

**ESSEX COUNTY  
TURTLE BACK**



**Zoological Society  
of New Jersey, Inc.**  
AT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO

# Turtle TALK

**Fall 2019**

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**Photo of the Season!**

**Zoo Guest Elizabeth Uss-Barry**

To be considered for Visitor Photo of the Season, please send photos to [info@zoologicalsocietyofnj.org](mailto:info@zoologicalsocietyofnj.org)

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## Nature Adventurers

Sunday, September 8 & October 13 @1pm

Join our Nature Play Leader to discover awesome hidden gems in the South Mountain Recreation Complex! Every month is a new adventure. Recommended for ages 6+. Register for our upcoming adventures here: <http://bit.ly/2XDVPWB>.

## Night Moves

Saturday, August 24 @7:30pm

Night Moves is a guided tour of TBZ's nocturnal species after the zoo closes! First tour at 8pm. Things to bring: flashlight, comfortable walking shoes, and your friends and family! Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/2XDVPWB>.



## Mini-Camp

Fall & Winter Season

The fun doesn't end with summer, stay tuned for the announcement of our mini-camp dates and themes! Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2GvNm70>.

## Early Childhood Programs

Fall Season

Early Childhood Programs return this fall! Learn how to greet animals in this age-appropriate, sensory based program. Hatchlings (ages 6-24 months) with caregiver, Tots (2-3 years) with caregiver, and Explorers (4-5 years) without caregiver. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2GidnYy>.

## Educational Programs

Select days throughout the year

Visiting the zoo? Add an education program! Themed programs for all ages. Outreach programs to your facility available. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2KVifHJ>.

## Clue at the Zoo

Saturday, September 21 @6pm

Save the date for our very first Clue at the Zoo! Join the zoo on an epic adventure of mystery and clues for your entire family to enjoy! Will you seek the truth? Learn more: [zoologicalsocietyofnj.org/clue](http://zoologicalsocietyofnj.org/clue).



## BARKtoberfest

Saturday, October 26

Save the Date! The Zoological Society of New Jersey's annual animal adoption event and marketplace will take place on Saturday, October 26. More details to be announced.







# CONSERVATION EDUCATION

by Educator Katie Fenyar

We all know examples of charismatic megafauna: lions, giraffe, and alligators, but where's the love for animals with exoskeletons (invertebrates)? Invertebrates fill crucial, yet mostly unseen roles within our ecosystems as pollinators, composters, food, and more. Without them, ecosystems collapse, crops fail, and countless species – including charismatic megafauna – face habitat loss or starvation.

We can predict the global impact of insect (an invertebrate) extinction by using the island model. A well-known example of this model are the Galapagos finches, where some finches evolved bills unique to catching a specific insect for food. If the finches' food source is dramatically reduced or goes extinct, the birds have few options: adapt to a new food source and compete with other species, migrate to a new location and hope for success, or go extinct. In thriving ecosystems, extinction of any one species may not have a measurable impact, but in an already stressed ecosystem, the impact may be huge. Then, the extinction-chain can cascade through an ecosystem until the top of the food chain faces the same decision: adapt, move, or go extinct. The loss of vulnerable invertebrate species could have momentous consequences.

An example is the spread of the Spotted

Lanternfly, an invasive insect species that is destroying regional habitats thus reducing our local invertebrate biodiversity. Rutgers Cooperative Extension, educating NJ residents on a wide range of health and environmental issues, utilizes its state-wide facilities to raise awareness, collect data on the spread of the lanternfly, and create conservation initiatives that are accessible to the public. According to Rutgers, increased public awareness is crucial; it's the first step towards action. Fortunately, there are many simple actions that can protect our beloved invertebrates (and all flora and fauna).

We can promote insect-friendly habitats by planting native plants and using pesticide alternatives in our backyards, local parks, community centers, and other outdoor spaces. We can lobby for the government to enact laws and create initiatives that protect our environment. We can support businesses that provide environmentally responsible services and products. It is all of us that have the power to effect positive change in our global environment for future generations. Visit <https://xerces.org> to learn more about the first step you can take to promoting a pollinator-friendly world.



## Brew at the Zoo

Thank you to everyone who attended Brew at the Zoo 2019! Join us again next year for more brew and more zoo! Check out some of our favorite pictures from the night!





# POST SEASON RECAP

**Summer Camp** - Summer camp is several weeks in, with campers ages 5 to 14 exploring the globe without leaving their backyard! Thank you to the Ralph Errington Foundation and TD Bank for sponsoring our camp scholarship program. TBZ campers have been busy with zoo tours, arts-and-crafts projects, animal presentations, and more! Our favorite project was by Zoo Crew, who made a "shoe for Shu" the Komodo dragon. Thank you for spending your summer with us!

**Outreach Programming: Cancer Survivor Day** - Educators Katie and Jared taught a class for cancer survivors from [Nutley's Relay for Life](#), focusing on butterflies and the beauty and resilience they possess. With our zoo ambassadors Bert the Burrowing Owl, Petey the Rooster, Mailbox the Box Turtle, and our butterflies, we were able to share our passion for wildlife conservation with an equally passionate group of people. Thank you to Heather Soto and all members of Nutley's Relay for Life for their continued support of our education department!

**Nature Adventurers: Family Nature Club** - Nature Adventurers travelled to the streams that stretch beyond our reservoir for a summertime adventure! Participants waded through the nearby streams to identify our reservoir's wildlife, from fish and snails to insects and more. What better way to beat the heat?



**Meet the Keepers** - With over 600 people in attendance, Meet the Keepers was a successful night of Q&A's, animal introductions, and a late night at the Zoo! We look forward to hosting Meet the Keepers again in the future! Thank you for attending!

**Penguin Tours** - TBZ hosted late-night Behind-the-scenes tours of our African Penguin exhibit! Our mission as educators and conservationists is to foster an appreciation for wildlife around the globe through our animal ambassadors. To support our penguins, learn about SANCCOB - the leading conservation organization for African Penguins - here: <https://sanccob.co.za>

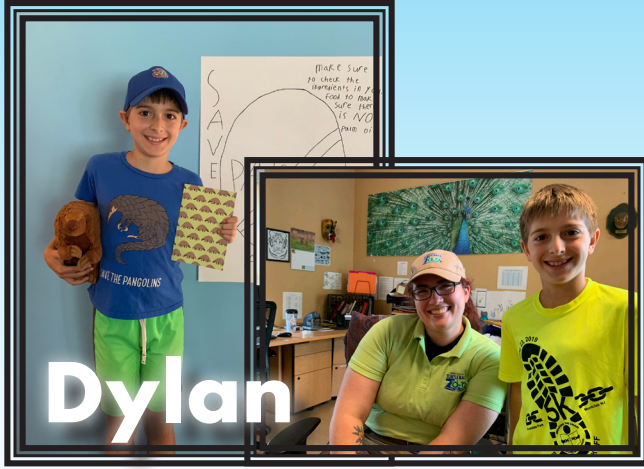
**Sleepover at the Zoo** - With a full house, TBZ's sleepover went off without a hitch this past June. Tie-dye, meeting zoo ambassadors, and running around in the giraffe yard (without the giraffe there, of course) were fan favorites. For these events, we turn our Berson Education Center's classrooms into temporary sleeping quarters, ready for your sleeping bags, blow-up mattresses, and cozy blankets!

**Date Night** - Date Night is a cheeky humor, fun-filled evening for adults age 21+. Our guests filled out their very own mad-libs, themed "dating advice from a zoo animal." The fun continued on with tours of our animal hospital, flamingo exhibit, and a special visit from our very own cheetah ambassador! The best part hands down were presentations about everyone's favorite topic: the wild world of animal reproduction.



Photo by Keeper Karis

# JUNIOR CONSERVATIONIST



## How did it feel to meet an endangered species in person?

It was exciting to meet an animal I've loved for a very long time. It was also [kind of] exciting that not many people get to experience it. Not many get to know what it feels like to meet one in person.

## What organization did you donate to and why did you choose it?

I chose the pangolin group ([PangolinConservation.org](http://PangolinConservation.org)). I chose that group because we watched a PBS documentary on pangolins and people who work to save pangolins. It inspired me.

## How did it feel to take initiative and inspire your peers to take action?

It was hard to hear that they weren't going to help. [After sharing with them what I knew about pangolins] a few classmates wanted to do as much as they could to help.

## If you could share one message with our readers, what would it be?

Palm oil: there's an app you can scan to see if it's sustainable. Check the ingredients to see if there is palm oil, because pangolins are endangered because of it. Help as much as you can. Not just pangolins, but with all animals and the environment. Keep it healthy and alive.

Learn more about the sustainable palm oil app here: <http://bit.ly/2SSbRkA>

We would like to introduce you to Dylan, a young conservationist from Maplewood with a love for Pangolins. When we first met Dylan at our Pangolin Breakfast in 2018, he was already eager to raise awareness about the plight of these endangered species. With the support of his peers and family, he raised over \$900 for pangolin conservation in Africa and Asia. To spread his message further, Dylan wanted to speak directly to our readers. As a member of the Pangolin Consortium and a local conservation organization, Turtle Back Zoo is proud to promote his conservation initiative. To support Dylan's cause, click here: <http://bit.ly/2ybupml>

## What was it about pangolins that inspired you to take action?

I just thought they were really interesting animals. They are [highly] poached animals and I wanted to help them however I can.

## Part of our Pangolin Breakfast involved eating a bug, like our pangolins do. Had you ever eaten a bug before? How did it taste?

It was the first time I can remember, yes. It was like a potato chip with legs; it got stuck between my teeth. It didn't have a flavor to it.



For the past few months, Mattie and Olivia have been working towards their Girl Scouts Silver Award. To achieve their Silver award, they need to volunteer 50 hours of their time towards their chosen project. With Sarah, one of TBZ's educators, they have been creating enrichment, or toys, for our zoo animals. Like Christmas in July, Mattie and Olivia went around the zoo to watch our zoo ambassadors receiving their enrichment.

"For our girl scout silver award, we were told that we could pick anything as a base idea for our project. We instantly knew we wanted to work with animals. Both of us have very fond memories of going to the Turtle Back Zoo as young children up until now. When we found out that we could learn more about animals and help pass along this information, we were over the moon." - Mattie and Olivia





# ZOO NEWS



Photo by Educator Katie Fenyar

Our Aldabra Tortoises are back on exhibit! TBZ keepers use positive reinforcement to “shift” our tortoises from their winter holding to the South America exhibit, which is much less stressful for our animal ambassadors.

## New to TBZ:

### False Gharials

(*Tomistoma schlegelii*) - crocodilian

**IUCN status:** Vulnerable

**Diet:** Opportunistic carnivore that primarily eats fish, but also invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals in the wild; eats fish at TBZ

**Where to see them:** Reptile House

**Habitat:** freshwater swamps & wetlands in Indonesia

**Fun Fact:** They hunt by sweeping their head side to side and catching prey in their long snout



Photo by Educator Katie Fenyar

### Clouded Leopards

(*Neofelis nebulosa*) - feline

**IUCN status:** Vulnerable

**Diet:** Carnivores that eat fish, rabbit, beef, etc. at TBZ; arboreal and terrestrial hunters in the wild

**Where to see them:** Amazing Asia, rotated on-exhibit weekly

**Habitat:** China, Bhutan, Nepal forest regions

**Fun Fact:** o They have the largest canines of any similarly sized cat



### Cougars

(*Puma Concolor*) - feline

**IUCN status:** Least Concern

**Diet:** A carnivore that eats beef, deer, and other meat in zoos

**Where to see them:** Big Cat Country

**Habitat:** Forest, grasslands, and deserts in western North America; widespread in South America

**Fun Fact:** There are several subspecies of cougars distributed throughout their range; they are great climbers

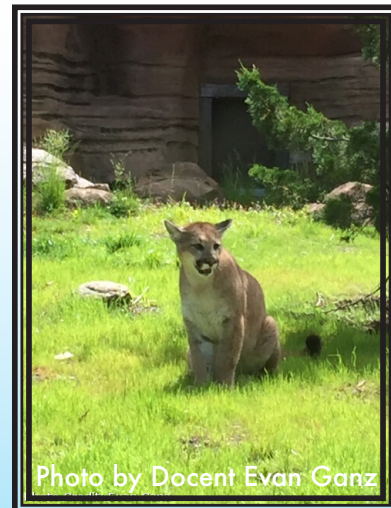


Photo by Docent Evan Ganz

# RWJBarnabas Health's 'Running with the Devils 5k Run and Walk'

## Saturday, November 2nd

The 2nd Annual RWJBarnabas Health "Running with the Devils 5K Run and Walk," in partnership with the New Jersey Devils, will take place on Saturday, November 2nd, 2019 at Essex County's South Mountain Recreation Complex. The 5K race, which will take place on a USATF Certified Course through the picturesque South Mountain Reservation, will begin at 9:00 am - followed immediately by the walk.

Proceeds from the charitable race and day of family-friendly fun will benefit the programs and services of RWJBarnabas Health. Participants are also encouraged to fundraise for the event. Exciting Incentive goals include tickets to New Jersey Devils games and concerts at Prudential Center. The top individual fundraiser will receive 4 club seat tickets to a New Jersey Devils game, high-five tunnel experience, photo at center ice, and more. The top fundraising team will receive a skating party at the RWJBarnabas Health Hockey House.



Additional family-friendly activities at the event include mascot race, interactive games, music, the opportunity to meet New Jersey Devils Alumni, and more. All registered participants will receive free admission to the zoo for that day. For more information on the event, to become a sponsor, or to register, visit [www.rwjbh.org/runningwiththedevils](http://www.rwjbh.org/runningwiththedevils).

## Education Corner with Educator Katie

Our Docents get a ton of questions from our visitors at the zoo. We took some of our visitors' top questions to TBZ's Docents and answered them here.

### How many teeth are in an American Alligator's mouth?

Alligators have 74 - 80 teeth! If teeth are damaged, they can be replaced with new teeth over the course of their lives.

### How low can an American Black Bear's heart rate be during hibernation?

Their heart rates slow by 75% or more. During hibernation, bears do not urinate or defecate. In fact, they even give birth during hibernation!



### What is parthenogenesis?

Females of certain reptile species, such as Komodo dragons, are capable of reproducing without males. When this occurs, a female (ZW heterozygous chromosomes) will always create male (ZZ homozygous chromosomes) offspring. In addition, they are genetic replicas of their mothers. Shu, our Komodo dragon, is a parthenogenic male.

### Are female wallabies born with a pouch or do they develop as the females mature?

Macropods, such as kangaroos and wallabies, are the size of a lima bean when born. They are born with an immature version of their reproductive organs, just like humans and other mammals are.



# SUPPORT YOUR FAVORITE WILD ANIMALS AT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO

We appreciate your generosity in strengthening Essex County Turtle Back Zoo's commitment to conservation, education, & inspiration. All donations to the Zoological Society of New Jersey support the Zoo by providing necessary funds for new habitat design & construction, general zoo improvements, operating support, and conservation programming. There are many ways to donate: Adopt an Animal, Adopt a Bench, Living and Memorial Tributes, Corporate Matching, Amazon Wish List, Monetary Donation, or Becoming a Member of the Zoological Society of New Jersey and Essex County Turtle Back Zoo.



Visit [www.zoologicalsocietyofnj.org/support](http://www.zoologicalsocietyofnj.org/support) to get started!

## Zoological Society of NJ Board of Directors

The Zoological Society of New Jersey, Inc. is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) corporation, organized under the laws of the State of New Jersey. Its purpose is to promote the general welfare of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo, a facility of the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs; to stimulate the public's interest in the growth, improvement, and development of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo through education and research with an emphasis on natural conservation of all species of animals; to support and sponsor fund-raising events to help in the financing of new facilities, purchase of equipment, and acquisition of animals; to encourage membership in the Society by persons interested in the promotion of the physical and aesthetic qualities of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo; and to stimulate the public interest in the development and enjoyment of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo and of animals everywhere.

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