

# KEEPING TRACK . FOLSOM CITY ZOO SANCTUARY

October – November 2011

## Sad Times

Found sick and malnourished in the wild in 2000 **Ventura** lived with a non-profit education organization before coming to the **Zoo Sanctuary** in 2001. Lacking the social graces that mother mountain lions teach their young he spent some time in a large enclosed “holding area” behind the exhibit so he could become acquainted with resident mountain lions under the watchful eyes of Zoo staff. When the day came for his introduction to the other big cats everyone was standing by with snares and water hoses in case of aggressive behavior and the Zoo veterinarian was on hand “just in case.” Ventura was released. The adult mountain lions were released. Humans held their collective breaths. The cats walked out, checked the surroundings, glanced at Ventura – and went about other business. Yes, there were some tactless lacks of judgment on young Ventura’s part, but ultimately there was peace and calm in the mountain lion exhibit.

On Tuesday, October 18 Ventura was unwell and continued to get worse after initial treatment of fluids and antibiotics for fever and dehydration. Throughout his life he had medical challenges and was able to pull through all of them. His condition this time was much worse and treatment options were limited. He was gently euthanized on October 20.

Over the years, Ventura became a wise mentor for youngsters **Rio**, **Flash** and newbie **Cedar**. The lucky humans who knew him were enlightened by his benevolence and kind heart. Visitors, staff and volunteers are saddened by his passing.

## Using Tools #1

A **Docent** returned from a lovely vacation at the **Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas** with a nice big canvas bag which is perfect for visits with African Gray parrot **Mesa**. It holds a big sheet so the Docent and Mesa can sit on the bottom of the cage and play with other stuff in the bag: a red & yellow plastic cat toy, a paperback book from which to remove pages with a sharp beak, another piece of sheet for hide-and-peek, a pop-up cat playhouse, etc. This is all Good. But what Mesa really wants to do in get inside the big bag and remove the zipper. Parrot beaks apparently are custom made for this job.

## Using Tools #2

Several weeks ago macaque **Wallace** acquired a nice rock that fit perfectly in his strong little hands. He nonchalantly tossed it hand-to-hand and thoughtfully rubbed it on his

lips but most of all he searched out depressions in the exhibit rocks where he would scrub it back and forth with the palm of his hand. Clearly, if he had grain he could make flour.

## Using Tools #3

A very nice Enrichment toy (purchased from a primate lab animal site) was attached inside the macaque night house. The heavy-duty white plastic box was perforated by angled holes that would hold treats. On the face of the box was a clear plastic “dial” that could be turned randomly to uncover the treat holes. Great toy. By the next morning it was completely dismantled. It will be reconstructed (if us humans can manage it) and redeployed *outside* the wire.

## Present Arms

Not every human is cool about having blood drawn from that nice big arm vein. Brave macaque **Wallace** is an enthusiastic participant for what will one day be a voluntary simian blood draw. A small piece of exhibit wire has been removed where a sturdy clear plastic tube “sleeve” approximately the diameter of a mustard jar lid hooks on. The monkey puts his arm into the sleeve and grasps a movable plastic dowel - which, cleverly, adjusts his arm enough to present the vein. This is where training comes in. Humans might falter. Not Wallace. Treats have encouraged him to permit the keeper to clean the arm with sterile water, to practice with an un-armed insulin needle as well as a “one-poke only” very short blunted needle, and he was unflinching when the area was shaved. When training ends enthusiastic, Wallace continues placing his little arm in the tube with hope of more treats. Since Wallace has seizures and will need to have on-going blood draws, in the future he and staff can do it the easy way.

## Voting For Cockroaches

Along with knowledgeable **Docent** handlers several of the Zoo’s outreach **Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches** paid a visit to Folsom’s newly opened **Whole Foods Market**. The male is about the size of your thumb and sports a very attractive shiny black-brown exoskeleton. He has antennae and six legs (of course) and not surprisingly, hisses when annoyed. The Hissing Cockroach Poll is as follows: Two-thirds of people who stopped by the table were interested but wouldn’t want one as a pet. Other customers totally backed away.

*Gromphadorhina portentosa* is one of the largest species of cockroach. The hiss takes three forms: the disturbance

hiss, the female-attracting hiss, and the fighting hiss used only by males to challenge other males. (And justifiably, little kids in **Zoo Summer Camp** classes.) Since cockroaches break down decaying plant and animal matter they're important *nutrient recyclers* in the forests of Madagascar which is one of the world's most endangered habitats due to slash and burn agriculture and mining activity.

### Hen Fight

Who knows why hens who have long shared lodging with each other and handsome rooster **Baby Girl's Baby** would suddenly have a falling out. But there was black hen **Lottie** missing all her tail feathers and **Henny Penny** was seen chasing and pecking her in a most unfriendly way. Lottie moved into a temporary big cage in the **Zoo Classroom** where it was observed that Lottie had been plucking her own feathers so after some days of R&R she returned to the exhibit under watchful eyes. An interesting sight was the newly re-feathering area that presented hundreds of not-yet-feathers encapsulated in shiny gray quill material.

### Amazing Zoo!

Sincere thanks to readers of **Style Magazine (El Dorado Hills and Folsom)** who voted **Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary #1 Favorite Kid's Activity and #2. Favorite Place To Volunteer.** Which brings to mind Zoo attendance. In October 2011 there were 8,291 visitors - nearly 2,000 more than last year at the same time. Who knows how many of them were introduced to the Zoo by Style Magazine?

### Phoebe & Fiona

New to the Zoo are rescued rouen (*roan*) ducks which originally developed in the Rouen area of France from local farm ducks. In 1800 they reached England and were "redesigned" keeping the coloration of wild mallards, but doubled in size. Originally raised for food (males can weigh 12 pounds) these not surprisingly flightless birds are show animals and well loved pets.

Originally named **Phoebe & Fiona** it's likely that Phoebe really is a Paul or Pete or something a tad more masculine. In defense of Zoo animal experts, handsome and colorful male rouen drakes will molt after breeding and re-feather with the more discrete colors of the female duck. We still are both gender confused and chagrined.

**Upcoming! Good Things At The Zoo Sanctuary**

**Holiday Shopping in the Gift Shop**

**Warming Treats at Fisher's Beastro**

### KIDS THANKSGIVING BREAK ZOOKEEPER CAMP

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,

Nov. 21 - Nov. 23 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ages 8 - 10 Fee \$198

**\$174 Folsom resident discount**

Learn hands-on what it's like to be a Zookeeper.

Participate in animal handling / animal grooming and cleanup. Make bear meals, create toys, and learn Good Stuff! Camps fill up quickly. Register now!

For information call 916-351-3527 or go to

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

### THANKSGIVING FEAST FOR THE ANIMALS!

Thursday, November 24 . 11 a.m.

A special tradition! Watch as Zoo animals receive festive Thanksgiving meals, including pumpkin pie!

**Regular Zoo Admission.**

### ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY FOR THE ANIMALS

Saturday, December 10 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Free Admission**

Celebrate the best of all animal parties! Santa will be on hand for Holiday Wishes and each animal will receive festively wrapped packages to open. Call 351-3527 to learn about the Animal Wish List or visit the Zoo at

[www.folsomzooofriends.org](http://www.folsomzooofriends.org)

Donate canned food for Twin Lakes Food Bank

### WILD NIGHTS & HOLIDAY LIGHTS!

Hours 5 to 8 p.m. on these December Dates!

Dec. 3 Dec. 8 to 10 Dec. 15 to 23

(depending on weather conditions)

Admission: \$5 per person

Free ages under 2

Thousands of sparkling LED lights!

Enchanted Forest of lighted/decorated trees!

Carolers & Refreshments!

Santa Claus and Our Very Own Santa Bear!

Ride Starlight Express mini-steam train!

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