

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

November – December 2011

The Warmth Of Companions

With winter coming and all, the **Zoo Classroom** is a warm haven for sensitive animals. Renovation moved Docents into the former reptile room which is now identified by a sign: “**Docent Habitat COD HQ**” which does not mean that the Zoo in fact has a codfish (which would make bears happy) but a **Chair Of The Day** who is in charge of arranging tours, answering phoned-in questions, etc. The sign includes a tasteful color picture of a small fish, presumably a cod. Other tenants of this room are lovely ferret **Cinnamon** and good-looking Hog-nosed snake **Flick**. Adjoining the Docent Habitat is a staff office with two desks and, currently, a large wire cage for ailing feral cat **Harriett** who is inside for lots of TLC. In the hallway there are two glass cases for **cockroaches**, with luck one for males and one for females.

On your right as you enter the **Classroom** is a large cage for Macaws **Bill & Bingo**. Although Bill is elderly and ill he has become a “miracle patient” and for now seems to be thriving. Maybe it’s the warm sheltered environment, loving care, excellent diet and – maybe most of all - the camaraderie of Bingo which includes co-grooming, surly beak-fighting and quiet friendly moments.

On the **Classroom’s** west wall is the black steel and Plexiglas 8’ x 6’x 4’ new home for Red-tail Boa **Andrea**, who, when she feels like it, can stretch her current 8-foot length across the entire front of her enclosure. This excellent habitat has lots of room for growing and includes climbing rocks, heat lamps for tropical warmth and a restful mural of a tropical blue waterfall. Snake **Lucy’s*** abode is next to that of Prehensile tailed Skink **Solomon**.

Little Russian tortoise **Donatello’s** tropical island is on the east end of the Classroom, complete with a heat lamp for warmth and UV light for good health, plus a small lagoon and a mini palm tree.

Around the corner, you’ll see Rainbow Boa **Cleo** and Glossy snake **Lindsay**. And in the center of the room are large cages for Goffins Cockatoo **Pogo** and his next door new best friend green Mealy Amazon **Andy**. Plus African Gray parrot **Mesa** (who learned the last time she stayed in the Classroom to perfectly mimic the sound of the Classroom door opening and closing which can be a little scary.)

During **Kids Thanksgiving Zookeeper Camp** some birds moved to the warm **Ops Building** to make room for

class tables, camper stuff and kids. Another advantage permits more supervised opportunities for the public to view reptiles other animals.

*Rescued Royal Ball Python **Lucy** came to the Zoo in 1995. Cleverly named for comedienne **Lucille Ball**, she ended up with a bad pun: years ago a veterinarian identified Lucy as male, which presumably was no surprise to the snake.

Danger!

With experience as our guide, we know that assertive, excessive, high decibel vocalizing is common to some members of the parrot family. Like Andy. But a Docent in the another room heard his scream (she could have been in Los Angeles and still heard him) and quickly checked to discover that Andy was issuing a warning: SNAKE. HELP. SNAKE, SNAKE, SNAKE because Andrea was slithering up and down the Plexiglas front wall of her new enclosure Right In Front Of Andy. A blanket was put up so Andy did not have to look at this stressful spectacle

Disappeared!

Recently a volunteer’s friend, on impulse, bought a Hog nosed snake at the recent **Sacramento Reptile Show**. Before too long the person realized that this was a mistake so snake **Flick** found a home at the **Zoo Sanctuary**. Right now he’s a tiny little guy maybe nine skinny inches long decked out with brown and gold spots and an endearing turned-up snout. Like his wild relatives he’s a secretive snake and spends a lot of time hidden under surface litter like sphagnum moss. Non-poisonous, Flick’s wild relatives live in southern states. They prey on wild toads which wisely puff up when attacked to make them harder to swallow. No problem for a hog-nose snake: large sharp teeth located at the back of the mouth deflate the toad for easy swallowing.

When threatened a hog-nose will raise its head, flatten its neck and hiss. If this fails to avert danger the snake rolls on its back, writhing as if in pain, tongue hanging out of the open mouth and, with a last gasp, become still. Roll the hog-nose over and it will immediately flip back over and “die” again. Early on at the Zoo, there was a moment when Flick could not be found. The terrarium top was tight. He wasn’t buried in substrate. But wait. Some of his furnishings included a brown clay logish thing with one minuscule hole on the side. After more hunting and

conferring and thinking the log was gently cracked revealing the shifty snake. He doesn't always hide. Recently Flick was seen hanging limply over the flat round stainless steel thermometer attached to the terrarium wall.

Attendance in November was 5,515, once again up from last year. So far attendance at **Wild Nights Holiday Lights** has been as they say in Hollywood – Boffo!.

Sad News

During an early morning animal check handsome opossum **Stewart** was found curled up in a blanket under a heat lamp in the **Miner's Shack**. He had died during the night. Given his age and known health issues a necropsy was not ordered. Born in spring of 2010, his life was much too short. We are all saddened by his passing.

Virginia opossum Stewart's wild family is among the most primitive and generalized of all marsupials. Opossums are curiously short-lived. Mortality in the pouch is high and fewer than 10 percent of the youngsters survive the first year. Statistically the oldest known wild opossums studied were 3 years-old or less. For all opossums age 4 was the maximum with most surviving only 2 to 3 years.

Seizure

After on-going health evaluations macaque **Wallace** has begun medication for seizures that occur with some regularity. Often visitors are the first to notice and they contact the nearby **Ticket Booth** so although staff doesn't immediately see all of the seizures, they are on hand to assess them for length of time and severity. The most recently observed seizure lasted approximately one-minute and both monks were at the top of the red swing. Touchingly, roommate **Darwin** was trying to support his friend so he wouldn't fall. Wallace seems to recover well, but the seizures are alarming for everyone.

Catching The Skunk

No one is quite sure how wild skunks manage to get into the exhibit where wolf-dog hybrids **Kya** and **Lincoln** live, but over the years it's happened more than once. Skunks or parts of skunks are found during the A.M. animal check. In this particular instance, the skunk didn't spray but apparently it did bite Kya on the nose. Zoo protocol for skunk incidents requires an examination of the remains to determine if the animal was rabid. Like our pet dogs, Zoo canines regularly receive rabies vaccinations. Keepers applied antibiotic to Kya's nose and both hybrids received rabies boosters "just in case." Since lab tests showed that the skunk was rabid the wolf hybrids will be quarantined

until May 7, 2012. Only keepers who have been vaccinated and have immunity (called a *titer*) can feed and clean.

Duck

The exceptional new **Zoo Aviary** at 15-feet in height provides lots more room for the handicapped resident birds to reconnoiter. Everything is high: perches, which are covered with Daisy mats for foot health, are elevated viewing sites that appeal to raptors and ravens alike. **Sam, Diego & Canyon** are on one end, Red-tail Hawks **Sedona & Redford** on the other end. Bald Eagles **Pinyon & Sierra** have the two middle spaces. Recently, a keeper was finishing raking and tidying the eagle exhibit when Sierra (the larger eagle) spread her mighty 7-foot wings and with a *swoosh!* angled down toward the keeper who straight away flattened herself face down on the ground.

Scary

With the recent cold weather, visitors and zoo staff alike are bundling up in coats and scarves and hats. One such hat caused an unexpected reaction. A keeper happened to be in the raccoon exhibit wearing her excellent wool raccoon hat: little raccoon ears standing up, black mask, green eyes and long gray braided ties hanging down. As she was gathering up her tools to leave there was raccoon **Crash** crouched, very hair on end reacting this big Scary Whatever.

HOLIDAY GUESTS?

**Bring the Whole Family to the Zoo Sanctuary!
Treat Hungry Folks at Fisher's Beastro!**

SHOPPING?

The Zoo Gift Shop is full of great shirts and jackets, books, toys, and more for your Favorite People – Proceeds Help The Animals

WILD NIGHTS & HOLIDAY LIGHTS!

**Stunning! Astounding! Beautiful!
December 15,16,17,18,19, 20, 21, 22, 23!
5 P.M. to 8 P.M.**

HOLIDAY HOURS

**Sat. Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sun. Dec. 25 – Christmas Day – Closed
Sat. Dec. 31 – New Year's Eve – 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Jan. 1, 2012- New Year's Eve – Closed**

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