

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

December 2011 - January 2012

Wild Nights, Holiday Lights

The amazing 13 nights of Holiday Lights were wild indeed, with more than 8,000 visitors who were entranced with everything! Santa Claus! Santa Paws! The choral groups! The Little Train's sparkling Holiday scenes! World famous hot apple cider and hot chocolate at **Fisher's Beastro!** And, of course the animals! Our sincere thanks to decoration folks who were patient and talented beyond our wildest dreams, both in setting up - and the less fun part - taking down and storing until next year. The lights & decorations are resting now, all packed away until WNHL 2012. Life is good.

Not Edible?

Zoo peafowl are enthralled by holiday decorations. Last year Zoo fences were decorated with three-foot high individually hand-painted Styrofoam gingerbread persons. Visiting kids loved them. But during the last week of the event it became clear that peacocks loved them too: the birds were expending lots of effort pecking off chunks of the lower extremities of the truly not edible gingerbread people. This year Zoo décor included excellent green & red painted trees hand-crafted out of - yes - plywood.

Ball Game

A beautiful holiday tree stood on the uphill side of tigers and a keeper was amused as she chased down a shiny blue Christmas tree ball that was rolling downhill with a peacock in hot pursuit. The bird followed her back uphill as she replaced the ball in the tree, only to see the bird chasing it downhill again.

The Awhhh Factor

Careful research has proved that it is literally impossible for visitors to walk through the **Zoo Sanctuary** without at least once exclaiming "*Awhhhh, how cute!*" Red fox **Mojo** is a case in point. When not napping, he often walks exhibit perimeters tracking visitors, perhaps listening for the *Awhhh* that is sure to come.

Hens

The Zoo Sanctuary participates with **Sacramento County Vector Control West Nile Research**. During the season, their techs draw blood weekly from the small flock of vector chickens that live in an off-exhibit enclosure. This year the Zoo is continuing care for three hens in recognition of just one of their many talents: three perfect eggs a day are collected to enhance Zoo animal diets.

Hen

Ever since she was just a chick, a lovely young hen has made it her business to work with Zookeepers when they clean the warm house that's home to squirrel monkeys

Curley, Orinoco and petite female **Monita**. Monkeys use their clever little hands to sort through food bowls that hang inside the night house. For a short time during cleaning the outside door is open while floors are hosed.

Having watched this process for a long time, the hen makes it her job to peck up scattered bits of apple, grape, monkey chow, etc. She's related to a breed of chickens that have been bred to be slim where others are (*um*) meaty. Her name says it all: Misses Rump-less-stiltskin. If anyone in your family needs assistance in naming offspring, call us.

Office Help

Docents spend a lot of hands-on-time with education animals. Recently white ferret **Cinnamon** was out for a romp in the **Docent Office**. She explored the desk, typed on the computer, checked out the phone and printer and quite enjoyed dragging the mouse pad around.

Leaving Your Skin Behind

All reptiles shed the outer portion of their skin. In snakes this is under hormonal control and associated with growth so young snakes shed more often than older ones. Most snakes shed their skin 4-8 times a year. This process is preceded by a period of relative inactivity that lasts several weeks during which the *eye caps* (like clear goggles) will become opaque. The vision impaired snake may be unpredictable or even aggressive. Shedding starts at the head: once the snake has dislodged skin surrounding the mouth and nose it will slither between rough objects to catch the loose skin as the snake glides by.

Andrea Sheds

Big Red-tail boa **Andrea** followed the *Snake's Guide To Shedding* textbooks. She spent a lot of time coiled in her big black plastic tub of warm water and as her shedding progressed she rubbed on enclosure rocks. While her new home is large, unlike wild snakes she doesn't have a long

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path with rocks and brush to assist in removing the shed, so at one point as Andrea exited her bath a keeper gently

encircled her body with both hands and the loosened skin slipped away. Right now, all shiny-new Andrea is spending a lot of time in her new hand-made-with-love blue jeans cloth hammock which hangs high in the warm upper corner of her snake apartment.

It's hard to look at already big and getting bigger Andrea without thinking of statistics. Currently she's 8-feet long and growing. She's big around, too. And how does one measure the girth of a snake? If you give a project like this some thought there are a lot of reasons for *not* using a metal tape measure. So recently a keeper used a length of sturdy twine gently slipped around Andrea's middle (if snakes have middles) and marked the spot on the twine where two ends met. One week ago she measured 14 inches – and growing.

Ono

In 1995 a California rancher asked a worker to knock down an old shed. He gave the shed a bump with his truck that knocked it flat. To his dismay a mother bobcat was sheltering her kittens under the shed. Only one survived. He took the kitten home where his family bottle fed the little one and named him **Ono** after a near-by gold-rush town. The kitten grew and played with the kids and dogs, and all was well until Ono was six-months old. It became increasingly clear that he was a wild animal and not a pet. Ono came to the Zoo Sanctuary in 1996. Recently staffers noticed a lump on his jaw. An examination at **Madison Avenue Veterinary Clinic** by Zoo Veterinarian **Mira Sanchez** diagnosed several "soft tissue growths" and prognosis for treatment was not good. Ono was gently euthanized January 10th. It's very hard to say Goodbye.

December attendance in 2111 was 14,784 more than doubling last year at the same time. Perfect weather was a factor, but it's clear that **Wild Nights, Holiday Lights** has a strong following.

Bear Cubs

Recently the **California Department of Fish & Game** borrowed a big animal crate from the **Zoo Sanctuary** to transport two orphaned black bear cubs to their new home in the wild. Their mother had been shot by a poacher. Fish & Game began a bear cub rehabilitation program in 2000 and has since returned more than 35 cubs to the wild. All the bears now at the Zoo Sanctuary were youngsters without the two vital years of training from mom so their chances of survival in the wild were slim. They came to

the Zoo from Fish & Game and like all animal residents have become teaching animals.

Problems

Everyone starting the day at the **Zoo Sanctuary** checks the email entries of the **Daily Journal** for general information about what's happening with the animals. Recently, there was a lot of concern about a wound (possibly a bite) on red fox **Mindy's** tail. Antibiotics were prescribed and given and still there was no improvement. At Madison Ave Vet Hospital x-rays disclosed fractured bones and **Dr. Sanchez** determined that the last four inches of her tail should be amputated. Shy Mindy is recovering well. (Since one of the identifiers of red foxes is the white tail tip is Mindy still a Red fox?)

Photo Info

Increasingly, zoostaff is taking zoom lens color photos of an animal's "body area of concern" - like Mindy's tail - which provides email consult access to **Dr. Sanchez** as well as an ongoing record for staff. Everyone working with the animal in question can view progress for better, or worse, resulting in more up-to-date knowledge for all concerned.

BACK AGAIN! FOLSOM ZOO SANCTUARY JUNIOR ZOOKEEPER CAMP!

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