

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

January – February, 2012

Don't miss "And It Grew Into A Zoo" at the amazing **Folsom History Museum** through March 18, 2012. As the Zoo Sanctuary comes up on a big 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2013, this is an excellent opportunity to remember founder **Gordon Brong**, successor **Terry Jenkins** and the **Founding Animals**. 823 Sutter Street. Hours: Tuesday – Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Something You Have Never Said At Home

The Zoo Sanctuary's **Daily Journal** has a wealth of information. **Terry Jenkins** established the Journal many years ago as a way to ensure that everyone knows what's going on with each animal on a day-to-day basis. "Fox **Mindy** has a sore tail." "**Docents** brushed the zebu." "Snake **Lindsey** is on medication." "Diets for pigs reduced." Or recently, "I have a bag of mice here before you make up animal diets."

## Lindsey

Over many months there were a lot of entries in the **Journal** about Glossy snake **Lindsey**. She wasn't eating, or shedding. Her intestines weren't functioning. And instead of feeling supple and strong her body felt "squishy" The diagnosis: Lindsey was egg-bound and, ultimately, surgery was necessary. From nose to tail Lindsey is 40 inches long. Imagine a 16 inch long incision on your own tender body. She's doing well post op. Currently, keepers provide two antibiotic shots daily and gently apply ointment to the full length of the incision. Instead of the usual dirt substrate, the bottom of her enclosure is covered with white wrapping paper and her bowl of water is small so she's not tempted to soak, which snakes like to do. Stitches will come out in several weeks.

## Health Care

Preventive medicine saves \$\$\$ and lives. All Zoo horses and, with a few exceptions, birds are vaccinated for **West Nile Virus**. West Nile encephalitis is an inflammation of the central nervous system. Prior to 1999 WNV was found only in Africa, Eastern Europe, and West Asia. In August of that year it was identified in the United States, and has spread across the country since then. Certain species of birds act as reservoirs for the virus and certain species of mosquitoes act as vectors. Mosquitoes may pick up the virus when they bite an already infected animal.

WNV has been identified in many animals, including cattle, dogs, cats, squirrels – and humans - since it came to the U.S. Horses and birds seem to be the most susceptible. Infection doesn't always lead to signs of illness and lab tests are necessary to confirm a diagnosis. While there is no specific treatment for animals, supportive vet care is

recommended. The best method of prevention of West Nile Virus infection for people and animals is to reduce the risk of exposure to the mosquitoes that may carry the virus.

- Reduce breeding sites like standing water: clean clogged roof gutters: turn over buckets, wheelbarrows, sweep away puddles, etc.
- Try to keep pets, and you, indoors during peak mosquito activity (dusk and dawn). Don't rely on pet flea products to repel mosquitoes.

## Truly Giant

Handsome brown rabbit **Kevin** may have had a Flemish Giant ancestor in his past. He looked big until lovely and really big (12 pounds and growing) gray female **Sweetpea** arrived. Historically her ancestors may have come from Patagonia and were bred for food in Flanders in the 1800's. Today Flemish Giants are justifiably very popular at rabbit shows. Plans are being readied for an outdoor rabbit enclosure next door to popular Rouen Ducks **Fergus & Fiona**. (This just in: Fiona laid her first three eggs, which will be fed out to members of her Zoo family.)

## Bear Trapped!

In addition to *ursidae*, **Zoo Sanctuary** bear exhibits provide comfortable hanging-out areas for numerous insects, rodents, thoughtless peafowl, and gray squirrels. Recently keepers spotted a big gray squirrel tangled up in some loose string snagged by claws from the fabric-covered fire hose of the bear hammock. Henry was moved to his bear night house. Gates were locked. And two keepers managed to cut loose the panicked and very angry squirrel.

## Little Dragon

2012 is the **Year of the Dragon**, which, according to experts is the "only imaginary Zodiac animal." Untrue. A small dragon has been living under an assumed name at the **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary** since 1996. Officially we identify him as a Solomon Islands Prehensile Tailed Skink to keep crowds of curious onlookers at bay. **Solomon** (not his real name) from nose to tail-end is about the length of an adult's arm, and true to his heritage, has smooth shiny scales and the strong clawed feet of a

dragon. Sadly, because of logging and abducting his relations for the pet trade, these little island dragons are endangered. Yes, he *is* capable of breathing fire so we're careful not to annoy him.

### Monkey Hot Tubs

On a cold day, a zookeeper hauled enough hot water to the macaque exhibit for a Spa Experience. Alpha monkey **Wallace**, seeing the spa, moseyed over and thoughtfully put one hand in the steam for a bit and then found other things to do. This left the spa open for his roomie **Darwin** who stepped carefully into the tub, hunkered down, and splashed the warm water on his hairy chest with his long-fingered hands.

**Attendance for January 2012 was 8,488, substantially more than January 2011's 5,295.**

### Monkey Tale

Training is an integral part of Zoo Keeping. Animals learn to move from one area to another, and to "step up" on the scale. Bears will shift from side to side and open their mouths for a quick health check. Tigers and wolves will "target" to paint works of art. Mountain lions and raccoons will move into a squeeze or travel cage for health exams.

Monkeys **Wallace** and **Darwin's** clicker training goes a bit farther. Wallace, guided by a click / treat, is more than willing to extend his little arm, vein side up to practice "blood draws." This constant, gentle training will be invaluable if a real blood draw is necessary.

Being able to trade one Good Thing for Something Better is what it's all about. Wallace had a small piece of brown glass and, lacking pockets, was keeping the glass in his mouth. It's easy to tell when this occurs because his lips are pushed out and you can see him rolling the treasure around with his tongue. He's alert, too because he knows that a Zookeeper will want to trade for Something Better. So with one person keeping Darwin involved elsewhere, a staffer was attempting to trade grapes for glass.

The words *ambivalent monkey* describes the situation, particularly when treats have been served earlier, plus the fact that this was the Best Glass Ever. Ultimately, Wallace wandered away. But wait! Darwin stepped up with dreams of glory. He found a tiny rock and presented it for a treat. Click. After a frantic search, Darwin presented a sliver of wood. Click. But nothing worthwhile was left.

Desperate Darwin, eye to eye with the keeper, reached back and grabbed the end of his tail. Quickly the keeper clicked. And Darwin traded his long, furry gray tail for a grape. She gently held the tail for a second, then relinquished it. This went on, with Darwin pulling more and more of his tail forward to trade for a treat.

### The Ways of Owls

A patient **Docent** has been working for months to encourage barn owl **Grayson** to willingly *come to the glove*. She wears a leather falconer's glove which is a specialty item protecting the hand, and the arm up to the elbow, from sharp owl claws. This was the day that Grayson was truly willing to hop on the glove and permit himself to be gently stroked on back and neck and around the handsome eye disc feathers characteristic of barn owls. A small crowd of visitors had gathered and the Docent was imparting owl lore when Grayson provided two examples of his own: he shook his feathers which is called a *rouse* and regurgitated an owl pellet on the Docent's shoulder which thrilled everyone.

### Yahoo IKEA!

We are very grateful for the **IKEA** award of \$10,000 to the **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary** for interactive interpretive signage inside the Zoo and a much needed makeover for the Zoo Classroom where Education Animals dwell and Zoo Campers learn. Thanks to Zoo fans who sent thousands of tweets to the IKEA site in support of these worthy projects.

### Breakfast With The Bears

Available 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

You supply the Breakfast and we'll provide the bears! Fill your Picnic Baskets with breakfast goodies for up to 20 Best Friends. We'll set up tables and chairs so you can watch our five black bears forage for their own breakfasts on the other side of the Bear Exhibit glass wall.

Includes a 30-minute behind-the-scenes tour, plus excellent photo opportunities.

Fee: \$249. Call 916-496-0045 for reservations.

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