

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

April - May 2012

## Truffles

Believed to be an Icelandic / Sufflok cross, giant male sheep **Truffles** moved in with Zoo ewes **Princess** and **Maggie**. He's estimated to be four-years old and was going to be slaughtered until rescue by **Animal Place**. Truffles is considered to be friendly. He also will butt, as veterinarian **Dr. Bob Morgan** discovered after he finished clipping Truffle's long toe nails. True to form, Truffles made moves on several keepers who by now know and understand his rowdy ways. Since Truffles was just neutered, and as staff gets to know him better, it's possible that this behavior will subside. Truffles arrived decked out in an astoundingly thick coat of wool and has a shearing appointment in his future.

## Snake Condo

Many visitors (mostly boys) ask if there are snakes on exhibit. The answer always has been that we have snakes but they are **Education Animals** and not on exhibit. They go on outreaches and mosey through the Zoo with Docents or Staff. Now the snakes have a large and very spiffy snake exhibit box, in which a snake can be periodically transported out on Zoo grounds for visitor viewing.

## More Snake

Recently a man showed up at the **Zoo Ticket Booth** with a live baby rattlesnake he said was loose in the park with a bunch of kids circling around it. And yes, he was holding the baby rattlesnake in his bare hand. Snake experts suggest that, though small, inexperienced young rattlesnakes might inject more venom than an adult. Older rattlesnakes are likely to control the venom amount because it takes several weeks to restore a full venom supply which complicates successful hunting.

## Rocky Macaw

Hatched August 13, 1983 handsome Blue & Gold macaw **Rocky**, at age 28 can be considered middle aged since these birds can live to be 50 years old. He came to the **Zoo Sanctuary** through **Mickaboo Parrot Rescue** and will be a companion for equally handsome Blue & Gold macaw **Bingo**. They've spent some weeks of meet & greet time in the temperature controlled parrot exhibit, each in his own cage. They're together now and all is well.

## Introducing Henry

For most of his life, **Henry**, the youngest bear at the Zoo lived next door to males **Woody** and **Marty**. You may recall that permanent screening was put up between bear exhibits to assure that baby bear parts would remain safe. Now a year later and after lots of observation and staff discussion, Henry was joined in his exhibit by adult bear **Woody**. Keepers and Zoo Vet Mira Sanchez were observers.

Wisely, Henry was shy at first, but made careful forays toward **Woody** – then backed away. Busy snacking on scattered kibble, **Woody** kept a wary eye on the youngster but made no move toward him.

Ultimately the bears came together. They gently touched each other's faces with paws and noses. Then Henry revved up and became the rowdy bear cub we know and love. Finally **Woody** had enough pestering and ran after **Henry** who fled to his big hammock. **Woody** followed, and smacked **Henry** with a restrained big bear paw. Possibly chastened, **Henry** retired to his night house but peeked out on and off. Since then **Woody** & **Henry** have been together and played for several hours at a time and all has been well. Adult bear **Marty** is next in line to enjoy **Henry** up close.

## ...Nature Red In Tooth And Claw

With spring the world is green and wild animal's lives change. Foxes and wolves shed winter fur prolifically, the blackbird clan starts work on a nest hidden in one of the mid-Zoo bushes, peacocks show off and scream, their fanned iridescent green-blue tail coverts shimmering. Hens that have hidden eggs in secret places herd tiny chicks.

But with all the growth and change there's always a reminder that Nature truly is "red in tooth and claw." We know when a worried person appears at the front gate with a fully enclosed box that it contains a needy creature with the same story. "We found it front of our house / shop / car / neighbor's house, etc." The most recent box contained a LBJ (birdwatcher jargon for *little brown job*) which means that it's not currently identifiable. This healthy LBJ was probably forty-eight hours from surviving on its own, so home it went with a Zoo person for some LBJ TLC. And two days later bird

and box returned. A logical place for release was at the edge of the upper Zoo parking area: lots of trees, no people: perfect. The little bird was released and flew away to a new life. And with the speed of light out of the sky came a scrub jay that snatched the little bird out of the air. The Zoo human swatted at the jay with the box, alas to no avail and little bird was jay's breakfast. The human quandary: the jay in breeding season caught a needed meal. The newly fledged bird did not survive to pass on his / her genes.

#### .....Nature

Coyote **Wild Iris** captured and ate what was most likely a member of the blackbird family that spends a lot of time near her exhibit, and remains of a wild rat were discovered in the wolf exhibit. The quandary persists.

#### .....Nature

To the left of the Zoo exit gate is a tall enclosed waste can which has several inches of clearance underneath, a cool, dark place for a rattlesnake. Zoo Staff, armed with snake can & snake hook, retrieved the snake and freed it and the young rattler found in the Park, on prison property.

#### .....Nature

On a happier note, one of the Zoo horticultural folks spent many happy hours removing misplaced plants growing in front of the wolf exhibit. And since rain was predicted for the following day, she made an early visit to Folsom's new **Green Acres** nursery for grass seed and white clover seed. (Thanks Green Acres for the Zoo discount.) A light rain was falling as the seed was broadcast. The pretty little black hen who hatched her three chicks several days earlier thought this was perfect timing as she and her chicks pecked up fresh seed.

#### Zoo Campers At Work

**Spring Zoo Camp** was, as usual, filled with good things to do. Campers smeared honey and jelly on trees in the **Black Bear Exhibits** (yes, the bears were locked up), created Spring Baskets for Pigs that included apples, hay and eggs, and delivered edible yellow roses to the donkeys. And more. During the visit with ducks **Fiona** and **Fergus**, one boy camper had an excellent experience. He was sitting on the park bench in the duck exhibit when drake Fergus jumped up and hunkered down next to him. The boy gently put out his hand to stroke the bird's handsome feathers and apparently taking this gesture as an invitation Fergus stepped up and settled on the Camper's lap. Happy Camper and apparently happy bird sat very still for a very long time.

#### Connected Events?

A report in the Keeper **Journal** mentioned that raven males **Sam** and **Canyon** were playing with sticks. Since spring is in the air, birds are gathering branches and other nest building materials including feathers and fur shed by Zoo animals.

But wait. Horticulturally speaking, where did the sticks come from? An examination of the raven exhibit disclosed that the now wilted twelve foot high honeysuckle vine formerly growing up the aviary wire was – yes – missing all its woody parts. Forewarned, Horticulture Division will move the replacement plant outside the raven exhibit and screen any woody parts within beak reach with fine wire. And collect some nice sticks of varying length for the ravens.

#### This Summer!

**ABC Zoo Ages 4 - 7 Four Camps!**

**Jr. Zookeeper Camp Ages 8 - 10 Five Camps!**

**Zoo Ambassador Program Three Camps!**

**Be A ZAP! Ages 11 - 15**

**For more information**

[www.folsomzoo.com](http://www.folsomzoo.com)

**Or Call 351-3513**

#### Treat Yourself!

##### **BREAKFAST WITH THE BEARS!**

Pack up favorite breakfast goodies and drinks and enjoy your own private event on the **Folsom Zoo Sanctuary Bear Deck** before the Zoo opens.

Watch bears inches away through big glass windows as they snack, play in their pools & check out the humans.

Rental includes a behind-the-scenes-tour of the bear den areas and excellent photo opportunities! (For groups with participants less than ten years old an animal presentation is provided in lieu of the den area tour).

**Available 9 to 11 a.m. June 1 through August 31.**

**Fee: \$249: includes tables & chairs for up to 20 people.**

[rratcliff@folsom.ca.us](mailto:rratcliff@folsom.ca.us)