

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

July/ August 2010

Alder

Mountain lion kitten **Alder** was dropped off at a bakery in Ventura and turned over to the **California Department of Fish & Game**. She arrived at **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary** in October, 1998 when she was approximately five-weeks old. Alder had problems not uncommon to motherless wild animals: she was covered with ringworm and loaded with intestinal parasites. Medication cleared up the health issues, and lots of hands-on TLC did the rest. At the Zoo, everyone talks to the animals - staff, Docents, volunteers, visitors - and Alder often responded by walking fence-lines chirping and purring and communing with the humans who loved her. In recent years the **Daily Keeper Journal** occasionally noted that there was evidence that Alder had experienced a seizure. For safety, the Zoo dismantled the suspended cougar walkway and reduced pool water depth to the minimum. In July, the seizures increased both in number and severity. Alder was gently euthanized on Sunday, August 1. We miss her chirps of greeting. We miss her pretty face. We miss Alder a lot.

Herding

There's a morning routine at the deer exhibit. A keeper arrives with food so it's likely that all six deer will show up for checkups and chow. But on this particular morning three deer were missing. As the keeper started to search for them in the shady oak forest, deer **Tallulah** ambled up in a friendly way. The keeper patted her on the head and more or less jokingly said, "Go get **Tomomi** and her kids." On cue Tallulah trotted off and before long the sound of hooves reverberated up the canyon: it was Tomomi and offspring **Sweetwater** and **Blacktail** - with Tallulah prancing and dancing and herding behind them. Coincidence? Surely not.

Inside Pony Sterling

Sterling was rescued by the **Grace Foundation** and moved to the **Zoo Sanctuary** in the winter of 2008. He shared the pasture with big handsome draft horse **Gus**, Barbados sheep **Princess** and **Maggie** and the remarkable feral pig boys **Templeton** and **Wilber**. Peace reigns because benevolent (Gus discourages any porcine misbehavior.) Because of his age and past life, when Sterling browsed he picked up lots of dirt causing some intestinal issues which means that vets at **Loomis Basin Veterinary Hospital** are well acquainted with Sterling's gut. If you are squeamish you can skip the next part. Over several weeks Vets periodically washed out his insides with a gastric tube. Depending on how one views veterinary findings, it was interesting to discover that a lot of what was being washed out of Sterling was hair from Gus' tail upon which Sterling had been munching, which is why Sterling is banned from associating with Gus for the time being. He's much improved and chowing down his Equine Senior with gusto.

Bad Tusk

Having a bad tooth is painful and miserable: having a bad tusk is much worse, as feral pig **Templeton** knows from experience. Pigs have four tusks, two upper, two lower. Templeton has an extra tusk on the lower right side and it's infected. **Dr. Heller** at **UC Davis Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital** "aggressively trimmed" the superfluous tusk to facilitate draining of the abscess. Upon return home he wasn't immediately released into the pasture because boar **Wilber** tends to chase him. So

Templeton spent a quiet recovery time in a pasture barn with soft food, a tub of water and a big pile of straw where he immediately bedded down for a very long nap.

Wild Boars

Early pigs (*Sus scrofa*) lived in Eurasia and northern Africa and traveled with Spanish and Russian settlers to California in the 1700's. In the 1920's a Monterey landowner came up with a plan that was to have far reaching effects: he introduced the European wild boar for hunting purposes. Intelligent and romantic boars bred with domestic pigs creating feral hybrids called *wild boars*. They up-root vegetation. They can be reservoirs for viral, bacterial or parasitic diseases. They successfully raise lots of little piggies. They thrive in California. And their success can be costly. For example:

To "conserve, protect and restore native plants and animals at **Pinnacles National Monument**" the **National Park Service** built a pig exclusion fence which took 18 years to complete at a cost of \$1.5 million. **The Nature Conservancy** and the **NPS** spent roughly \$9 million to implement total eradication of introduced feral pigs from **Santa Cruz Island** to protect rare endemic species and cultural resources. In 2007 the 62,000-acre park was declared pig-free after the lethal shooting of 5,036 pigs.

A Zoo sign sums it up: "Feral pigs live throughout California and are considered a nuisance to many people, a treasure to some, and fair game to others." (FYI: Zoo Sanctuary pigs are listed under *treasures*.)

Inter Species Affection

With an eye toward Outreach Presentations, **Zoo Sanctuary Docents** work with many of the animals ranging from famous rooster **Baby Girls Baby**, ferrets **Cinnamon** and (nippy) **Missy**, African Gray parrot **Mesa**, (stubborn) owl **Grayson**, snakes **Andrea**, **Lucy & Cleo**, skink **Solomon**, llamas **Dolche & Palino**, pony **Sterling**, and the mini-donkey girls **Spicy Jalapeño** and **Rosarita**. All benefit from the extra affection and for the hoof stock the exercise is an added plus. **Rosarita & Jalapeño** especially like walking in the llama pasture which abuts Phase I of the **Wild Canid Exhibit**. The wild canid in this

case is coyote **Maggie**. Typical of coyotes everywhere she is elusive, opinionated and very, very smart. Additionally, she apparently seems to believe that mini-donkeys are wonderful. In this best of all possible worlds, the donkeys are willing to walk right along the fence outside Maggie's enclosure. And Maggie, clearly delighted, cavorts as only coyotes can on the other side of the wire, tail wagging, tongue lolling, joyfully throwing pine cones and sticks in the air and generally celebrating her new best friends. It's important to note that coyotes and mini-donkeys are aware of how fences work. Attack / defense reactions may be set aside for the delight of the moment.

Donkey Training

To retrieve and walk a donkey from the exhibit, Docents have spent a lot of time to make R&J comfortable with halters and lead ropes that signal an upcoming walk. After greeting the donkeys as usual, a Docent purposely dropped the halter and rope and walked away. Fine Then. Jalapeño grabbed up the halter, stalked over and pushed it against the Docent's arm. People are so hard to train.

Attendance for July / August was a busy 18,795. Notable are the increased numbers of young fathers with the kids. Hopefully, this is vacation time, but as layoffs in the greater Sacramento area increase the Zoo Sanctuary is an enjoyable, worthwhile and inexpensive way to spend several hours together.

Painting

Undaunted by **Old Town Folsom** construction, there is an insatiable demand for paintings by **Zoo Sanctuary** animals whose original works of art are now showing at **Samuel Horne's Tavern**. Savvy connoisseurs have snapped up paintings by wolves, foxes, mountain lions and tigers betting that in time they will sell for big \$\$\$.

Think **Jackson Pollock**.

As it is with humans, the techniques of Zoo animal painters differ. Wolves, foxes and mountain lions tend to place a front paw in paint (called *targeting*), then swipe (*paint*) the canvas. While tigers follow Pollock's *spatter* techniques, too often they focus on eating paint, which leads to some interesting and colorful objects to shovel up in the tiger exhibit the following day.

Baby Girl's Baby had works of art on exhibit at Old Town's **Black Rooster Gallery**. Since he had not painted before, Zoo staffers pondered how *does* a rooster paint? Plan One involved putting a canvas down and pouring washable, non-toxic black paint in a shallow pan, then grasping BGB on both sides, dipping his feet into the black paint and "rubber stamping" his feet on the canvas. It's likely that Baby Girl's Baby didn't find this technique as entertaining as everybody else. So once again he was picked up, foot-paint replenished, and put down to walk across the canvas all-by-himself, thus creating a perfect work of Chicken Art. (Want to invest in your future? Contact the Zoo: it's possible that you can a) choose the animal painter and b) become very rich.)

What's That Noise?

Sit on a bench in the Zoo Sanctuary on a warm afternoon and listen to the exotic sounds. Coyote howls. The beep-beep-beep of a backing truck coming from the beak of African Gray parrot **Mesa**. Tigers chuffing. Wolves squabbling. Peacocks calling. Kids laughing. Parents reading signs. But one sound was a New Sound, not heard before. Hearing it, a person stopped. Several more visitors came up, ears cocked. It was sort of a sharp but quiet *chink-chink* sound coming from blind gray squirrel **Helen's** exhibit. People finally reconnoitered enough to spot Helen seated on the ground, holding in her dainty hands a slab of ice: the *chink* was the sound of her sharp little teeth biting off bits of ice.

Ferret Dreams

While Zoo Campers met in the **Classroom**, ferrets **Missy** and **Cinnamon** lived in a big multi-story ferret apartment cage in the **Ops Building** office. This was good because staffers had the opportunity to chat with **ZAP Kids** as they provided ferrets with food, housekeeping and TLC. Even though ferrets are illegal pets in California, stores have an excellent selection ferret goodies: toys, furniture (yes, ferret couches) and long narrow fleece ferret sleeping bags. Ferrets often sleep upside-down, with pointy little noses sticking out. Sometimes they squeak when dreaming, or snore gently.

Rumor has it that during renovation of the **California State Capitol Building** lanky ferret contractors were provided with little harnesses tied to lengths of electric wiring which they would pull through narrow antique pipes located in the old Capitol walls.

Meet Visiting Bats
Nor Cal Bat Rescue
Saturday, October 2, 10 am - 1 pm
Learn why these little guys are really
important to humans and the environment.

Folsom Family Expo & Wellness Festival
10 am to 4 p.m.
Saturday, October 2 - Free!
Folsom Community Center
Visit the Zoo-Visit the Fair
Stock Up at Fisher's Beastro
Picnic in the Park
a perfect day!

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