

ESSEX COUNTY
TURTLE BACK



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

Turtle TALK

Winter 2019

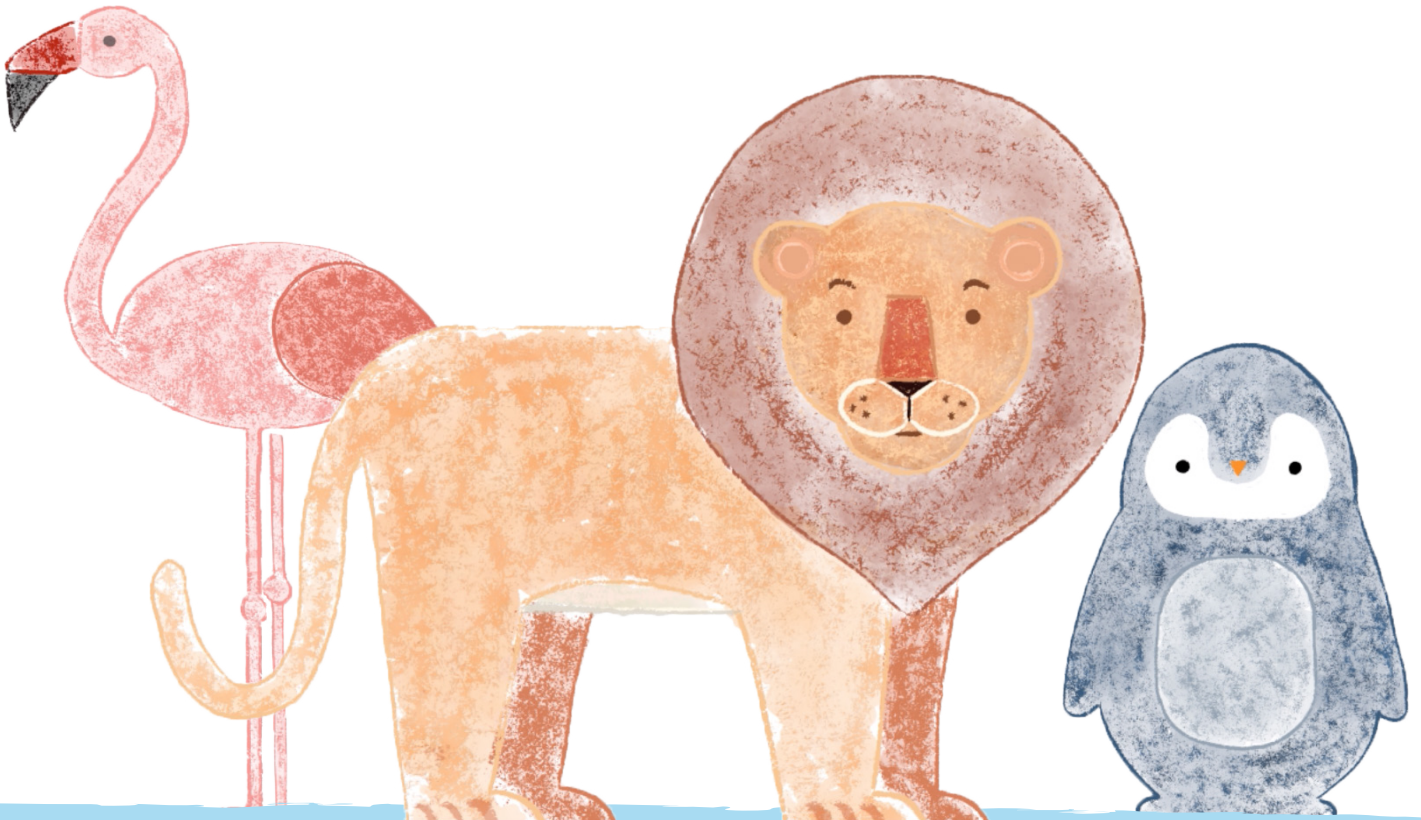
#GiveTheZoo this
holiday season.
givethezoo.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Behind-The-Scenes: Giraffe Tours

Select days in November

Ever wondered where our giraffe go when the weather is too cold? Wonder no more! This popular event returns Saturdays and Sundays in November. Go behind-the-scenes with our educators and keepers at TBZ's giraffe barn. Must be 6 or older, register here: <https://bit.ly/2luDSmk>.

Holiday Lights

Nov 22 start + Storytime with Mrs. Claus (December 14-22) + Winter Workshop (December 7th)

Holiday Lights starts November 22nd (free admission). Join us for a walk around our zoo, featuring thousands of holiday lights. Special events include Gingerbread House and Winter Workshop (December 7th) and Storytime with Mrs. Claus (December 14-22) for an extra fee. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/2E8qllc>.

Afterschool Zoo Club

Select days in November and December

Need something fun to do after school? Join our educators for "Out of School," TBZ's new afterschool club! Our zoo club includes animal themed lessons, zoo tours and/or reservation hikes, activities, and more! Recommended for grades 1-5, learn more: <http://bit.ly/2B1QOUZ>.

Explorers, Hatchlings, and Tots

Select days in November and December

Winter early childhood December registration are open. Introduce your hatchling (6-24 months with caregiver), tot (2-3 years with caregiver), or explorer (4-5 years without caregiver) to the wonderful world of animals! Includes arts-and-crafts, scientific activities, animal presentations, and more. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2kn9Y2M>.

Mini Camps

December 23, 26, 27

Next mini-camps are December 23, 26, and 27th (Animal Myths and Legends). Mini-camps include age-appropriate scientific activities, arts-and-crafts, zoo tours, animal presentations, and a WILD time! For ages 5-10, learn more: <http://bit.ly/2GvNm70>.



Outreaches and on-grounds classes

Select days throughout the year

Now scheduling on-grounds educational classes and zoo-to-you outreach programs for Fall! These inquiry-based STEM programs are hosted by TBZ's education department and feature topics tailored to your group. Birthday parties and scout programs also available. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2KVifHJ>.





CONSERVATION EDUCATION

by Educator Jared Moloshok

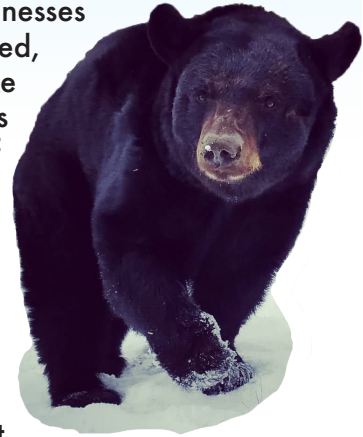
We may associate the winter with cold, but in fact, our winters are growing warmer each year from human activity. As our energy consumption releases heat-trapping carbon into the atmosphere, it has a worldwide effect. The NOAA has measured the global average temperature as having risen dramatically since 1976, with the annual global temperature record having been broken five times since the start of the 21st century. The result is an increase in 1.8° F (1° C), but it has been enough to cause the polar ice caps to begin thawing, resulting in rising sea levels. It also has led to hotter summers and milder winters, as well as harsher, less predictable extremes of drought and precipitation. These factors have already taken their toll on habitats worldwide, and the animals living in them. From shifting the timing of some animals' life cycles, to loss of food or habitat for others, climate change affects all.

Because much of this global warming is the result of human activity, it is up to us to tackle this crisis.

While governments and businesses are beginning to get involved, ordinary citizens can help make positive change as well. This can be as simple as turning off lights and electronics when not in use, lowering the thermostat a few degrees during the winter and raising it a few degrees in summer, or seeking alternative modes of transportation. Any one of these methods can contribute to a worldwide impact.

To find out more, and to calculate your carbon footprint, visit

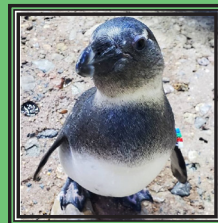
www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator.



Animal Holidays

First Hatch Day (September 5th) - Mosi the African Penguin celebrated her first hatch day, just in time for African Penguin Awareness Day! Her species has recently been reevaluated as critically endangered, meaning their population is still declining. Successes like Mosi, who celebrated her first hatch day on September 5th, are crucial to their species' survival. As a member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, TBZ participates in the African Penguin species survival plan, which maintains a genetically diverse population of at-risk species to raise awareness and guard them from extinction. You can help protect wild African penguins by supporting SANCCOB, who researches and protects African seabirds: sanccob.co.za.

International Red Panda Day (September 21st) - Jing-Li and Sebastian celebrated International Red Panda Day! TBZ's educators and keepers banded together to raise awareness for this endangered species, where visitors pledged to reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink the products they use at home. To support Jing-Li and Sebastian's wild counterparts, learn more here: www.redpandanetwork.org.



National Reptile Awareness Day (October 21st) - From our smallest snake to our biggest lizard, Shu the Komodo dragon, all of TBZ's reptiles had a blast for National Reptile Awareness Day. You can help reptiles in the wild by supporting PARC, which is dedicated to conserving the world's reptiles and amphibians and their natural habitats: parcplace.org.

International Snow Leopard Day - For International Snow Leopard Day, our keepers did a training demonstration with our two snow leopards, Gala and Chamale. Training through positive reinforcement strengthens the bonds between animals and keepers, we can evaluate the individual's health and contribute. By working daily with our animals, we can evaluate their individual health and contribute to the ongoing research and conservation of this vulnerable species. Learn more: snowleopard.org.

POST SEASON RECAP



Fall Mini-Camp - Mini-campers “jumped into fall” with our camp counselors to learn about how animals prepare for the upcoming winter! Special visitors included Mosi the penguin chick and our cheetah ambassador! All of our mini-campers were well prepared for fall themselves, bringing along their favorite human preparations: hats, jackets, scarves, and boots.

Early Childhood - What a special surprise! Our hyacinth macaw came to visit TBZ’s young learners. This is an exciting time of the year for early childhood, as this popular program expands to include Saturdays. Our early childhood educator, Shay, is excited to expand this programs’ curriculum to feature exciting new opportunities for young learners.

Nature Adventurers - Nature Adventurers visited the fields along Cherry Lane to meet the little creatures that make their homes in the tall grass – butterflies, grasshoppers, dragonflies, and more! Educator Sarah has recently expanded this program to explore the many unique habitats that South Mountain Reservation contains.

Behind-the-Scenes Hospital Tours - This tour offers a unique look at the veterinary technician career path, which is an intensive yet fulfilling job at the zoo. exotic-animal veterinarians and vet-technicians study a wide-range of species in order to provide superior care and treatment to our zoo ambassadors. The hospital is equipped with x-ray machines, surgery tables, quarantine rooms, and a scale that can weigh animals over 1,000 pounds!



BARKtoberfest - The cutest day of the year was a success! Many dogs and cats were adopted throughout the day of BARKtoberfest. We had amazing weather, delicious food, great vendors, and an awesome Pet Costume contest! Congratulations to our winners! We hope to see you next year!

First Bethel Baptist Church Outreach *(contributed by Educator Sarah Burroughs)* - In June we visited First Bethel Baptist Church in Irvington for a tabling presentation at a community party run by the church. It was a hot day, but no one was fazed—the members of this church, as well as Reverend Grady James, were some of the friendliest, most inquisitive people I’ve ever met and they made every effort to see we felt included and appreciated. We set up two tables of biofacts and some live ectothermic animals in the lobby of the church with their own themes: one featured New Jersey Animals, and one animals from other parts of the world. Both tables focused on how these animals are impacted by humans and the small changes we could make in our own lives to be good stewards of the earth. These included choosing reusable materials over single-use plastic or purchasing RSPO certified palm oil products and sustainable seafood whenever possible, or even simply pledging to pick up one piece of trash per day. We talked about how all are great to do, but not everyone is able to make every change, and brainstormed ideas that would be best to encourage their community. My Master’s research centered on working with urban community-based organizations to encourage environmental stewardship, and so this program was dear to my heart. As another city dweller constantly battling my own longing for interactions with nature, my favorite thing about teaching is to see the “wow” factor on peoples’ faces as they learn just how much wildlife can be found in even the most urban of places.

Clue at the Zoo - Thank you to all who attended our very first Clue at the Zoo. With over 600 people in attendance, the mystery of the magical land of Ukadora was solved. Clues were found, puzzles were solved, and a fantastic magic show was watched. We hope to see you at our next event with the Zoological Society of New Jersey!

Snow Leopard at Risk!

by Aakanksha Ahuja,
Former Guest Relations Keeper

Below is a piece from Aakanksha Ahuja, who graduated from Bergin University of Canine Studies with a B.S. in Cynology (study of canines) and is currently pursuing her M.A. in animal studies with a focus on climate change at New York University. Her aspiration to promote environmental stewardship is driven by her time riding horses and rehabilitating shelter animals in England, California, and the tri-state area; where she was recently employed at Turtle Back Zoo's farm. In her spare time, Aakanksha enjoys spending time with her two dogs, cooking, horseback riding, and learning Japanese.

"In our Summer 2019 issue on human-animal conflict, we mentioned the snow leopard, located in our Amazing Asia exhibit. Per the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), their International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List status is Vulnerable. While snow leopards are resilient to temperature ranges of -40°C to 40°C, they face indirect pressures driven by climate change.

According to WWF's Wildlife and Climate Change Series, the climate vulnerability of snow leopards starts with their small population (4,000-7,500). According to Snow Leopard Trust, the Tibetan Plateau, which comprises 50% of the snow leopard population, has increased 3° C in the last two decades. While the leopards can adapt to this temperature, the ecosystem's vegetation, water supply, and prey (wild goats and sheep) are impacted. Apart from these animals, livestock is a significant source of food during the winter, when leopards follow their prey to lower altitudes.

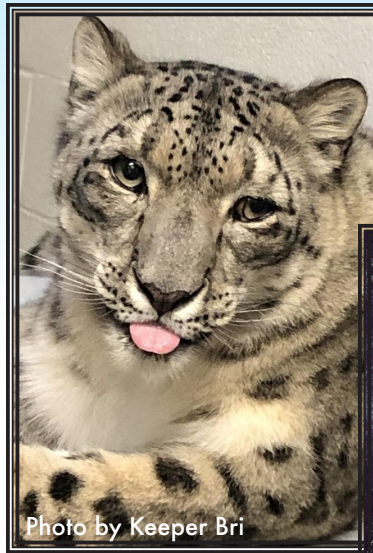


Photo by Keeper Bri

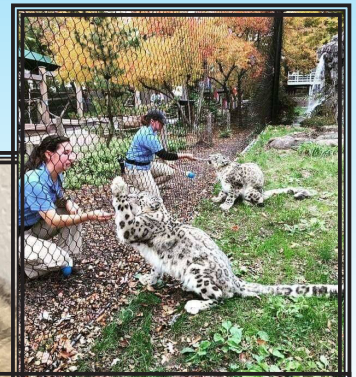


Photo by Director of Animal Operations, Erin



Reduced prey combined with threats to their habitat (high mountains of Central Asia) directly threaten snow leopards. Climate change has resulted in livestock grazing in leopard habitats, which leads to habitat degradation and encroachment by humans for poaching and hunting. This leads to lower survival rates and reproductive success for snow leopards.

To add to climate change risks, there are human-wildlife conflicts, such as retaliatory killing for livestock predation, as well as hydro-electricity development, mining, and road construction. As human activities begin moving to higher elevations and encroaching on their habitat, it is critical to ensure that snow leopards have continuous access to their natural prey by increasing protected areas and improving the management and restoration of existing protected areas. Learn about Snow Leopard Trust here: www.snowleopard.org."

Zoo Team Go

Thank you to everyone who attended our second Zoo Team Go effort! We were able to help the South Mountain Conservancy clean up over 85 pounds of invasive species at Washington Rock Lookout. The view at the lookout was beautiful and the clean up was a success! We hope to see you at our next family friendly Zoo Team Go volunteer initiative! Interested in hosting Zoo Team Go at your location? Visit zoologicalsocietyofnj.org/zooteamgo/host/.



ZOO NEWS

Have you seen our peafowl? Remember, no "fowl" play! If you see our peafowl, quietly observe them from a distance and snap a pic! Share your discovery using #PicofPete on Instagram.

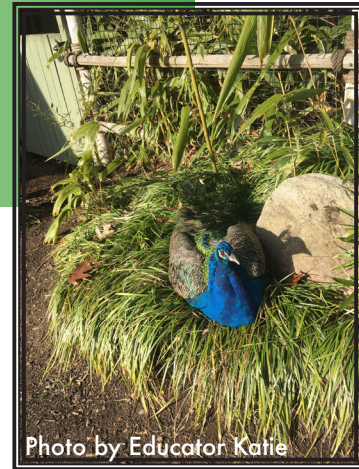


Photo by Educator Katie

Dyson and JR the California Sea Lions are back at TBZ! While our water looks green, it is not unhealthy for our animals and will return to its blue coloration soon. The sea lion shows have not resumed yet, so that JR and Dyson have time to re-acclimate to being at the zoo. Stop by to give them a warm welcome home!

New to TBZ:

Southern Cassowary

(*Casouarius casouarius*)

IUCN status: Least Concern

Diet: Fruit, snails, fungi; occasionally small mammals and reptiles. Fed meat and fruits at the zoo.

Where to see them: South America exhibit

Habitat: Forests, savanna in northern Australia, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia

Fun Fact: Cassowary poop is rainbow-colored because it contains seeds from all of the fruits they have eaten. This rainbow poop helps create a thriving ecosystem, where plants can take roots far away from their parent plants!



Photo by Docent Dora Monserrate



Malaysian Dead Leaf Mantis

(*Deroplatys desiccata*)

IUCN status: Not evaluated

Diet: Other insects

Where to see them: Reptile House (along the wall to left of entrance)

Habitat: Rainforests in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines

Fun Fact: This species excellently camouflages with dead leaves, which is how they got their name. Not only do they look like a leaf, they sometimes rock on branches to mimic swaying in the breeze!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: The Rocha Family

When did you start coming to the Zoo?

My daughter (Larissa) and I started coming to the Zoo in July of 1994 when we moved to Millburn. Larissa was 6 years old then. We have been coming to the Zoo regularly ever since. Larissa is autistic and the Zoo is one of her favorite destinations year-round.

What is your favorite exhibit or animal to visit at the Zoo?

We have two favorites, Luna (the Kunejune pig) and Sumo (one of the juvenile White-Cheeked Gibbons). They are both very personable. Luna definitely knows us and Sumo used to when he was very young and lived inside.

How has the Zoo changed since your first visit?

The Zoo is very, very different from what it was in 1994. Everything is different. There are many more exhibits and animals, the physical appearance of the Zoo is modern, the exhibits are much more natural and the animals certainly know and enjoy it. The landscaping is also much more extensive. I remember when most of the Zoo was covered with weeds. Also, the Zoo now has at least 3 special needs young adults who work or volunteer at the Zoo and are wonderful role models for special needs visitors like my daughter.

What interests you most about our organization and why?

I like the fact that the Zoo helps injured animals or animals needing a home. Protection of endangered species is also a laudable endeavor. But most important to us is that for Larissa, the Zoo really is a special and most favorite place. She is very calm and engaged when she visits the animals.



What would you like to pass on to future generations?

The need to protect wild animals and treat all animals with respect and compassion. In addition, tolerance and kindness toward individuals who may act a little differently in public places.

Tell us about the group trips you've organized (if any)?

The most meaningful of our group trips was an excursion with a group of special needs young adults.

What are your dreams for the Zoo and the Society?

The Zoo and the Society have great responsibilities as our planet continues to deteriorate and ever more species are under greater stresses. I see the Zoo not only as an attraction but as a safe haven for the animal residents and a platform to teach children early to care about and respect both wild and farm animals. I hope the Zoo continues to be an ambassador organization for the welfare of all animals.

I would also like to praise the Zoo staff, many of whom recognize us and are extremely nice.

If you would like to be considered for our donor and member spotlight, please contact bderose@zoologicalsocietyofnj.org.

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, 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 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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