

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

January, 2010

Catching Up Moving I

When young mountain lion **Flash** first moved to the **Zoo Sanctuary** in June 2009 she took cover in the off-exhibit dens farthest away from humans and other mountain lions and there she stayed. Respecting the fact that wild animal offspring have survived because they're cautious, quiet, and careful, staff thoughtfully respected her needs. They were cautious, quiet and careful too. Over a period of many months Flash became accustomed to the humans in her life as well as the other mountain lions.

In November, she spent some up-close-and-personal time with males **Ventura** and **Rio**. There were hisses but no aggression. Ditto 11-year-old female **Alder**. The transition from off-exhibit to the large cougar yard, complete with a passel of watching visitors, went well.

One exciting incident stands out. Early on, Flash jumped up onto one of the exhibit rafters, a distance of 12 + feet. *Whoa*, keepers thought. But Ventura and Rio might have been even more impressed, They sat below, staring upward, possibly awed or intimidated or whatever mountain lions do in situations like this. Long after Flash jumped nimbly down. Ventura kept returning to the scene and casting his eyes upward.

Moving II

Preceded by multiple keeper planning meetings, conversations, and yet more meetings, three animal groups exchanged living spaces. Coyotes **Maggie & Wild Iris** moved to the **Wild Canid Exhibit**. Wolf hybrids **Lincoln & Rex** moved to the first two exhibit spaces formerly occupied by the coyotes. And raccoons **Scout & Crash** became their temporary neighbors in the lower third of the coyote exhibit providing an opportunity for keepers to complete a little redesign of the former raccoon area.

Coyotes: Since for some time Iris has tended to be very – *um* – assertive toward younger Maggie, they've been separated and this policy continued in the new area. At the Canid Exhibit Iris seemed the more skittish of the two, but ultimately moved into the large exhibit yard and was even spotted standing atop the rocky coyote cliff, silhouetted against the rainy, gray Folsom sky – yes! – howling.

Wolf-dog hybrids. Lincoln and Rex, always good boys and good friends, seemed to be pleased with their move.

Raccoons. One of the major concerns in moving any animal is assuring that the new exhibit is safe and secure. Since the former coyote area consists of 3 living areas, 4 entry gates, and 3 drop-gates and since raccoons can climb better than wolf-dog hybrids (no offence) keepers worried and performed endless on-site inspections. Which is why, the next day in mid-morning after the animal moves had

been completed, a visitor's innocent question "should that raccoon be on top of the cage?" immediately shifted staff into emergency mode. Visitors were escorted out and the zoo was locked down. Meanwhile, keepers armed with catchpoles and rakes and a lot of human agility and climbing prowess, conducted Scout back inside the lower exhibit area within minutes. How did Scout go walk-about? Raccoons appear to be bulky-bodied round little guys. If, however a curious raccoon discovers a tight fitting gap you couldn't stuff your arm into, she will absolutely positively flatten herself and skinny right-on-through.

Moving III

Scout and Crash are now back in their original raccoon exhibit where Crash has a new hammock and Scout can check for exits to her heart's content.

Moving IV

Goffin's Cockatoo **Pogo**, African Gray parrot **Mesa** and Amazons **Larry Bird** and **Luther** moved inside for the winter. There will be some exhibit revisions and the birds will move outside hopefully for good when the weather warms. In Folsom's climate, members of the parrot family will acclimate well when they live outdoors.

Moving V & VI

ADA upgrades of the Zoo Classroom are complete. Opening In Spring! The New Zoo Bistro!

Monkey Business

In the wild, young male Rhesus macaques move away from the main troop to live in a bachelor colony until they are 5 or 6 years old and considered mature. So if they were members of the wild troop, Zoo monks **Darwin** ('04) and **Wallace** ('05) would be facing a lot of social dominance issues. Recently, to prevent aggression and some possible long term health issues, the boys were neutered. Construction of the architecturally elegant elevated monkey roof is complete, a new heater is ordered, and the monks while away their time gently grooming each other and unscrewing construction nuts and bolts. The usual.

Gone But Not Forgotten.

MB

Injured in the wild, kestrel **MB** moved to the Zoo in 1992 and spent some very good years with female **Falca**. After her passing, he remained outside for a bit, but as he aged MB moved to an inside cage in the Classroom where he spent a lot of time near a sunny window. One warm spring day the screened window by his cage was open. MB had a grip on a piece of formerly frozen quail. Outside a panicky crowd of young peafowl were milling about, stretching

their necks up to check on the mini dangerous predator that was 'way too close.

Phoenix

Red-tailed hawk **Phoenix** had a difficult start in life with injuries to his spine and wing. Rescued by **Sacramento Wildlife Care** in 1990 he did well in at the Zoo Sanctuary where exhibit "furniture" could be arranged with his physical handicaps in mind. With age, health issues increased and he was gently euthanized.

Rex

Wolf-dog hybrid **Rex** was a stray identified as a possible wolf-dog hybrid. Because of safety concerns hybrids aren't offered for adoption. Handsome, golden haired Rex moved to the Zoo in 2005 and he and **Lincoln** became fast friends. When Lincoln left the Zoo for repair of a torn anterior cruciate ligament Rex howled for his return. In December, keepers discovered that Rex had passed away in the night. As his remains were gently taken away for a necropsy Lincoln howled his loss.

Harrison

Livestock Guarding Dog **Harrison** took his duties seriously. You'd hear his "industrial strength" barks as he ran the pasture fence line assuring that no dog in the park, - or after hours front gate visitor - ever considered going where they shouldn't. He was appropriately kind to new LGDs like **Cheyenne** and even pesky **Annabelle**. In the pasture, his white coat was spiffy for at least 30 minutes after a bath. Harrison passed away in December. Everyone misses this handsome gentleman.

The joys of the Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary far outweigh the sad times. Still, when an animal passes away everyone is truly saddened

Tiger Alert

Utilizing giant truck tires and canvas firehose, an **Eagle Scout** cleverly constructed several tiger hammocks. While both **Misty** and **Pouncer** clearly enjoyed their special loungers, Pouncer liked them best and frequently could be seen sprawled on her back, all four legs akimbo, pink tongue hanging to the side. Unfortunately, Pouncer loved her hammock too much and was seen one day with a big black chunk of tire between her formidable teeth.

So with great effort, the Zoocrew wrestled the tires down to the bear exhibits. Snippy little female **Tahoe** plopped herself down on the new furniture and napped. Her big male roommate **Sequoia** was another matter. He smelled tiger, and while surely he had never seen one in the wild, it was clear to him that they were Not Good. He approached the hammock - and backed away. Reconnoitering the exhibit, Sequoia checked all around the hilly den area, a logical place for tigers to skulk. He refused to eat for one whole day (an uncommon occurrence). So the following day, keeper **Amy Van der Molen** moved T & S out and non-tiger phobic males **Marty & Woody** moved in. At the next rotation all bears were happy.

Party Hearty

Our thanks to the **National Charity League** for cooking and providing gourmet animal meals and enthusiastic assistance for the Zoo's annual **Thanksgiving Feast for the Animals**. They also hosted a free craft-making table at the gazillionth **Holiday Party for the Animals**. These events are so popular that rainy days were no deterrent to crowds and good cheer.

Newbie Kya

Probably born in 2003, extremely beautiful wolf-dog hybrid **Kya** (Ki-ya) came to the Zoo from **Sonoma Wildlife Rescue**. Her new roomie, **Lincoln**, apparently thinks she's the Cat's Pajamas which makes for a nice relationship. One of her first acts in her new home was to chase down a chicken and - is amputate a word? - a leg. Kya was chastised and the poor chicken was euthanized.

Newbie Andrea

Imagine going into a dark storage shed to pick up your tool box and discovering a Great Big Snake curled up in it. The reaction of the Napa Valley resident who had this experience was much as you imagine. Fortunately, he took the snake to a knowledgeable friend who was fond of reptiles. **Andrea** went from his gentle hands to the **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary**. Judging by her size, she's young and, typical of her kind, can live into her 30's.

In pet shops these animals are often called a Red-tailed Boa, avoiding the possibly scary word *constrictor*. At maturity, females like Andrea may grow to 10 feet in length - larger than males. Boas are one of the most exploited snake species and many are wild-captured for the pet trade. In their home areas they also may end up as market meat.

Grayson's Little Surprise

As **Docents** (bless 'em) take on more tasks, they spend a lot of time with **Education Animals** to assure that everyone involved is comfortable and safe during Outreach efforts. One day Barn owl **Grayson** was practicing sitting on the falconer's glove. Everything was going well until he started make the same kind of sound that warns you to snatch your dog or cat off the down comforter and run them outside quick. This went on for a bit until suddenly - *errp*- Grayson hacked up a giant owl casting. The Docent, being an animal fan, was honored.

Excellent Friends

My thanks for the lots & lots of good wishes and acts of kindness from Folsom people, both Zoo and City, after my Unfortunate Misstep several months ago. I had several months to ponder my very Good Fortune in having all of the above.

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