

**ESSEX COUNTY
TURTLE BACK**



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

Turtle TALK

Summer 2022

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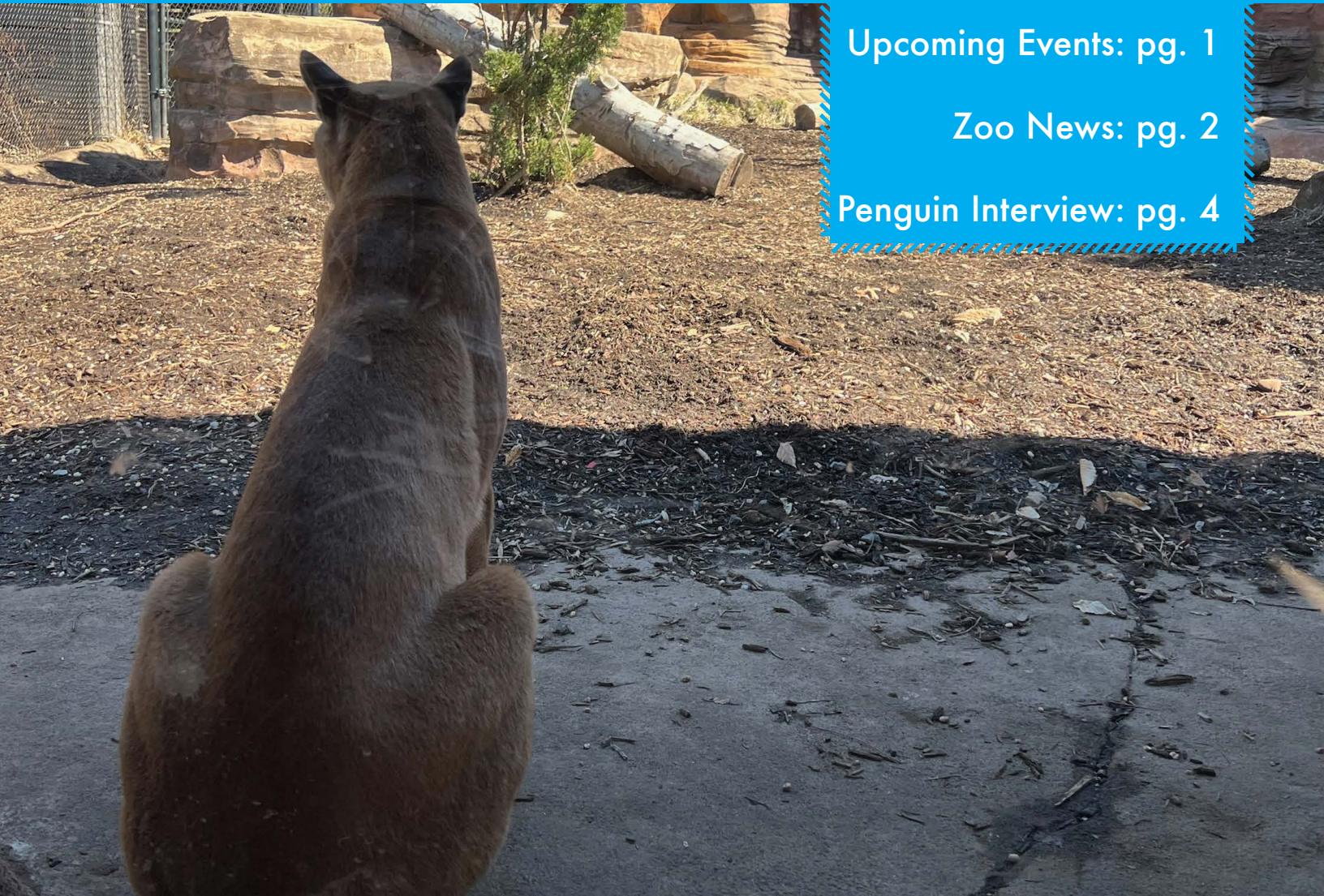


Photo of the Season!
Membership Director, Hayley

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

UPCOMING EVENTS



Early Childhood

Select Sundays and Mondays (Tots and Explorers)
Discover our popular Tots (2-3 years w/ caregiver) and Explorers (4-5 years w/out caregiver) programs at Turtle Back Zoo! Introduce your young learners to the natural world through gently structured play, art, stories, animal visits, and more. Tickets sell fast, learn more: <http://bit.ly/2NUW5J>.

Sophisticated Science

Select Saturdays @1PM-3PM

For ages 13-103, join us for Sophisticated Science seminars! These programs cover everything from the amazing, diverse wildlife of Earth to the wild careers you can find at zoos and aquariums. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3yl9Ukw>.

TBZ Butterfly Garden Exhibit

Coming May 27th

TBZ's butterfly garden, featuring stunning plants and butterflies including Monarchs, Swallowtails, and more, is coming back to TBZ! Curated by our horticulturist, this popular attraction funds the Zoological Society of NJ's conservation fund, which benefits conservation organizations across the globe. Stop by TBZ to visit these butterflies and learn about our commitment to Monarch Watch, a project to help stop Monarch extinction. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3wFkZU>.

Night Moves

May 20 @7:30PM

June 10 & 23, July 23 & 28, @8PM

Night Moves are back! Take a trip with our docents (volunteer educators) to discover our nocturnal zoo residents and learn fun facts about them. Recommended for ages 6+, fun for the whole family! Stay tuned: soon: <https://bit.ly/3JMgmaf>.

Wonders of the Wild

Multiple dates @1PM-3PM

Wonders of the Wild offers students an opportunity to participate in supplementary science and nature-themed programs and projects that facilitate scientific literacy and life-long environmental stewardship. Recommended for ages 6-12, learn more: <https://bit.ly/3G1Unuq>.

Summer Camp

Summer camp, our weekly program for ages 5-13, is mostly filled, but we do have some spots!! Campers experience visits to the zoo, behind-the-scenes tours, animal presentations, age-appropriate science demos and crafts, and memories to last a lifetime! Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2GvNm70>.

FNC: Nature Adventurers

Family Nature Club is coming back this June! After a short hiatus where we created a pollinator garden at the South Mountain Reservoir, we're back to hiking and exploring NJ's native wildlife. Stay tuned for dates and themes, coming soon: <https://bit.ly/3JMgmaf>.

Upcoming Events

Looking to learn more about the amazing animals on Earth? Join us for educational events at TBZ! World Turtle Day and Endangered Species Day (May 21 & 22), World Sea Lion Day and Otter Day (May 28 & 29), World Oceans Day (June 11 & 12), and World Giraffe Day (June 21). Events included with admission.



Facebook Live Streams

TBZ is going live for Endangered Species Day (5/20) and World Oceans Day (6/8)! Follow us on facebook and turn your notifications on to meet our animal ambassadors and discover how we can make an impact for Earth's ecosystems. Missed them? Swing by Facebook @TurtleBackZoo to rewatch our livestream anytime!

Amazing Asia Grand Opening Celebration

Saturday, July 30 @6PM-9PM

Amazing Asia Grand Opening Celebration is an evening of family fun, for kids of all ages! During the event, guests will have the opportunity to stroll through the Zoo, participate in activities, experience cultural performances, explore animal bio facts and enjoy up-close animal encounters. More information coming soon!

ZOO NEWS

Birds off exhibit

Turtle Back Zoo management and many AZA-accredited facilities have decided to take birds off-exhibit due to the new variation of bird influenza, which has a higher mortality rate than previous strains. Our indoor bird exhibits, including toucans and the Shores of Africa penguin exhibit, can still be seen since they are not in contact with wild birds. Learn more and stay up to date: <https://bit.ly/3P3o4zO>.



Joey Alert: Welcome to the world (Happy belated Mother's day)!

TBZ keepers spotted two joeys popping their heads out for the first time this Spring! Photographed here are Lily with her joey Walnut and Adriana with her joey Dundee! Did you know that joeys are as big as a jelly bean and blind when they're born? They climb all the way into Mom's pouch to nurse and grow for the next 9 months. Stop by TBZ and tag us @TurtleBackZoo on facebook if you spot them!



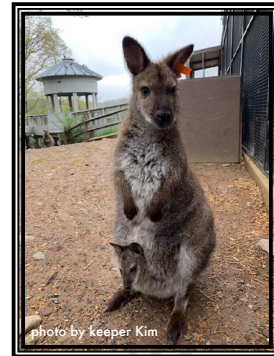
A new home for Kijani the Spotted Hyena

Kijani, a 2 year old male Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) recently arrived at TBZ from Albuquerque BioPark in New Mexico! Kijani, means warrior in Swahili, the primary language that is spoken in regions of Africa where wild spotted hyena roam. Kijani was recommended as a mate for our female hyenas, Kamaria and Kiira, by the Spotted Hyena Species Survival Plan (SSP). The SSP is a cooperative, zoo management program that coordinates the transfers and breeding of a single species maintained within institutions accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Close management allows us to maximize the demographic and genetic health of these population to ultimately assist in conservation of their wild counterparts. SSP's also work together with other AZA organizations to advance conservation through research, habitat preservation in the wild, and more. Spotted hyenas are considered Least Concern by the IUCN with an estimated 27-47,000 left in the wild.



Creature the aardvark makes debut in reptile house + Shu's medical procedure

When Shu is away, Creature the Aardvark will play! Shu the Komodo dragon is behind-the-scenes as he recovers from a successful procedure to heal an infected nail. Meanwhile, our favorite nocturnal mammal Creature reminds us that hitting the zzz's before digging in the dirt is important!



Welcome 2022 docents!

35 new docents have joined our sea of blue! Docents are adult volunteers who donate 100 or more hours each year at Turtle Back Zoo. With a heartfelt thank you, we appreciate everything TBZ's docents do: from fundraising for animal enrichment, upholding our education mission, and being amazing stewards for wildlife conservation causes around the globe. Also, the education department sincerely thanks you for all the help with our programs (and the snacks and fun chats you spoil us with)!



Aquarium Update - Touch Tank

Lots of new species have joined our new reef aquarium, housed in our touch tank! One of our favorite additions is a massive cleanup crew of hermit crabs and shrimp, whose job is to tidy up the tank. Stop by and discover the fascinating animals who live in Earth's fragile reefs. Learn more about AZA's commitment to conserve Florida's reefs: <https://bit.ly/3M3zD7G>.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

by Educator Katie Fenyar



Did you know that there are over 2,000 native species of plants in New Jersey? From trees to herbs, these plants are the backbones of various ecosystems. According to the NJDEP (NJ Department of Environmental Protection), our small state is poised in a unique location. Due to the geology of our region, our habitats are home to 50% of the plant species found across the Northeast. Despite this, approximately 17% of our flora, or plants, are considered locally endangered, or in jeopardy of disappearing from our state. While these plants do survive in other states, losing plants threatens countless species who rely on them for food, shelter, and safety. Despite these odds, the solutions to protecting and preserving our ecosystems are in our hands. Check out some of our top-picks for things we can do at home to support at-risk species in our green garden state.

#1: Invasive species! Many of us have heard about the spotted lanternfly as a big introduction to invasive insects (p.s. If you see them, squish them!). According to the NJDEP, 1,000 invasive plants are established in NJ, including Japanese stiltgrass, Japanese knotweed, and Asian bittersweet.

Invasive species can travel through transit (i.e. cars or trucks), contact (i.e. on our clothes), international trade, and release into the wild (i.e. planting in your yard, letting pets go, etc...). Be vigilant: check your clothes, cars, and belongings for plants or animals that might 'hitch a ride.' Follow local organizations like FOVHOS for the latest invasive species tips.

#2: Plant native species! One of the biggest issues plants face is space. By 'going green', we can not only beautify our towns and cities, but also create urban homes for animals like NJ's state bird, the American goldfinch, and state butterfly, the Black swallowtail butterfly. Some plants to get started with include native milkweed varieties for our region, such as swamp milkweed, purple coneflowers,

parsley, carrots, or dill. Milkweed is a host plant for Monarch butterflies while parsley, carrots, and dill are hosts for swallowtails. Caterpillars of these species will eat the plants and eventually grow into their chrysalis and butterfly stages in your yard or even on your patio or balcony! It's a great way to watch nature right outside your window. Check out native plants under the "plants list" tab here: <https://bit.ly/36PnWCQ>.

#3: Citizen science! Whether in your backyard, at a park, or preserved open space, citizen science projects can happen anywhere! One of my favorite things to do is sit for 15 or more minutes and observe how many animals I can find nearby. To get started, focus on the appearance of the plants and animals you see. The more time you can spend observing them, the better! Write down the details of who you saw, including color, size, shape, and notable behaviors. For example, one of my favorite birds - the white-breasted nuthatch - is known for climbing face-first down a tree, a unique behavior among birds. Finally, use resources including field guides to help you identify what you saw. To contribute your findings, iNaturalist



is a great app to report your sightings - all you need is a free account! Learn more: <https://bit.ly/39gsSkO>.

#4: Think about Trash: We can reuse single-use items for creative projects at home! One of my favorites is a mason bee hotel, which can be made from anything to wood, plastic bottles, or PVC pipes. Next time you have something considered garbage, see if you can make it into something new and good for wildlife before sending it to the landfill! Learn how to make a bee hotel for that amazing pollinator in your life here: <https://bit.ly/3Lmlycc>.

KEEPING AFRICAN PENGUINS SAFE

Interview by Educator Katie Feyar
Photos by Keeper Brittany



Brittany Bishop, one of TBZ's Avian keepers who specializes in African penguins, recently traveled to South Africa to explore their habitat and volunteer with SANCCOB. SANCCOB's mission is to research, advocate for, and rehabilitate sea birds, from cormorants to African penguins. Check out our interview below to learn more about Brittany's time with SANCCOB, her career, and how we can make an impact for wildlife conservation.

What was one of the main reasons you visited SANCCOB?

If you house African penguins at your facility, you're probably aware of SANCCOB and just the good work that they're doing. They're on the front lines doing everything they can to save this endangered species from extinction. I wanted to learn more about their rehabilitation process with penguins and what they were doing, what was being done to combat African penguins going extinct. That was my reason.



What did you do while you were at SANCCOB?

They have volunteers, interns, and staff that come from all over the world to work there. I was interested in doing their professional experience program, which I found out about it through the African penguin SAFE program. SANCCOB has a professional experience program for animal care professionals in AZA facilities, so those who have penguin experience can jump in and start helping right away. If you get a volunteer that's come in that has absolutely no experience, there's just going to be a little bit more of a learning curve on how to handle the birds and how to act around animals, so it's great that they have a program like this for experienced people. I spent the first day in the kitchen, learning how to make their food formulas and figure out how everything is run. The very next day, I was in the rehab pens helping with feeds and day-to-day care. It's a really cool relationship SANCCOB has with the AZA facilities over here.

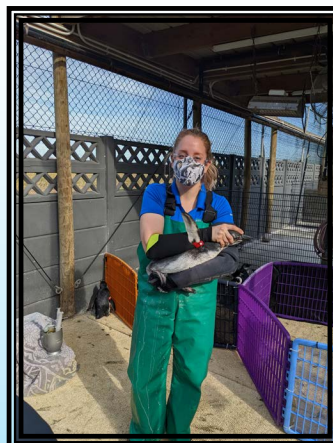
How did you feel that working with wild birds differed from those in zoos and aquariums?

At SANCCOB, they're doing multiple feeds throughout the day, some birds that are coming in are very young, so those birds are tube fed. It varies a lot because in zoos we work closely with the animals daily, so they're comfortable with us, unlike wild penguins. Rehabbers look to make sure each bird has put on a certain amount of weight, are swimming, and have feathers in good condition before they can move on to eventual release.

Is there anything you would like to share with our readers about why African penguins are so important to conservation?

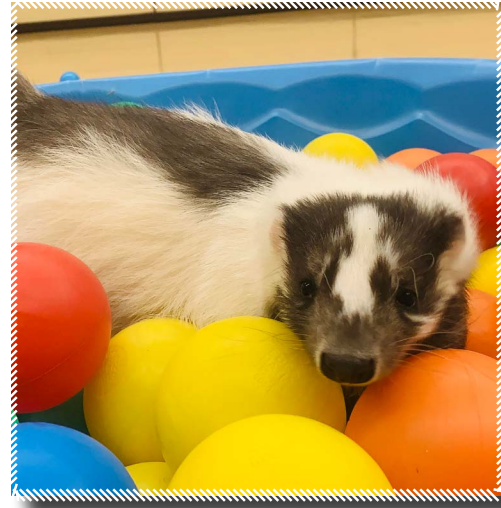
Penguins are part of the ecosystem along the South African coasts: if you remove one animal from an ecosystem, the rest of it crumbles. African penguins are the only species of penguin in the whole continent of Africa, they are an important food source for larger predators including sharks, seals, and more. The ecotourism aspect is really important too, at Boulders Beach, they charge entrance fees which go back towards maintaining the habitat.

Please support SANCCOB in any way you can, whether it's a monetary donation, volunteering, or raising awareness. One of the reasons African penguins are going extinct include global warming, climate change, and over-fishing. There's a lot of things we can do to combat that at home, whether its recycling, shopping local, and purchasing sustainably sourced seafood. Never in a million years did I think I was going to be in South Africa and working at SANCCOB. If I can do it, you can do it. Be passionate about it and work hard to get where you want to be, do what you want to do, and save what you want to save.



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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