts on education programs and zoo camps
- Discounts on purchases at The Curious Cub Gift Shop
- Discounts on purchases at the HoneyBee Café
- Discounted prices for zoo birthday parties and special events
- Subscription to *MyZoo Magazine*

Looking for a unique way to recognize the efforts of your hardworking team? Look no further!

An organization membership is the perfect way to say "thank you" to your staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Reward your team members with the many benefits of a zoo membership.

HOW TO USE:

Simply present the organization membership card to our membership team upon arrival and begin enjoying your day!

Present the membership card in our giftshop and concessions to receive an exclusive discount!

Questions? Please contact membership management team at (315) 435-8511 x8537, or scan the QR Code below to learn more about this unique opportunity!



ASK ABOUT BECOMING A CIRCLE OF FRIENDS MEMBER

Get additional benefits that bring you closer to the zoo! For more information, contact Gina Rapasadi at (315) 435-8511, X8534 or email grapasadi@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

Make Your Summer Event One to Remember!



Now Offering!

NEW ENGLAND STYLE CLAMBAKE

Looking for a truly unique experience for your next corporate event or company picnic?

This summer, treat your employees to a one-of-a-kind clambake at the zoo!

PERFECT FOR A COMPANY PICNIC!



CATERING AT THE ZOO



CHECK OUR WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR UPDATES ON OUR POPULAR GOURMET PAIRING DINNERS!

MYZOO JR. ANSWER KEY

Down:
1. smell
3. koala

4. sharp
5. eucalyptus
6. bear

9. bellow
11. gray
12. black

13. wombat

Across:
2. tree trunks
7. gumleaves

8. bull
10. sleep
13. water

14. two
15. arboreal
16. kangaroo



Upcoming Events

See page 18
for these and other
exciting events!

