

ESSEX COUNTY
TURTLE BACK



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

Turtle TALK

Fall 2021

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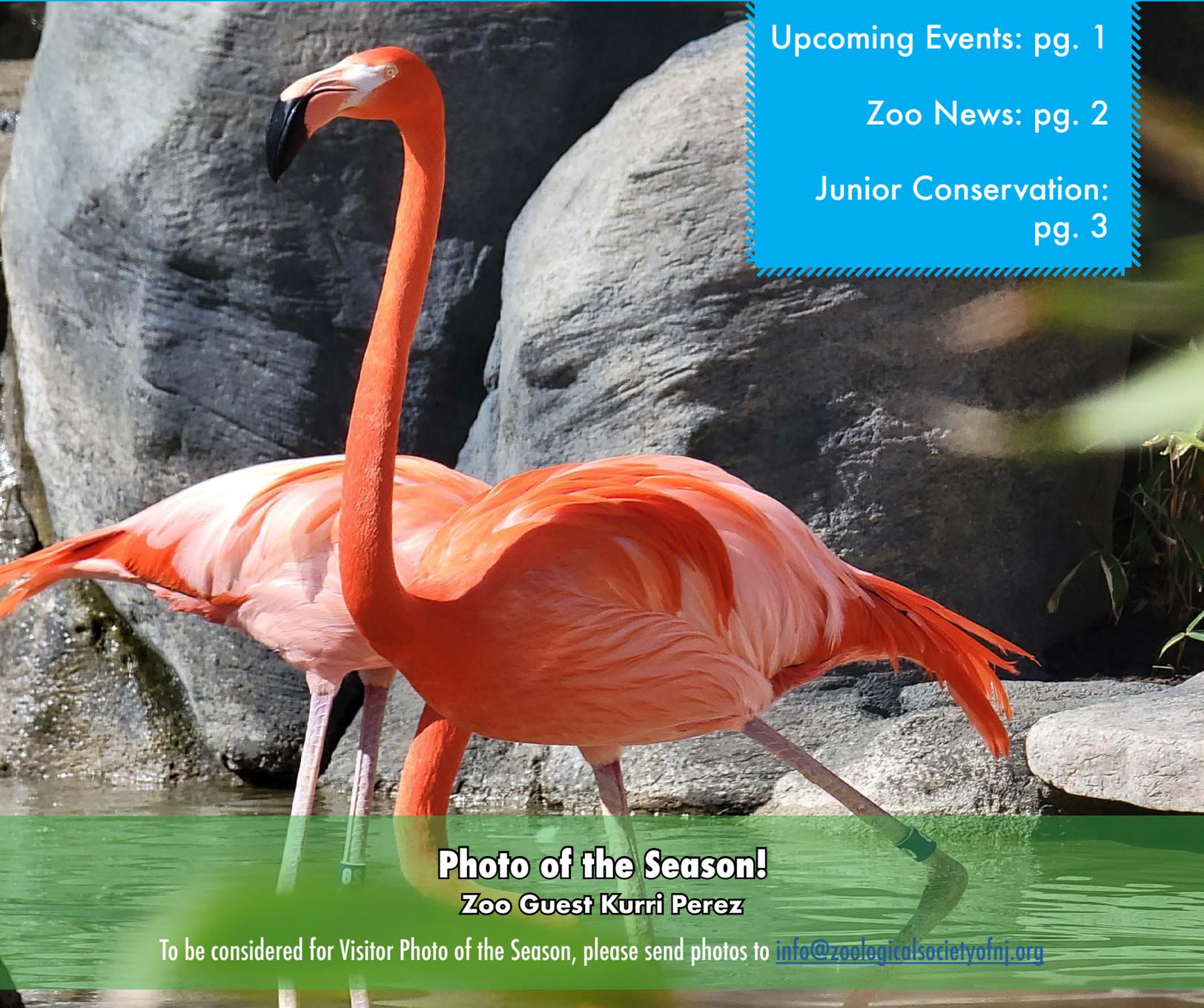


Photo of the Season!
Zoo Guest Kurri Perez

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

UPCOMING EVENTS



Fall Mini-Camp

Summer camp registrations are full, but never fear - our Fall mini-camps are around the corner! Stay tuned for themes and dates: <https://bit.ly/3uc1x9g>.

Bad Bugs

Invasive species are a danger around the world, and there are many affecting NJ. Join us at our next Bad Bugs session to learn how to identify and eradicate invasive insects like the Spotted Lanternfly, Emerald Ash Borer, and more in the most environmentally safe way possible. Email tbzvosnato@gmail.com for more information.



NEW! Zooventure box

TBZ's new activity box is coming to your door! Our Zooventure boxes are designed for ages 5-8 and includes hands-on science experiments, arts-and-crafts, zoo tour videos, and more! Stay tuned for our Fall bundle on our eventbrite. <https://bit.ly/3eahKWJ>.

Family Nature Club: Nature Adventurers

2nd/4th Sundays monthly, with some exceptions
This July, we discovered a young snapping turtle as we explored the Reservoir! Join us to get out and discover nature! Recommended ages 6+, register on eventbrite. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/38zOu64>.

Early Childhood

In-person Explorers classes are continuing this summer! Your little learner will enjoy zoo tours, fun science lessons, arts-and-crafts, animal presentations, and more! For ages 4-5, learn more: <https://bit.ly/3gPdhdJ>.

Sloth Social - sloth presentations

Select weekend dates throughout the fall
In celebration of Juneberry, our recently born Linné's two-toed sloth, we're having a sloth social! Join us to discover the fascinating history of sloths: from the Giant sloths of old to today's 6 species. Multiple dates, learn more: <https://bit.ly/3i7m4br>.

Kingdom of Color

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Lisa Palombo Studios will be unveiling her "Animalia" series here at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo. Save the date for a night of art, food, and animal ambassadors.

Sophisticated Science

Oooh how fancy! Join our educators for seminars covering topics including animal anatomy, habitats and conservation, animal careers, and more. These programs are perfect for those interested in discovering animals, science, conservation, and nature in a relaxed atmosphere. Recommended for ages 14+, learn more: <https://bit.ly/2RsLYLR>.

Wonders of the Wild

Saturdays throughout the fall

Wonders of the Wild is taking a break this June, but we'll be back in July! Join us and the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society to discover Earth's amazing habitats near and far. Recommended for ages 6-12; program includes zoo trips, animal presentations, nature walks, and more! Stay tuned: <https://bit.ly/3sqlwju>.

Distance Learning

Birthday parties, outreaches, and in-person programs are now available! Turtle Back Zoo is hosting programs available for all ages with topics tailored to your group. Virtual options still available, email our education curator, Marguerite Hunt, at mhunt@parks.essexcountynj.org for more information.

ZOO NEWS



Our African Penguins were Molting!

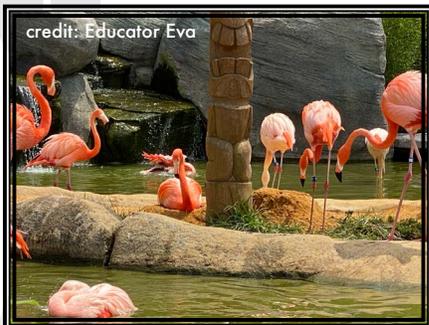
If you visited in July, you might have seen our African penguins looking a bit funny! Penguins go through a catastrophic moult, in which they lose all their feathers before growing all new ones. This process is better for wild penguins, so they can replace their feathers when food resources are plentiful.

Visit our Great Horned Owl!

Cisco the great horned owl is settling into his new habitat in Wild America! Come visit him across from the Bald Eagles in the upper zoo.

Reptile house redesign

In the reptile house, we are constantly revamping our exhibits with live plants. The biggest example is the gator exhibit. With our horticulture team, we planted *Metasequoia* (Dawn Redwood), Hostas, Daylilies, Echinacea, Grasses, Mint, Hybrid Willow, and Canna. Planted exhibits create a naturalistic, enriching experience for our reptiles that creates opportunities for reptiles to utilize their natural behaviors.



Cougar birthday

In July, our three cougars celebrated their third birthday! With colorful boxes and streamers galore, Jane, Wyatt, and Josie ran about their yard. TBZ's carnivore keepers shared that the cougars, like many cats, especially love boxes. Happy birthday!



Renovations are coming!

Amazing Asia will be undergoing renovations in the future. We're planning a habitat to highlight a few amazing Asian species, including Clouded leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*) - a mid-sized cat species native to the forests of China to Malaysia.



Flamingo Nest Mounds

Our flamingos are showing nesting behavior! Our avian keepers recently observed 3 flamingo nests, which these colorful birds create by mounding sand together. We're excited to see this nesting behavior continue and are monitoring for eggs.

Boo and Scout the Bourke's parrots (*Neopsephotus bourkii*) arrive at TBZ

Two Bourke's parrots, also known as Rosy Bourke parakeets, have arrived at our aviary! These gray and pink small parrots are the same size as our budgerigar. Bourke's parrots are members of the Psittacidae family and are the only species in their genus, *Neopsephotus*. Bourke's parrots and budgerigars overlap in parts of their range in Australia.



Junior Conservation Spotlight

Local Teen Girl Scout Project Supports Education at Turtle Back Zoo

Helena, member of the Livingston Cadette Troop 20290, worked with Essex County Turtle Back Zoo educators Giulia and Caroline and docent Jerry to earn a Silver Award. With a passion for animals, especially those who are endangered, they spent the past year crafting signs at key zoo exhibits that address frequently asked questions (FAQ's). As a regular summer camper at the Zoo, Helena discovered unique facts about our zoo ambassadors during camp that were not often displayed on usual signage – such as how you can tell the sex of Northern White Cheeked gibbons by the color of their fur. Come check out the signs at Turtle Back Zoo!

“As educators here at Turtle Back Zoo, we strive to inspire the public to conserve wildlife and to further their wildlife education. Helena’s Girl Scout Silver Award project focused exactly on our mission and we were excited to collaborate with her!” - Giulia and Caroline, educators at TBZ”

“I really liked being able to make signs for the zoo because I love learning about animals and nature, and being able to raise awareness about them and their unique habitats and features,” - Helena, Silver girl scout award recipient





CONSERVATION EDUCATION

by Educator Katie Fenyar

While reading the news, you might have read about the latest threat to birds: an unknown disease with its origins in Washington, DC. This disease is primarily affecting fledgling (young birds just leaving the nest) songbirds, including European starlings, blue jays, American robins, and common grackles.

At the time of this writing, there are still a lot of unknowns about this disease and its impact on bird populations. According to the United States Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC), researchers have ruled out salmonella, chlamydia, avian influenza virus, West Nile virus, Newcastle disease, herpes viruses, poxviruses, and Trichomonas parasites. While this has ruled out a lot of zoonotic diseases that can spread to humans, researchers are still determining what has caused this sudden disease. One current theory is the timing of the cicada Gen X emergence, in which a new 'zombie fungi' found on cicadas could have affected birds who ate them. This fungus removes the reproductive organs in cicadas and spreads rapidly as the cicadas seek out others to mate (even though they cannot).

So what's next? While the cause isn't clear yet, we have a role in figuring out what's going on and preventing its spread. Not only can we provide our observations to researchers, but we can also help minimize the spread to healthy birds. Keep on reading to learn more about this disease, why researchers are taking action now, and how activism as individuals and a community can help save lives.

What to look for:

If you come across a sickly or injured looking bird, the first things to look for are signs of eye discharge and/or crusty eyes, stumbling, tilted head, and an inability to fly far distances. While the disease originated in Washington, DC, it has since spread throughout the Southeast and the Mid-Atlantic, only recently having arrived in NJ. This is an important time to be vigilant. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3rgFmxS>.

Prevention:

We're masters of social distancing after our pandemic, and now it's the birds' turn. Take down places where animals commonly gather like bird feeders, bird baths, and more to prevent gathering in large groups. Many organizations, including the Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research Inc. (TSBRR), recommends cleaning these items in a 10% bleach solution weekly and letting them dry. The rescue organization also notes that hummingbirds are not affected at the time of this piece (August 2021).



Sightings:

If you come across a live individual with the above behaviors, first call your local wildlife rehabilitator such as Raptor Trust for further instructions. If the bird is deceased, they can be safely placed in a plastic bag and kept cool while you contact the agency (see below). Whether alive or dead, wearing disposable gloves is recommended to protect yourself in the event the disease is harmful to us or our pets.

Contact:

If you find a live bird, contacting your local wildlife rehabilitator is the first step. If the bird is deceased, NJ's contact is Nicole Lewis, MS, DVM, Wildlife Veterinarian at the Office of Fish and Wildlife Health and Forensics at Nicole.Lewis@dep.nj.gov or 1877-WARN-DEP. For our readers outside NJ, check your status here: <https://bit.ly/3rgFmxS>.

WANTED

Who: A varmint since 2014, the spotted lanternfly has raided the fruit and hardwoods of the East Coast!

Reward: Healthy trees and fruits for years to come!



IF YOU SEE IT, STOMP IT!
**HELP END THE INVASION OF THE SPOTTED
LANTERNFLY!**

If numbers are high enough in your area
grab a spray bottle, fill with distilled Dawn
dish soap and get spraying!

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>