

KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

June, 2009

Another Pretty Face

After the recent passing of mountain lion **Willow**, another wild mountain lion youngster was able to find sanctuary at the Folsom Zoo. As it has been with mountain lions who preceded her, she was born wild and came under the care of the **California Department of Fish & Game**. She was 19 weeks old when she arrived on June 27, and very frightened.

Over millennia, wild animal offspring have survived because they're cautious, quiet, and careful, and **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary** staff wisely respects this. At her new home, the young lion took cover in the quiet off-exhibit den farthest away from humans and other mountain lions and there she stayed. For several days she ate very little of the offered raw chicken, but as days passed she came out with keepers present, and now is willing to jump on top of the den to scout out her surroundings. When she's ready she'll begin the process of getting to know the rest of her clan, males **Ventura** and **Rio** and female **Alder**. It will be a while before she's ready to go on exhibit. Did we mention that she's very beautiful?

Altricial Or Precocial ?

Newborn mountain lions, like our own beloved human children, are considered to be *altricial*, a word that means *born in a helpless state*. They need parental support, protection and training until they grow up. (Yes, our own kids sometimes stretch *altricial-ness* into overtime.) Baby mountain lions spend about 2-years with mom, learning how to do all the things necessary to survive in the wild.

All the deer at the zoo sanctuary were *precocial* babies. Shortly after being born fawns can stand and are able to move along with their herd.

The Amazing Two-Tailed Cat

In 2006, the zoo sanctuary received a grant in memory of **Robett F. Bauder** from **Harvey & Janice Greenberg** to construct a unique small house for feral cats. It was connected by a cat tunnel to an enclosed outdoor cat garden. Which is why the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary is without doubt the only facility in the *world* probably, to exhibit a living two-tailed cat. **Penny** is long-haired and sort of a copper & ashes color. And despite the best efforts of valued cat spoileries **Robyn Williams** and **Sharon Helmes**, who spend many hours providing laps and love for the ferals, some cats just aren't going to let someone clip off the 8-inch long tail-ish thing of matted fur that's

next to, and almost identical with, the tail she's always had.

Gender Misidentification

Is it a boy monkey or a girl monkey? Well, duh. You can tell by looking. But when the question arises about birds or snakes it's a whole different process. You can Google and find the answer: "*Molecular sex identification with PCR using primers derived from spendlin genes blah*" or you can check with zoo veterinarian **Mira Sanchez**. Which is why, after working with red tail hawk **Redford** since 1979 it has come as a surprise to zoo staff that "he" really is a female hawk. It is unlikely that this misidentification has caused her any stress, since she probably has always thought of herself as *Buteo Exceptionalis Spiffy Chick*, or some such.

Together Again

With the passing of male alpha wolf **Granite**, zoo staff has been pondering the new social order in the wolf exhibit. Like humankind, each wolf is an individual. With attitudes. And hopes and dreams. When Granite came to the zoo in 1994 as a puppy he was mothered by female **Black Onyx**. Female **Redbud** arrived a year later and Granite took over puppy training and the new alpha pair began a friendship that lasted a lifetime. With the arrival of young males **Joshua** and **Yucca** in 2004 the alphas did their best. The pups begged food from Redbud and she'd regurgitate breakfast day after day. Granite played with the little guys, who very quickly became big guys with attitude. So the alpha pair was separated and switched in and out of the exhibit on alternate days with the "rowdy young upstarts."

Redbud comes from a family of dominant females. Her mom was running the pack when she was just a year old. Redbud has been very dominant, but also flirty and playful with Granite. So a lot of thought went into putting the three remaining wolves together.

On The Day, staff and Dr. Sanchez were standing by. Hoses were turned on and at the ready to break up a fight.

The gates opened. The wolves were together. Both males approached Redbud. She pulled up her ears, narrowed her eyes, and stood tall. Yucca approached and was pushy. Redbud growled, bared her teeth, and chased him around the exhibit perimeter three times. Point made, she backed off. Joshua fared slightly better. His approach was more diplomatic: he circled

back and gently touched her hip with his paw. She growled. Every time he tried it. Plan two. Joshua gently placed his chin on Redbud's back. She growled. So far, the boys watch Redbud thoughtfully from afar. A close encounter with her leads to more growling. For the time being, peace reigns.

B.I.N.G.O.

A group of pre-school kids were touring the zoo. They came to the exhibit where the exotic macaws dwell. The Docent offered some macaw facts, and explained that **Bill** was the red bird and **Bingo** was the blue-and-gold bird. She asked if the kids knew the famous song, B.I.N.G.O. They didn't but they learned it pretty quick. And sang it for a long time, very loudly. Bingo swayed from foot to foot and bobbed his head in time with the singing.

Bathing Big Dogs

When you spot Livestock Guarding Dogs **Harrison**, **Annabelle** and **Cheyenne** lying around in the muddy / dusty pasture (depending on the season) you wonder why most LGDs are white or blond since their jobs involve - *right* - lying around in pastures. There's a reason. Shepherds depend on the dogs to guard the flocks. And if suddenly there's a dark animal - like a wolf, for instance - the shepherd will spot it right away. The light colored LGD's blend in with the flock.

Cheyenne and Harrison both have heavy coats of fur. And Cheyenne needs a monthly bath because of a delicate skin condition. So Docents **Brenda King** and **Carol Quayle** show up on the first Monday of every month dressed in shorts and rubber shoes and retire with the dogs to the zoo kitchen where there's lots of warm water and a good drain for the soapy runoff. Dogs are scrubbed and brushed and hugged and sort-of-dried with many towels. Cheyenne spends the rest of the day in the Ops Building office, smelling of dog and drying out.

Attendance: Woo Hoo! 10,224 in June. Good weather is our friend! Incidentally, this year-'til-now Docent hours were 2,452! (Bless 'em.)

Sensitivity

Of course zoo animals have feelings. And of course zoofolks are sensitive to that fact. For example:

. **Zookeeper Sharifa Moore** was tidying up kestrel **MB's** indoor home, removing rejected mouse parts and changing the newspaper on the bottom of the cage. Spreading the paper out she noted a garish murder headline. She turned the paper over. "No bad news for MB." We should all be so lucky.

. The Docents have been working with friendly hen **Penny** so she can become a dependable Outreach Animal. For awhile, she hung out in the Docent Room in a big cage, complete with natural limb perches and little bowls of scratch and water. She was very accessible so Docents could work with this affectionate and clever chicken. Docent **Georgia Carver** had been spending some quality time with Penny and one day when she returned the hen to the cage it seemed as if Penny "cried out." Several days later vacationing Georgia called long-distance from New Hampshire to make sure Penny was OK. She was. And is.

Tribulations

Tiger and bear pools plug up because of leaf and hair overload. Often the clog can be blown out with the hose turned on full volume. Not always. A major plug of the tiger pool brought about an Incident.

Keeper **Shawn Harrold** had tried everything and finally brought in the Drain King. In case you haven't had the pleasure, a Drain King is an expandable ball thingy that when attached to the end of the hose and shoved down the drain, will swell up thus blocking backflow and blowing out the obstruction.. Or not.

In this case Shawn's head was barely visible above the edge of the 5-foot-deep pool He was on his hands and knees pushing the drain king down the drain. And crowds of visitors were watching, most of them asking when the tigers would be out. They asked this many times. Many times. Back at the bottom of the pool, Shawn felt the plugged pool finally open up and started to remove the drain king. Which was firmly wedged 'waaaaay down the drain. So with his hand, he followed the hose down the drain pipe, and squeezed the hose to loosen it. Which it did. But now Shawn's arm was stuck tight in the drain. Visitors were still calling. "Wherearethetigers?wherearethetigers? Truly, these are the times that try men's souls. Being a professional, Shawn ultimately retrieved his arm, the hose, and the drain king, and replied quite civilly that the tigers would be out in about 10 minutes.

Got E-Waste? Drop It off!

Folsom Rodeo Arena parking lot on Stafford Street

**Saturday, August 8 and Sunday, August 9.
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

A portion of the proceeds from this Eco Friendly Event benefits zoo animals, the Friends of the Folsom Zoo, and helps fund educational programs for kids like the **Astoundingly Fine ZAP Kids**

(batteries, fluorescent light bulbs - tubes, large household appliances are a no-no. There's a \$5 fee for microwaves.)

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