

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

February – March 2015

In The Past . September 1999. Keeping Track. “It’s a Turken! A Turken is a Designer Chicken, possibly created by a mad scientist or at least by someone with a sense of humor. From the shoulders down (if chickens have shoulders) you’ve got your standard chicken-shaped bird. But from the neck up you have what amounts to a masterpiece. The neck is bereft of feathers, except for a little patch where the Adam’s apple would be if chickens have Adam’s apples. On the very top of the head, rather like a bad toupee, is another patch of feathers. In most, but not all cases, the skin of the neck is scarlet. Lovely. Look around the Zoo. Nearly every hen has a few Turken chicks. All chicks hatched from a single clutch don’t necessarily have the same father. If there are several roosters in the vicinity it is likely the chicks are the result of –um – varied relationships. And it is increasingly apparent that Turken genes Rule. Scholarly Internet research reveals that Zoo Sanctuary hens are breeding with a **Transylvania Naked Neck** rooster. (Created by vampires for obvious reasons?) The neck skin turns red from sun exposure. The naked neck is the result of a single gene that affects the arrangement of feather growing tracts on the chicken’s body. The gene ‘can easily be introduced into any breed.’ (This we know.) With a reduced number of feathers on their bodies Turkens need protection from cold temperatures. (We’re knitting little chicken sweaters.)”

Horticulture Hazard

Handsome Blue and Gold Macaws **Rocky** and **Bingo** are examples of the adage Birds of a Feather Flock Together. During cold weather they pretty much hang out in their roomy temperature controlled house. Windows let shivering visitors check them out on cold days. But now, with sunny weather the birds venture outside into their aviary cage. One sunny day a Zoo Horticulture person (armed only with clippers and a trash bag) endeavored to cut back some of the lanky, overgrown green plants that surround the macaw exhibit. Only moments elapsed before the birds, ferocious Rocky in the lead, clambered across the cage wire and threatened dire consequences. Having dealt with these problems before the Hort person would move ahead three feet and start clipping –with birds giving chase - then dart back and clip another area. Rocky, born in 1983, lived for many years with his person before he came to the Zoo Sanctuary. Bingo was born February 16, 2000 and moved to the Zoo in May, 2000.

Crash Sleeping

As reported previously In a **Keeping Track**, raccoon **Crash** has been a serious sleeper for several months curled up in a little den in his tall faux concrete tree. Now with consistent balmy days he shuffles up his raccoon ramp to nap in the sun seven feet up on narrow wood shelves. You may recall from January’s KT that the Zoo’s flock of little brown sparrows have been stopping by to take baths in some of the shallow water areas in the raccoon creek, but the savvy little birds avoid the pool belonging to neighboring coyote **Wild Iris**. Ignore this misinformation. Recently was a somewhat larger “wild” brown bird splashing water out of the coyote pool during a lengthy bath. And, yes, coyote **Iris** stood by and watched the bird and then turned her back and walked away.

Dancing

In preparation for seasonal changes several male peacocks are practicing courting behaviors. The focus is on the astounding array of long blue and green tail feathers called *coverts* which are held erect by strong

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tan colored foot-long tail feathers. When a peahen is handy, the male deploys the blue and green feathers that are so enchanting to peahens and humans as well.

Occasionally, peafowl appear with white plumage. Years ago a white peacock thoughtfully named Mr. White drew the attention of everyone. While pure white albino peafowl do exist, they are rare. They have a genetic mutation which causes a reduction in pigment, and, in peafowl, causes a complete lack of *melanin* and therefore they have white plumage.

Helen

We are saddened by the passing of Gray squirrel **Helen**. She spent four years with a rehabber from **Sacramento Wildlife Care** before she moved to the **Zoo** in 2009. Helen had cataracts in both eyes, and while she was able to see well enough to get along safely in her exhibit she would not have survived living wild. Helen's box / house with clear plastic viewing windows was always full of stuff – paper, wool, etc. that was provided by zookeepers so she could construct perfect nests of her own design.

Attendance: Apparently having missed winter altogether, Zoo visitors swung into spring with 16,834 (!) attending in February and 13,903 in March: Moms, Dads, Grandparents and Kids Galore!

Tigers, Continued II.

You may recall from the January KT that a Zookeeper found, in the tiger exhibit, a pair of new Victoria's Secret pink, partly consumed undies on the rocks of the small tiger pool. How they arrived is a mystery. Staff is concerned when an animal consumes something – *unusual*. Doses of Psillium concealed in treats were provided for three days to assure inner tiger health.

Zookeepers consistently provide less exotic items that might capture an animal's interest. Recently offered were two promotion cards rescued from upscale magazines. Strangely one of the scents was from – yikes - a **Victoria's Secret** advertisement that the tigers shunned. The winner: golden curry powder from the Zoo kitchen. These are just simple Down Home cats.

The Tiger

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry
William Blake 1757-1827

Update On Echo

You may recall that cougar **Echo** took a trip to **Loomis Basin** several months ago because of a left front lower canine injury that possibly was the result of blunt force trauma before he came to the Zoo. The tooth was broken on top and over time bacteria spread infection into the jaw. Echo returned to the Zoo to prepare for surgery, receiving pain medication and antibiotics. On operation day Echo took another trip to **Dr. Mira Sanchez**, and **Dr. Koen**, an animal dental bone graft major surgery specialist. The tooth was removed in a little over an hour and Echo returned home for some quiet recovery time. After several days he began to eat ground raw meat (plus “most” of his camouflaged meds) and after 11 days of extra oversight Echo has returned to daily routines.

The Big Red Truck

A Zoo Person parks her good-looking big red truck in the upper Zoo parking lot, which for many weeks was shared with one of the young peacocks. Each morning there he was, checking out the “other” handsome peacock reflected in the shiny chrome wheels. Fortunately, he has found other pursuits.

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