

**ESSEX COUNTY
TURTLE BACK**



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

Turtle TALK

Fall 2020

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Photo of the Season!
Jake Danishevsky

To be considered for Visitor Photo of the Season, please send photos to info@zoologicalsocietyofnj.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



Summer Camp

No summer plans? Why not zoo camp? Check out our camp takeover on page 3 to learn all about what TBZ campers are up to this summer! With guidance from the County Health and Parks department, TBZ is committed to a safe and fun camp experience; learn more here: <https://bit.ly/32Kzse4>.

Virtual Education Programs

Interested in a virtual education program or zoo tour? Turtle Back Zoo is hosting Distance Learning programs with topics tailored to your group. For more information, email our Education Curator, Marguerite Hunt, at mhunt@parks.essexcountynj.org. Check out a few of our topics here: <https://bit.ly/3bRrh1w>.

Member Late Nights

Every Wednesday in August, 5-8pm

Join us every Wednesday in August for Members Only Late Night! Reservations are required. Visit <https://bit.ly/32f9iQE> to reserve your spot.

We've missed you! Stay in touch with us and your favorite animals by following Turtle Back Zoo on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Subscribe to our email listing at <https://bit.ly/2V8zVIG> and check out our calendar for future updates here: <https://bit.ly/31dsMUW>.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY'S

PHOTO CONTEST

FINAL SUBMISSION MIDNIGHT SEPTEMBER 16, 2020.

VOTING BEGINS SEPTEMBER 17, 2020.

WINNERS ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 2, 2020.

1ST PLACE - 2 YEAR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP TO THE ZOO

2ND PLACE - 1 YEAR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP TO THE ZOO

3RD PLACE - 1 YEAR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP TO THE ZOO

5 HONORABLE MENTIONS - CONSERVATIONIST ANIMAL ADOPTION



Coming Soon!

Zoological Society of New Jersey's Photo Contest

Get your cameras ready! The Zoological Society of New Jersey at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo will be holding a photo contest with great prizes! There is a \$5 entry fee for every photo submitted. Winners will be determined by

a public vote. All photos subject to review. Rules and regulations apply. More information coming soon! Check back on social media for future details and how to enter or sign up for our mail list here: <http://eepurl.com/biGWcr>. Happy snapping!



CONSERVATION EDUCATION

by Educator Katie Fenyar

Something is different at Sea Lion Sound! Storms are brewing, rain is pouring, and thunder is booming. It must be Zeus, the California sea lion! We dove right into a (virtual) interview with our Sea Lion team to get the latest scoop on Zeus! Check it out:



Photo by TBZ Sea Lion Team

Where did Zeus live before Turtle Back Zoo? How old is he?

Zeus was born in Milwaukee WI on March 6, 2015 to his mother Sonoma. He moved from WI to Chicago IL when he was 2 years old.

What species is Zeus?

Zeus is a California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) just like Dyson and JR.

Can guests see Zeus?

Yes. All three sea lions (JR, Dyson, and Zeus) are together on exhibit. Zeus is the darkest, has the shortest whiskers, and his snout curves upwards!

What's your favorite fun fact about Zeus?

Zeus likes to check up on Dyson during our sessions to see what he's doing, and they pair up to swim fairly often.

What was it like to begin working with a new sea lion?

The first thing we did (before he even arrived) was to talk to his trainers from his previous facility about his personality and behavioral history. Then we made a plan for how we wanted to transport and introduce him to our sea lions here!

How did you transition Zeus to a new habitat?

We gave him access to holding by himself and then gradually the exhibit so that he could get his bearings before meeting the others.

What were the first steps you took to build a bond with Zeus?

For the first few days, each trainer spent time feeding him and getting to know him; Zeus also had time to get comfortable with the trainers. We gradually started asking for simple behaviors that he already knew before working on more challenging or new behaviors. During this time, we also paid close attention to what behaviors and enrichment he reacted most positively.

What challenges do keepers face in the first few months when working with a new sea lion?

The biggest challenge of the first few months of working with a new sea lion is building up a relationship and trust with the animal while also introducing them to the other sea lions. For Zeus, we came up with a plan specifying which animals he was going to meet, when, and where before putting them all together.

Introductions to JR and Dyson continue to go well, but it's an ongoing process as he learns his place in the hierarchy and gets to know his new trainers.

While California sea lions are from the Western coast of North and South America, marine animals are being stranded around the globe. To support our mission of being environmental stewards, learn more about how you can protect local marine wildlife here: <https://bit.ly/2ZwvRhV>.

TBZ Camp Takeover!

We've interrupted your regularly scheduled programming for a TURTLE TALK TAKEOVER! Take a gander at what's been happening in summer camp:

Virtual Vultures and Digital Ducklings
No one had to miss out on summer camp thanks to camp counselors Nadine, Zoe, Gill, and Jared! Check out this interview with TBZ's virtual camp leaders!

What inspired you to design a virtual camp?

Virtual camp was mostly inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to be able to safely share our awesome zoo camp experience with everyone, whether or not they could come to the zoo in person. We also loved the idea of utilizing technology to create a virtual zoo community to share with people who do not live close to TBZ.



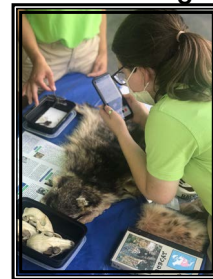
What is a typical day like at virtual camp?

It's very similar to a day of in-person zoo camp. We started out with some icebreakers to get to know each other, then introduced ourselves and our theme for the week. We played games, toured the zoo live, and of course had up-close encounters with some of our education ambassador animals. Once our live videos ended, we posted a variety of crafts, activities, readings, and videos online for our campers to enjoy throughout the rest of the day.



What were some special moments that you and the campers shared together?

Some special moments that we shared with our campers were our keeper talks in the zoo. Over the week we worked closely with keepers in two departments to schedule a private keeper talk during our zoo tour that was specially for virtual zoo campers. Our keepers here at TBZ are always generous with their time and enthusiastic to share some of their day with zoo camp, so we were really honored that they did the same for our virtual campers. We had talks with our flamingo keeper, Shawn as well as with our alligator keeper, Rachel.

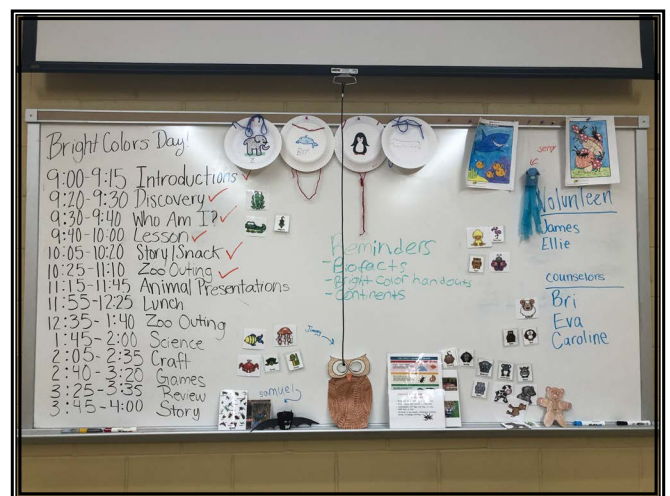


Now that virtual camp is complete, if you could change one thing, what would it be?

If I could change something we would make our virtual camp longer!

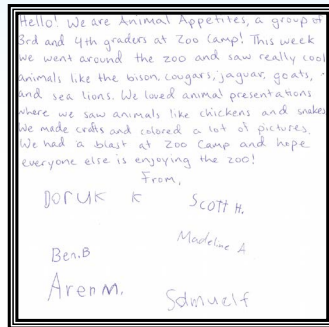
Would you like to share anything else about virtual camp with our readers?

Virtual zoo camp was really made out of necessity but it was such a success. Everyone had a great time and learned a great deal and we are so excited to use our new virtual program experience throughout the year to continue to safely carry out our mission of conservation!

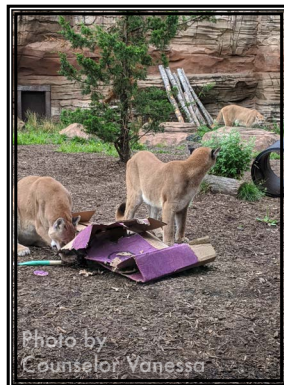


Summer Camp

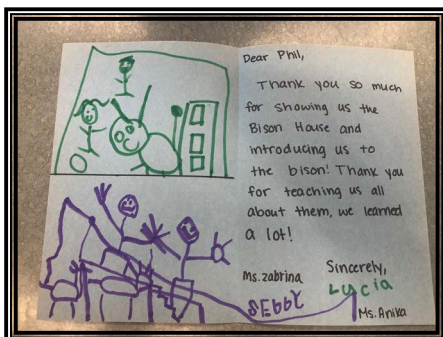
Straight from our "Animal Appetites" campers, here comes their letter to you:



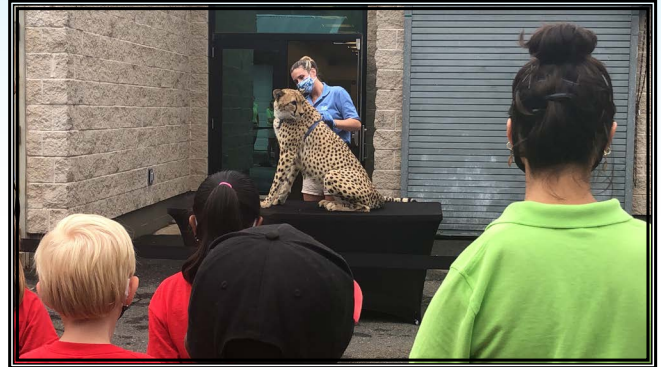
Zoo Crew's big project each week is to make enrichment box art for animal ambassadors. Enrichment challenges an animal to use its innate skills and abilities in new and challenging ways. In this case, absolute destruction is 100% the way to get meat snacks!



For Zookeeper Week (July 19 - 25), TBZ campers decorated cards galore to thank our hardworking staff! Through rain and snow, keepers work hard to care for our animals. Thank you for all that you do!



A special treat: Our summer campers had a special visit from our Simon and his keepers! Did you know dogs in Africa are used to save cheetahs? Cheetahs are naturally skittish, so by having a specially trained dog at farms, it chases cheetahs away. This program is an alternate solution to farmers shooting cheetahs, which occurs when farmers need to protect their livestock from predators.



With guidance from the County Health and Parks Departments, we're hosting a safe and healthy summer camp; we still have a few spots open for upcoming weeks! We'll also update the Zoo Camps homepage with information about our fall mini-camps when we know more. For more information, including our health and safety guidelines, check out our Zoo Camps homepage here: <https://bit.ly/32Kzse4>.



ZOO NEWS

Cheetah Sightings

You might be able to see our cheetahs in their new cheetah run (former South America exhibit). Our cheetahs are still getting used to being in this space, but it makes for an excellent space to run and get some fresh air! Since they are still getting used to it, our cheetahs may be off exhibit during your visit.



Nadya the Amur Leopard Cub Update

Nadya the Amur leopard cub is extremely curious and always full of energy! She's really starting to explore her abilities by interacting with new types of enrichment that strengthen her natural abilities like climbing and biting. Our carnivore keeper team says Nadya enjoys playing with all of her enrichment, but her favorites are the traffic cone and monkey fist. Amur leopards are on the brink of extinction, with less than 100 individuals surviving in the wild. Every birth is a huge step forward for conservation, learn more: <https://bit.ly/2WE3hci>.

TBZ Reopens To Visitors

Timed tickets are available for reservation (members only) and purchase for the general public. Tickets are only valid for date and time specified. Guests have a 30-minute time frame to enter the Zoo after the time specified on your ticket, however you may stay in the zoo until closing. Before arriving, please have your tickets, food and water (if desired), strollers, and all other necessary items as late arrivals will not be accommodated and there will be no re-entry. Please do not print your tickets; instead please show the confirmation email on your phone to the cashier at the entrance. Per our County Health Inspector & Zoo Veterinary Staff guidelines, guests will be required to wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth. Check out our FAQ's here: <https://bit.ly/3drdL4o>.



Members Only Nights

Member's nights are returning to TBZ with limited capacity. Beat the heat by enjoying TBZ after hours! Time slots will be released two weeks in advance, learn more: <https://bit.ly/32f9iQE>.

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, Donor Wall, 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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To see other Zoo Communications, please visit
<https://bit.ly/2SDw0OR>