

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

April – June, 2015

In The Past . May, 2001. Keeping Track. Foxes! In the world of foxes, Red foxes can be identified by the white tail tip. Their coats can be a whole range of colors. For example, senior Zoo fox **Cole** is a handsome dark silver gray. His white tail tip tells us he's Officially a Red fox. Fur farm bred **Vixen** is white all over so the tip of her tail is white as well. All four of the youngsters have – yes! – white tail tips. Red foxes, right? Male **Jasper** currently is a splendid pale orange / red. Male **Forrest**, however, has a dark overlay to his red coat. Female **Fern** is the same. And **Isabella** is a cross-fox, a dark color phase red fox with lighter golden or reddish belly and markings. Watching these busy little guys one can conclude that parent foxes don't have a lot of down time. When the youngsters first arrived at the Zoo they played vigorously for a while, then flopped over for long, limp fox naps. They spend time climbing on anything available, practicing, because foxes are excellent climbers and pounce on their big brown gorilla toy that provides both a safe adversary and napping spot." Senior Isabella still lives at the Zoo and is still beautiful.

Surgery For Misty

On June 15, **Dr Mira Sanchez** and Zoo Staff came in early to anesthetize tiger **Misty** in preparation for removal of a lump on her right shoulder. The procedure went well. Companion **Pouncer** will remain in the upper area of the tiger enclosure and Misty will be separated in the lower concrete area for two weeks. She will be on antibiotics. And yes, the few surgically shaved places on her beautiful body are proof that a tiger's skin is, indeed, striped.

Tigers Together

The tigers were born in 2002 at an animal "rescue facility" in southern California. In 2003, the facility was raided and stunned authorities found the bodies of several dozen big cats on the premises and the remains of 58 tiger cubs in the freezer. The **California Department of Fish & Wildlife** filed charges including felony animal cruelty and illegal breeding. The **Fund For Animals** was designated to care for surviving animals until homes could be found. Misty and Pouncer moved to the Zoo Sanctuary in 2004.

Individual tigers can be identified by stripe patterns on their faces and bodies, as well as by paw prints or *pugmarks*. A tiger's body is built for capturing large prey by stealth and sudden attack, and can cover nearly 40 feet in one jump. Tigers roar to announce their location and greet each other by rubbing cheek to cheek and *chuffing*.

Tigers are the largest cats. Though endangered now, they once ranged from **Siberia** south through **India**, **China**, and **Southeast Asia** and the islands of **Java**, **Sumatra** and **Bali**.

Tigers are in trouble. There are more captive tigers in the **United States** than there are worldwide.

Seeking Water

In summer it's not uncommon for snakes and other reptiles to visit the Zoo seeking water. Most recently livestock guarding dog **Annabelle** had a rattlesnake cornered in the pasture. Keepers teamed up to remove dogs and horses and catch the rattlesnake which was

released to safe wild areas outside Zoo grounds.

Predators!

Snakes fill every warm ecological niche and Nature has handed them an ultimate weapon. The most advanced system is found in the vipers, a category that includes our very own **American rattlesnake**. Its bite is spiked with a powerful *cytotoxin* which starts digestion of the prey even before it's swallowed. Many snakes produce only small quantities of weak poison that is just adequate for their small prey. But some snakes' venom can be deadly for large animals—including humans. When the snake's mouth is closed, the teeth lie folded against the roof of the mouth. When the snake is hunting the hollow fangs stab down into prey which is swallowed whole. In California anyone age 16 or older must have a current license to take or collect reptiles or amphibians – except for rattlesnakes which (alas) are not protected by law.

Which Way Does The Wind Blow?

Located on the deck above the animal pasture between bobcats **Aiko** and **Blue** and coyote **Wild Iris** is the world's most stunning windmill. Designed and created by artist **Rolf Samulewicz**, and standing at twelve-feet in height, the fan blades and tail are hand-crafted metal silver feathers. Moving down below the windmill are the animals: a single howling silver coyote, supported from below by two silver mountain lions, then two bears, and finally four wolves. The Zoo is honored and grateful for this gift of art.

Famous Tortoise

Currently tortoise **Lily** is about the size of a medium soup bowl, and much more interesting. She's a desert tortoise who was raised as a pet. At the Zoo, Lily eats fresh salads of chopped

veggies and fruits. She naps in an authentic log cabin built with loving hands. She and ferret **August** were invited to attend a recent wedding at the Zoo, and Lily was also quite the star with a crowd at **Karen's Bakery**. Her shady exhibit sits above historic rockwork that puts her pretty much nose to nose with fascinated little kids. Lily's Mojave and Sonoran members of her clan spend much of their lives in burrows which protect from high desert heat and very cold winters. Life spans can reach 100 years. In summer females lay hard shelled white eggs but sadly only a few youngsters out of a hundred make it to adulthood. It is unlawful to touch, harm or collect a wild desert tortoise. (California rattlesnakes should be so lucky.)

MHC

Five gentleman **Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches** have moved into the Zoo's large cockroach tank and we are wishing them happy times and long lives (two to three years). Males are territorial and fight by "butting heads." They produce the famous hissing sound to communicate with other cockroaches during mating, while fighting or when they feel threatened. Some humans find this noise creepy. Some do not. Of all the species in the cockroach family researchers believe that the MHC is most like the prehistoric cockroaches that roamed the earth long before the dinosaurs. What's not to love? The retired senior resident cockroaches are living peacefully in a separate environment.

! Check It Out !

ABC Zoo Camp – ages 4 to 7
Junior Zookeeper Camp – ages 8 – 11
Senior Zookeeper Camp – ages 12 - 15

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