

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

May – June 2013

Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary 50 Years Old And Better Every Day

**Written July 2003: Not A Foxhole.** Every once in a while, the wolves take it into their heads to dig a den. This usually occurs when they're feeling the nudge of spring mating time. But apparently holes can be dug just for something to do. Wolves **Redbud** and **River** completed such a project months ago. The hole is deep – nearly four feet down and goes back who-knows-how-far because no one wants to crawl down there to find out. For a while, alpha male **Granite** stepped up dominance behavior with young black male River as the target. This involved world-class growling and riding up and lots of posturing by the alpha, and a certain amount of reckless pushyness by River. Fortunately, there is The Hole, where River can retire when everybody needs a break. Sometimes Granite lies, observant, in the shade by the den. Occasionally you can see River's head periscope up to check around for the big bad wolf.

## Earthquake

Huffington Post, May 24, 2013 “Residents in rural northeastern California assessed damage to their homes and businesses in one of the strongest temblors to hit the densely forested region in decades. ‘Without question, it’s the strongest quake I’ve ever felt here,’ Plumas County **Sheriff Greg Hagwood** said, ‘it lasted long enough to create a measure of anxiety.’”

For the humans in the **Folsom-Sacramento** area the quake was more like a hardly noticed little bump. But possibly some of our wild friends had concerns. A trainer has been working with the ravens. The day following the quake female raven **Diego** behaved as usual. Males **Sam & Canyon** not so much. During training both the males seemed more skittish and anxious for several days.” Ditto with the foxes.

Word wide there are more than 13,000 quakes yearly with a magnitude of 4.0 or greater. Some scientists believe that given enough resources quakes can be reliably predicted. Many other scientists maintain that accurate quake predictability is inherently impossible.

## New Skunk Funk

The biggest skunk you will ever see, alliteratively named **Funk**, has a new home at the **Zoo Sanctuary**. He's a year old and raised by loving hands hence the excess weight which will disappear because he has been enrolled in a “diet transition with a slow weight loss program.”

## Drake Bully?

It's common for male members of the duck family to be what humans would (and do) designate as bullies. With the passing of handsome rooster **Feliks**, hens **Lotte &**

**Henny Penny** were harassed by duck neighbors and moved to a roomy enclosure at the back of the wolf-dog hybrid exhibit. One can assume that the hens are happy with the new arrangement and apparently OK with neighboring wolf dog hybrid **Kya** “welcoming them” with lots of long term barking sessions. Eventually the thrill was gone and all is quiet at the multi-animal exhibit area.

## Rattlesnakes Abound

As usual with warmer weather the Zoo deals with more than a few wild rattlesnakes. One theory is when temperatures rise, snakes come into the Zoo in search of water which is easily found in animal drinkers & pools.

Apparently protecting a **Docent** visiting pasture livestock, guarding dog **Annabelle** was engaged in some serious barking, focused on a space between stalls where a wild rat had created a cozy home – until a big rattlesnake stopped by for lunch. Since the snake had vanished the guard dogs were moved next door until one of the keepers spotted it and used a handy snake hook for removal. (It was released far away.)

The snake found near the rabbit and duck exhibits was 4-feet long. A 3-foot snake was found in the pasture, and let's count the snakes near the feral cat enclosure, by the bear exhibit storage shed and a really big snake (plus a small one) behind the cougar exhibit. All are back where they belong.

## New Hammocks

On a warm day **Eagle Scout Justin Bassett** along with family and friends wheel-barrowed hefty hand-crafted animal hammocks through the Zoo for installation. This was no easy job. The Scouts created heavy-duty firehose

into big hammocks that were installed in various exhibits. The results were excellent. In the late afternoon the only parts visitors could see of a tiger was her great long black and orange striped tail snapping up and down as she napped in the shade of her hammock. Young **Henry** was found stretched out to the max in his new hammock in the bear exhibit. Perhaps the most touching sight was big old bear **Sequoia** lying in obvious comfort on a low-rise “handicapped hammock” perfect for elderly, arthritic bears. Sincere thanks to Justin and fellow Scouts.

**Attendance: Lots of visitors, many in the morning before official nap-time for the little ones. The count? April 11,182 and May 11,799.**

### Hot Dogs

Weatherwise, it was a comfortable breezy June afternoon when a **Zoo Camp Counselor** with a thermometer in hand and a passle of **Zoo Camp Kids** took a hike up the the parking lot to check the temperature of her car. More than 90 degrees! Sadly, there was a dog shut up in a nearby truck. (See following chart.) An announcemet about the dog was made on the Zoo loudspeaker. Fortunately when a staffer checked, the vehicle and dog had departed. On this second day of camp kids received **My Dog Is Cool!** certificates: “I pledge to never leave dog’s name in a hot car!” Campers could fill in their own dog’s name or Zoo dogs **Annabelle** and **Marcus**.

<b>The Following Heat Chart Is Worth Reviewing            If You Spot A Hot Car With A Dog Inside And You            Want To Tape The Chart On Their Car            Window In The Parking Lot            (After Calling Animal Control) Go For It</b>		
<b>Outside Temp</b>	<b>Inside 10 min</b>	<b>Inside 30 min</b>
70/degrees	89 degrees	104 degrees
80 degrees	99 degrees	114 degrees
90 degrees	109 degrees	124 degrees
95 degrees	114 degrees	129 degrees

### Fledging

As in years past, a blackbird couple reused an existing nest that was tucked away in the tallest bush in the core Zoo area. Last year the babies seemed to be nearly fledged but for some mysterious reason they died in the nest. In the past, too, the blackbird parents dived at, and pecked passersby. This year no blackbird warning signs were necessary. It was all good, as long as humans

stayed in their own space. Until one of the nearly fledged chicks fell out of the nest. It was rescued by a Zoo staffer, who fortunately was wearing a visored hat when she gently picked up the little one and reached into the bush to restore it to the nest. Yes, blackbird parents really *are* aggressive and a hatless human would have an interesting story for an emergency care doctor. Over several days concerned visitors reported more downed babies for rescue. There was good news on Monday morning when at least two of the fledglings and possibly all three were discovered in nearby trees – vociferously demanding food from mom & dad.

### A Prairie Dog’s Job

With Zoo Campers in the Classroom ferrets **Cinnamon** & **August** and prairie dog **Holly** moved to the **Ops Building**. (Opossum **Orchid** remained with the kids.) On a early morning a passing friend stopped for a chat with Holly who came to the cage front for a little scratch and some sweet talk, but clearly she had work to do. The good-sized cage has four levels: two are full-size with a cutout for a narrow wire screen animal ramp to the next floor. Additionally there are two smaller shelves about the size of a **Life Magazine** if you remember those. Each level has attractions changed daily: colorful containers ( large, and small) filled with alfalfa, some with torn newspaper, plus a feeding bowl with greens and other goodies. Apparently Holly’s job-of-the-day was to gather mouthfuls of torn newspaper (top shelf) and run down to stuff it into a big blue high-sided container of alfalfa on level two. Once deposited, Holly bulldozed the alfalfa into piles replacing it with gobs of newspaper shreads (possibly creating a nest.)

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