

Winter 2004

White's Tree Frogs!

Photo courtesy of Lynn Dowling



To some, the names Sydney and Melbourne conjure up Australian metropolises. At the Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary Syd and Mel are White's tree frogs. They're former pets and live in the warm, humid Education Center animal room. Since all amphibians need fresh water to keep their porous skins moist, the zoo sanctuary takes extra care to provide bottled spring water for their shallow soaking pool, and keepers avoid soaps and disinfectants for frog habitat cleaning and hand washing.

Native to the wet parts of Australia, Indonesia and New Guinea, White's tree

frogs are nocturnal, sedentary and docile. If you're a frog, it's handy to have feet equipped with suction cups. They're good jumpers which is important for an animal that likes to eat insects like crickets and even small mice.

The amphibian group that includes frogs, toads, newts and salamanders are cold-blooded vertebrates that spend some time on land as adults but breed and develop in water. The Global Amphibian Assessment Group has just completed a 3-year study that shows that of the 5,747 known species of amphibians, 1,856 (32%) are threatened in their forest, stream and underground homes. By comparison, 12% of all bird species and 23% of all mammal species are threatened.

California leads the nation in amphibians in trouble, with 13 out of 54 species listed as threatened. In the Sierra, frogs imported for pet stores, laboratories or food and later "humanely" freed to the wild by well meaning, but misguided frog friends, are possible sources of a devastating fungal skin disease that is decimating native species. Worldwide, climate change, habitat loss and polluted water are taking an enormous toll of these fragile animals.

Other Education Animals



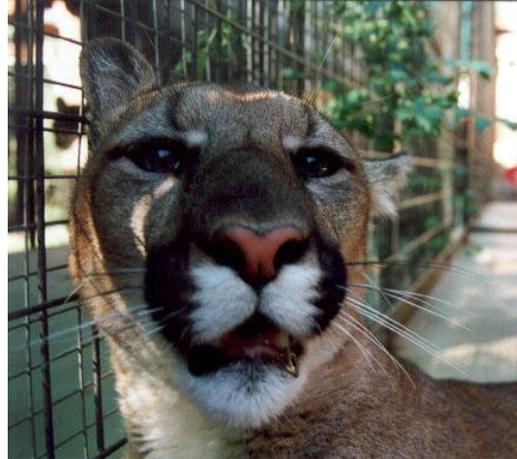
Photo courtesy of Lynn Dowling

Like all the animals at the zoo sanctuary, Education Animals represent their own kind to the public, both on site and on outreach presentations. On nice days, prehensile-tailed skink Solomon and African gray parrot Mesa spend warm, good air days out on exhibit near the front gate. Since snakes grow throughout their lives, rainbow boa Cleo and ball python Lucy are becoming - well - impressive. Barn owl Grayson is increasingly tricky about coming to the glove so that he can visit classrooms, but once there, he's a

champ! Great horned owl Aerial, a star in her own right, hops up on the falconer's glove dependably. (Did you know that Aerial's wild relatives commonly prey on skunks? At the zoo Aerial makes do with formerly frozen mice and TLC.)

Minds of Their Own

All cats have Attitude. And mountain lions are no exception. One of the daily routines is to ask the mountain lions to lock-up in the off-exhibit holding pens. Keepers theoretically make this easy by providing big bowls of raw meat. Mostly the cats move right in and chow down. But not always. Recently, at feeding time Bristlecone, Alder and Ventura moved in with great growls and snatched their bowls. (They're fed separately for obvious reasons.) Female Juniper and male Willow declined to participate. While a keeper in back enticingly called, another keeper checked in front and spotted Juniper standing in a den. Seeing that someone required her to "Do Something" she lay down! Not going to move, Willow way lying high up on the catwalk, tail drooping over the edge. Not going to move! The keepers decided to ignore the cats and began to wash down the back areas and rake outside the exhibit. Ultimately, having made their point Juniper and Willow ambled in for breakfast. With the exhibit cleaned and meals completed, the gate to the mountain lion exhibit was opened and the cats went out. Except Ventura. He planned to go out, but on the way his foot caught on one of the stainless steel feeding bowls and it rolled. Provocatively. That was enough for Ventura, he attacked the bowl, snarling, all claws out, formidable teeth bared. Fortunately he lost interest in the prey before there were holes in the bowl! *Photo courtesy of Kaye Banyard*



Holes In The Bowl

If you need a reason not to keep a tiger in your urban apartment consider their great strength. Misty and Pouncer have been able to tear great jagged holes in one of their bowls with their teeth and claws. A determined human would have trouble piercing the bowl with a sharp screwdriver and a hammer. For a tiger, no problem. Think of the mischief a house tiger could wreak in your happy home. Holes in the refrigerator. Cupboards. Bed. Floor. Ceiling. etc. Yet, people who keep track of such things tell us that there are at least 10,000 tigers in the United States - as pets! You've read about the problems, which most often end with the animal being moved from one inadequate situation to another, or euthanized.



Cooler weather seems to agree with Misty and Pouncer. Their enthusiastic athletic competitions of chase and wrestle-in-the-pool have increased. Visitors, thrilled by tiger games, don't seem to mind the water splashing out of the exhibit onto them. "Lucky you" one mom said to her wet - complaining - 7 year old girl. "You're the only kid you know with

tiger water in her hair."

Photo courtesy of Lynn Dowling

Stuffed

The little felids (zoo-speak for members of the cat family) bobcats Ono, Aiko and BJ are well. Aiko, the only female and decidedly strong-willed, spends a lot of time curled up in the hollow log. The space inside is just large enough for her to walk in and turn around before she lies down. Several



mornings recently visitors were treated to the sight of senior male BJ stuffed into the log with Aiko, lying on his back with his big rear feet sticking out! In Japanese, Aiko mean *love child*



Barking

Photo courtesy of Kaye Banyard

There are certain people that wolf dog hybrid Lincoln just doesn't trust. Mostly the humans in question are men and usually they're leaning on the fence staring at Lincoln or his roomie Wakara. Barking/warning ensues, which nearly always delights the watcher so much that he tends to lean longer and stare harder. Both Lincoln and Wakara are former pets. Just because a wolf dog hybrid looks like a dog doesn't mean that he will act like a dog. Increasingly, animal control agencies won't adopt out wolf-dog hybrids because of safety concerns and liability issues.

Feng Shui For Monkeys

In a zoo, furniture takes on a new meaning. For birds, it can be branches and perches. Furniture for a raccoon could be a log with a den hole in it. At the zoo sanctuary, squirrel monkeys Miquita, Monita, Tumaco and Orinoco have many matching sets of hammocks made by the loving hands of volunteer Linda Mueller. Keepers match up the red, white and blue striped hammocks with the blue towel with white stars as bedding in the suspended PVC pipe that provides a cozy sleeping den. And yes, there are no bad vibes because colors and designs are always coordinated. Sort of!

Squirrel Hammocks

Linda has made some spiffy hammocks for gray squirrels Peanut Brittle and Toothless too. When the squirrels are at rest, all visitors can see is a hump weighing down the hammock. Senior squirrel Bumpy is 10 years old. Because of a head injury when he fell out of his natal nest, Bumpy has always been a little wobbly and staff and volunteers make sure he has a lot of extra care to make him comfortable. There was a big scare recently when Bumpy was exhibiting symptoms of West Nile Virus. He was clearly ill, and dragging his



hind-quarters. Zoodoc Mira Sanchez prescribed steroids to reduce neurological symptoms and antibiotics to ward off opportunistic bacterial infections. Blood tests aren't back yet, but Bumpy, after a few sick days, is back to two meals a day and apparent good health. Unfortunately West Nile Virus is affecting wild squirrels in this

area, as well as crows, magpies, wild raptors like eagles, and unvaccinated horses.

Claudia

Keepers expressed concern that Rhesus macaque Claudia seemed unwell, so zoo leadworker Jill Giel presented Claudia with a travel crate with a handful of raisins inside. Claudia doesn't like the crate, but she really likes raisins. An all too-human dilemma. Claudia circled the crate, walking hunched and flat-footed as macaques tend to do. She vocalized "eee, eee, eee" which probably means "I hate this," and eventually, grudgingly, stepped into the crate for the raisins. Which she ate. Then Claudia settled down for the trip to the veterinary hospital. Her blood work was good, but x-rays showed an enlarged kidney, and the need for dental work. She's on a course of antibiotics (disguised in raisins) pending dental surgery.

Photo courtesy of Lynn Dowling

A Message From Zoo Sanctuary Superintendent Jocelyn Smeltzer . . .

Change is in the air. Visitors may have noticed some serious building in the ravine across from the aviaries where PBM Construction has begun work on the bridge that will eventually span the ravine, connecting the aviary side to the pasture side. Visitors will have an up close view of the existing pasture and feral pig exhibits, and ultimately the wolves, wolf-dog hybrids and coyotes in the large new hillside Canid Exhibits.

The energetic folks who work and volunteer at the zoo are acquiring some new spaces as well. Work will begin soon on Phase One of the Zoo Operations Center that will include a new and larger kitchen, walk-in refrigerator, walk-in freezer and dry storage area, records room, break area, mud room, safety equipment storage, restroom and locker room. The additional space the zoo operations center provides will help staff and volunteers take the best care possible of our animals.

Ops Phase One will require movement of some of our current exhibits. These animals will be relocated and "move up" to new, larger, improved spaces. Join me for a virtual tour: owls Grayson and Aerial in due course will move to new exhibits between the cougars and bears, and since both are nocturnal they'll benefit from being in a forested, darker portion of the zoo. The squirrel monkeys will move to a new home next to the macaque exhibit, and the ferrets will take up residence near the eagles.

As always, small exhibits will be constructed via donations and volunteer labor (wonderful zoo volunteers, Eagle scouts, etc.) whenever possible. Our larger construction is possible because of contributions to the Zoo Trust Fund, Friends of the Folsom Zoo, the Bosack/Kruger Charitable Foundation, and the remainder of a grant from the State Park Bond Act of 2000.