

An insider's view of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

My ZOO

WINTER 2024

Magazine

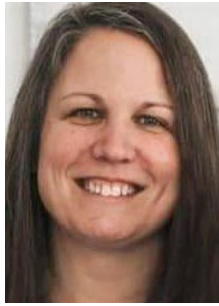


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A Message from the Friends Executive Director

It is hard to believe we are already in the early days of 2024, given how busy and fruitful this past year has been. To follow

up on a great year, the Friends have plans for an incredibly exciting new year here at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo!

First, we are delighted to announce the acquisition of some truly awesome animals, such as red-bellied piranhas now on exhibit in the USS Antiquities cave. A new male Hoffmann's two-toed sloth named Foley will join our females on exhibit in the Nocturnal Animals Wing, while female Amur leopard Iona will join male Rafferty on exhibit in the Amur Leopard Woodland. These animal arrivals represent our steadfast support of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) growing Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) initiative.

Our jam-packed event schedule has a ton of fun lined up for this season. Our Zoo Run Run on April 14 is coming up fast, so build your team and start training to run with the pack – or as a lone wolf! Spring also brings our annual golf tournament Tee-Off FORE the Animals as well as family favorites like Breakfast with the Bunny, Easter Brunch, LGBTQ+ Day, Senior Citizens Appreciation Day, and much more.

The Friends are also excited to bring you the sensational new seasonal exhibit, Dragons Reign! These magnificent mythical animatronic creatures will take dominion over the zoo from Memorial Day through Halloween! Read more about dragons in our feature story beginning on page 3. If you haven't renewed your membership yet, now is the time!

We're in the Snow Leopard Days of winter, when many species (such as our leopards, wolves, red pandas) become more active. Visitors can enjoy reduced admission through the months of January and February, so tell your friends and come enjoy the winter weather alongside some cold-acclimated creatures!

We have so much in store for you this year and we can't wait to create even more memories with our beloved zoo community.

Excited for 2024,

Carrie Large

Carrie Large
Executive Director, Friends of the Zoo

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Please direct questions regarding this publication to editor@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

ON THE COVER:
The "Ice Dragon" photo by Dino Don and the Komodo dragon Naga photo by Camille Murphy



Dragons!

2024

ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO

Dragons to Reign over the Rosamond Gifford Zoo this Summer and Fall!

Legend has it that when this year's solar eclipse blots out the sun on April 8, the cold shadows will awaken the draconic denizens of an ancient age, who will soar the skies and descend on the zoo to take rule!

The dragons will begin their reign on Memorial Day weekend, and will rule over the zoo through Halloween. Varying in size from five to twenty feet tall, the ten animatronic dragons will claim their territory throughout the zoo grounds.

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The Rosamond Gifford Zoo One Conservation Place, Syracuse, NY 13204 is owned and operated by Onondaga County. Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing a level of excellence that makes the Rosamond Gifford Zoo a national leader in animal care, conservation and visitor experience.

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A Word from the Board

I grew up visiting the zoo frequently and watching Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom every Sunday. When I had the chance to join the Board in 2011, I was thrilled! The more I learn and the progress and growth that I've seen over the last 20 years has been incredible! It's been amazing to be a part of it all, especially learning about the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the Species Survival Program (SSP) and how they are helping species that are endangered to come back from the brink of extinction.

Al Gough
Friends of the Zoo Board Member



ANIMAL UPDATES

Did You Know?

Baby scorpions are called scorpplings. At just over two inches long, adult Hentz striped scorpions aren't much bigger than babies of other scorpion species, but they sure pack a potent punch! These scorpions aren't lethal, but their venom is strong enough to cause serious pain for hours after a strike. This species is common throughout Florida and considered a pest, but this pest does pest control, too – because Hentz striped scorpions love to eat cockroaches!



Pictured left: A Hentz striped scorppling; Right: an adult scorpion.

CREATURE FEATURE: RED-BELLIED PIRANHA



Ten giant African millipedes were sent to the Utica Zoo on September 13.

Eight northern lined seahorses were sent to the Odysea Aquarium on October 11.

A female Von der Decken's hornbill was sent to the Buffalo Zoo on October 19.

Thirteen Florida scorpions arrived on October 26.

A female Von der Decken's hornbill was sent to the North Carolina Zoo on November 2.

Two male Von der Decken's hornbills were sent to the Albuquerque Biopark on November 8.

Female red panda Simone was sent to the Sunset Zoo on November 14.

Male Black Welsh Mountain sheep Bryson arrived on November 15.

Female red river hog Zena arrived from the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo on December 2.

Male Hoffmann's two-toed sloth Foley arrived from the Pueblo Zoo on December 4.

Female Amur leopard Iona arrived from the Niabi Zoo on December 8.

Female red panda Raji was sent to the Seneca Park Zoo on December 9.

Fun Fact:

The word "piranha" comes from the Tupi, an ancient culture indigenous to Brazil. Piranha is composed of the Tupi words "pirá," meaning fish, and "sainha," meaning tooth.

Arrival of the Amazon!

A school of red-bellied piranha has taken up residence in the USS Antiquities cave!

The school came to the zoo last summer and spent the fall acclimating to their new home.

These omnivorous fish hail from the Amazon River Basin and the freshwaters of northern South America. Red-bellied piranhas are small fish that typically grow to six to eight inches and feature silvery scales with a bright red underbelly. There are more than 20 species of piranha that vary in color and pattern. These fish are infamous for their sharp, triangular teeth used for their varied diet – which may include meat (or flesh).

Piranhas are freshwater fish known for their aggressive appetites, as they eat other fish and sometimes resort to cannibalism if food is scarce. Like sharks, they have an incredible sensitivity to the scent of blood in the water and can race into a frenzy when they smell it. However, piranhas are misjudged for their natural wild instincts.

Despite their scary flesh-eating reputation, piranhas are actually pretty timid. In the wild, they will travel in schools of 20-100 individuals to protect themselves from larger predators. Humans are more of a threat to piranhas than they are to us since piranha is often fished for South American delicacies. Usually, piranha bites only occur when fishers are trying to pull the fish off the hook.

Piranhas have unique omnivorous diets for fish. They eat insects, fish, snails, worms, and will eat larger animals (like birds or small mammals) if they die and fall in the water. Piranhas will sometimes eat seeds, fruit and various plants if food is scarce.

You can see our school of red-bellied piranha swirling around in their tank exhibit inside the USS Antiquities Cave.

A special thanks to Sam and Carol Nappi who gifted the Fish of the Amazon exhibit to the zoo!



Meet Foley!

The Nocturnal Animals wing has welcomed a new male Hoffmann's two-toed sloth named Foley. He arrived December 4 from the Pueblo Zoo, on a breeding recommendation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) for this species.

This suitor sloth joins our five female sloths Emma, Gummy, Basil, Cayenne, and Ruth on exhibit. This mirrors the social structure of this species in the wild; male sloths will often form and lead small groups, (or harems) of female sloths.

Hoffmann's two-toed sloths live in tree canopies of lowland and upland tropical forests of Central America and South America, including Peru and Brazil. Being arboreal (tree-dwelling), sloths eat, sleep, mate and give birth while suspended from tree limbs – only venturing down to the ground about once a week to relieve themselves. These Central American tree-dwellers have a very low metabolism and spend up to 20 hours per day sleeping. Foley will be on exhibit soon! Follow our social media for updates.

Photo courtesy of Pueblo Zoo



DRAGONS TO REIGN OVER ROSAMOND GIFFORD ZOO *continued from pg. 3*

Dragon mythology of some sort is prevalent in cultures past and present around the world, and these dragon installations reflect both the commonality and diversity of different global cultures. For example, a Chinese Dragon pays homage to the Zodiac calendar, a pterodactyl-like species called a Queztacóatl references Mesoamerican myths and folklore, and a Manticore dragon draws on Persian legends.

Some of the dragons even display interactive features, such as a fire-breathing dragon and a Friendly Dragon that reads poetry.

“While taking care of real-life animals is our biggest priority at the zoo, these replicas of imaginary creatures open the door for cultural learning,” said Carrie Large, executive director of Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. “Our dragon installations will inspire the imaginations of visitors young and old, and the funds they generate will eventually help us pursue our conservation mission for the living animals in our care.”



With a solar eclipse, a leap year, and the year of the dragon on the Zodiac calendar, 2024 promises to be a novel year – and all this intrigue will combine for an unprecedented experience at the zoo that will have guests visiting time and time again!

Don't miss a beat. Make sure to check out the zoo's website for regular updates on Dragons Reign! events and programming.



Siamang Love Songs: Understanding Siamang Ape Vocalizations

When you really love someone, sometimes you just want to shout it to the whole world!

For siamang apes, vocalization is just part of the morning routine. These long-armed primates, native to the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia, use song to establish a bond and denote their territory to other siamang ape pairs. This species forms monogamous couples that typically stick together their entire lives, and each couple creates a completely unique song together.

“While many of the species in our care – such as blue cranes, elephants, and red wolves – exhibit various mating and courting behaviors, there’s nothing quite as special as hearing our siamangs’ song emanating through the morning sky from atop their lofty perches in Primate Park,” Zoo Executive Director Ted Fox said.

Like a frog, each ape inflates the skin sack on their throat, which swells until it looks like a beach ball. Then, the male and female siamangs perform their unique duet for all to hear. Indeed, the song of the siamangs can be heard from up to five miles away!

For siamang apes, songs play an important role in establishing territory and warning other apes of predators, and the creation of the song is just as interesting as the song itself. Each siamang uses parts of the song which its parents sang and marries it with its partners’ parents’ song. Unlike many other ape species, siamang fathers play a large role in child-rearing. So, siamangs grow up hearing their parents’ song each day – and these unique notes become something of an aural heritage for siamang offspring. Like a puppy watching and hearing elder dogs howl and joining in with its own shrill call, baby siamangs will inflate their little throats and imitate their parents’ vocalizations.

“In coordination with other AZA-accredited institutions, we contribute to and oversee multiple species studbooks, which record the genealogy of each animal in our care to preserve the genetic diversity,” Fox said. “But the siamangs themselves, through their unique songs, create and maintain what is essentially a sonic genealogy of their own family tree.” The Rosamond Gifford Zoo’s male siamang ape, Abe, has been put in the unusual circumstance of creating not one, not two, but three love songs.

Abe’s mate of ten years, Amy, passed away in late 2016. This was the second partner that Abe outlived – and his care team knew they needed to find him another companion quick. Luckily, the zoo coordinated with AZA institutions to find Abe a new partner. The zoo examined the AZA’s Species Survival Program (SSP) for siamang apes, and eventually determined that the best companion for Abe was Fatima, a 34-year-old siamang ape living in Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas.



After the siamang care team began preliminary introductions, it was immediately clear that Abe and Fatima had a connection. Once they had developed their own inimitable love song, it was official – these siamangs were going steady! The pair has lived happily together since 2017, alternating between Primate Park and their habitat in the Social Animals Building. While they haven’t produced any babies together, Abe has sired several children with his previous mates.

In fact, one of Abe’s kids made headlines in 2017, when the siamang apes of the Dickerson Park Zoo (including Abe’s daughter Makali) were the subject of media attention after zoo-goers observed their reaction to the solar eclipse on August 21 of that year. As siamang apes typically perform their duets at sunrise, and sometimes at sunset, visitors were interested to see how the apes would respond to the unexpected shadow. Siamang pair Makali and Lucu didn’t just observe the eclipse – they responded accordingly by erupting into their song.

Abe and Fatima have never before observed a solar eclipse, so the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is brimming with excitement to see how our own long-armed love singers respond to this extraordinary cosmic event! Will Abe take after his daughter Makali and begin to sing?

Visit the zoo on April 8 to celebrate the eclipse with us and watch animals like Abe and Fatima (and plenty of others) react to the phenomenon! Glasses will be available in the gift shop for safely viewing the eclipse.

DID YOU KNOW? A siamang ape duet can be heard from up to five miles away!



Celebrating a Star: Remembering Ashley Sheppard

On November 26, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo hosted a celebration of life for our cherished colleague Ashley Sheppard, who passed away on October 29. Ashley was a collection manager and conservationist who dedicated more than 15 years of her life working at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo. Both a brilliant animal specialist and an eager educator, Sheppard had a knack for translating the scientific ins and outs of her job into terms that could inform and inspire her community.

Sheppard's passion for elephants saw her complete substantial research on Asian elephants during her tenure at the zoo, and even took her to India and Thailand to experience elephants right in their range countries. As the first female elephant manager at the zoo, Ashley worked extensively with our Asian elephant herd.

She was one of just two people present for the birth of the second miracle elephant twin, Tukada, and was vital in saving the little calf's life.

The Celebration of Life event was hosted in the zoo's banquet room on November 26, and hundreds of friends, family, coworkers, and loved ones came out to pay respects to a woman who dedicated her life to conservation. Elephant conservationists from around the nation, and from further abroad, journeyed to the zoo to recognize Ashley. The event showcased just how important she was to our local community and beyond.

Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon issued a proclamation honoring Ashley for her dedication and service to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and the Central New York community.

A silent auction raised nearly \$25,000 in funds for the zoo's Asian elephants – continuing her contribution to the herd she so deeply cared for. In addition, Friends of the Zoo installed a bench in her honor at the Elephant Overlook as an enduring tribute.

Ashley will be remembered for the dedication and zeal with which she approached her work – but beyond all her incredible contributions to conservation, we will remember the truly irreplaceable glow she brought each day to our zoo. We are so grateful to have been able to call her a friend and a colleague.

Eletwin Update



The Eletwins turned one on October 24, marking one year of double trouble and tons of fun in the Asian Elephant Preserve. These little elephants aren't so little anymore – in fact, both Yaad and Tukada have gained more than 1,000 pounds from their birthweight! Of course, the twins minds are expanding, too, through training sessions, engagement with new enrichment items, and learning from the elders of the herd!

During the winter months the twins will be viewable inside or outside daily, weather dependent, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

In the meantime, make sure to follow the Official Eletwin Fan Club on Facebook to stay tuned on any and all Eletwin updates!



Wish List

Elephants:

Jelly beans
Peanut Butter
Marshmallows

Carnivores:

Spices
Canned Tuna

Penguin Coast:

Hand soaps from
Bath and Body Works

Hoofstock:

Perfume pack

Indoor/Outdoor Birds:

Ryobi drill, impact driver, pruning saw, string trimmer, cultivator, cordless circular saw, mower

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is thankful for your contributions and always appreciative of enrichment items for the animals under our care. Items can be delivered to the membership desk during zoo hours.

If you have any questions, please contact our philanthropy office at (315) 435-8511 x8534 or grapasadi@rosamondgiffordzoo.org

Friends of the Zoo Announces New Director of Marketing and Communications

The Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo welcomes Andrew Brazill as its new director of marketing and communications.

Brazill is a seasoned media professional with a passion for storytelling. He will oversee the zoo's marketing and communications efforts, building on the zoo's strong reputation and expanding its reach to new audiences. Brazill is passionate about the conservation mission of the organization and its significant role as a community resource. Brazill succeeds outgoing director Maria Simmons, who served in that role for 15 years.

"Maria Simmons has been transformative in this role for a decade and a half, and Andrew Brazill is the perfect person to build on her work. We are excited to see Andrew continue to tell the story of the zoo and connect people to our mission," said Carrie Large, executive director of the Friends of the Zoo.

A lifelong CNY resident, Brazill lives in Liverpool with his wife and two sons. He brings a wealth of experience and media prowess to the zoo, having worked in various leadership positions across the marketing industry in CNY for more than a decade. Brazill will utilize immersive technology to enhance the guest experience, and plans to elevate the zoo's marketing efforts while preserving its rich history and ensuring its continued growth for future generations.



"The zoo is an important institution in our community, and I am excited to explore new approaches to amplify the exceptional stewardship that our animal care team performs day in and day out," Brazill said. "In this role, I can help preserve this wonderful resource for generations to come." - Andrew Brazill

Zoo Executive Director Joins International Elephant Foundation Board



As the year drew to a close, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo achieved one more milestone for Asian elephant conservation – Zoo Executive Director Ted Fox joined the Board of Directors of the International Elephant Foundation (IEF). As a member of the IEF board, Fox will provide insight and support to the organization's extensive conservation efforts.

The IEF is a global leader in elephant conservation, coordinating and uniting the work of research institutions, sanctuaries and preserves, zoos, anti-poaching patrols, and more to reverse the negative population trends of wild elephants and secure a future for these incredible creatures.

"It is an honor to become a member of this organization, which coordinates global conservation work for elephants in their range countries," Fox said. "In this position, I can share the lessons, insights, and research unique to our institution – such as the vital research we are conducting in pursuit of a vaccine for Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes Virus (EEHV). This is a great way to amplify the conservation work we are already doing at our zoo, while bolstering global conservation efforts to protect all three elephant species."

Fox looks forward to participating in the IEF's work, as well as hosting events and fundraisers to educate on and support the IEF's mission, in the new year.

Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon said, "Under the leadership of Ted Fox, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo continues to be one of the premier zoos in the country. The fact that the IEF has offered Fox this prestigious position on their board of directors demonstrates just how prominent he is in the international conservation community and the tremendous job he and his team do every day." County Executive Ryan McMahon continued, "This global recognition by a leading conservation group is just another recognition of Ted's exemplary dedication and illustrates that our zoo is in the best of hands."



Documenting the Andean Bears of Machu Picchu

Conservation Society's New Strategy: Camera-Trapping Andean Bears!

In the summer of 2023, a team of scientists and conservationists geared up for an expedition with the goal of studying the living residents of an ancient empire. The team wasn't studying a human population, though – their focus was the Andean bears of Machu Picchu!

Spectacle Bear Conservation Society (SBC) – a Peruvian non-profit organization dedicated to protecting bears and their habitat – planned and led the journey into the historic park with support from the Peruvian government. Comprised of SBC members, Machu Picchu's park guards, volunteers, and porters, the 26-person team embarked on a three-week expedition to deploy camera traps across the park and start collecting vital data on bear ecology, health and habitat use. Current scientific data is needed to understand how bears may be impacted by threats like increasing tourism pressure and forest fires – and these conclusions will help the Peruvian government identify effective conservation actions. It is also important to understand how bears may be using habitat outside the park.

SBC's long-term goal is collaborating with the Peruvian government and local communities to create a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Biosphere Reserve protecting 1.5 million acres of land surrounding the Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary.

"Since bears require large habitat areas to thrive, by leading with bear conservation, we can protect entire ecosystems and vast areas of biodiversity," a representative of SBC said. "This expedition was the critical first step."

Though the famed Inca Trail (which crosses this historic region) is just 25 miles long, the Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary spans 125 square miles when accounting for massive elevation gains and drops across the Andes Mountain range. It may be tough going for humans, but the terrain is perfect for Andean bears – also called 'spectacled bears' due to their facial fur patterns that resemble glasses. This is the most arboreal of all bear species, and they love a good climb. In fact, Andean bears are also quite crafty, and are known for constructing "nests" in tree canopies.

*Photo courtesy of
Michell León / SBC*



So, the steep elevations of Machu Picchu may be fitting for an Andean bear – but for humans to journey where bears are most comfortable, bushwhacking and climbing were essential. On top of that, the logistics of transporting more than 1,000 pounds of food, gear and supplies proved added more complexity to an already daunting challenge. "The terrain itself was very challenging, with route-finding and long hiking days across steep mountains and ridges and into very dense forests. We encountered massive elevation gains, hiking up to 16,000 feet above sea level in some areas," SBC said. "Coming from field work in the hot and arid forest ecosystem in northern Peru, it was also the first time that many of our team members experienced high elevation, very cold temperatures and frost on their tents."

But teamwork and a shared love for Andean bears made the journey a success. SBC Founder Robyn Appleton and Executive Director Alexander More led the expedition, though many others stepped into leadership roles wherever necessary. The team split into four separate groups to get more than 200 camera traps installed over such a large area. Machu Picchu's park guards were also an essential part of the team, providing extensive field experience, local knowledge, and a strong passion for protecting nature. Through all the challenges of this unprecedented journey, team members displayed determination and enthusiasm to protect this incredible species dwelling in an iconic, historical region.

"The most rewarding part of this experience was knowing that with every step through the incredible ecosystems of Machu Picchu, we were expanding our impact for bears and biodiversity in Peru," the SBC said.

While globally-renowned, Machu Picchu is also a source of great local pride and Andean bears are a beloved species in Peru, so SBC is seeing local support for this important work. Indigenous communities have lived alongside Andean bears in the Machu Picchu region for generations, and they are very interested in the project as well. SBC prioritizes community partnerships because empowered communities play a direct role in local conservation decisions and management. Improving community well-being – through conservation education, training and alternative economic opportunities – is key to long-term conservation success.

SBC returned to retrieve their camera traps in October and are in the process of analyzing the data. The camera trap expedition was the first phase of a larger plan; the next phase of the project, set to begin in 2024, will focus on collaring Andean bears. The purpose of the GPS collars is to see if Andean bears travel to any unprotected habitat outside of the Machu Picchu Historic Sanctuary, so SBC and the Peruvian government can coordinate protection of these areas as well.

We at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo proudly care for our fan-favorite Andean bear Bjorn and are so grateful to know that there are dedicated conservationists out there protecting all of Bjorn's wild counterparts! We can't wait to see what insights SBC produces with the next phase of their project!

Visit www.sbc-peru.org to learn more about SBC's work to protect Andean bears in Peru.



Conservation Fuels a Carnivore Comeback

Multiple Felid Species Expanding Their Ranges, Populations in Native Countries

Thanks to the conservation efforts of governments and activists, multiple iconic species are returning to their ancestral hunting grounds which humans had previously encroached on.

The Amur leopard and Amur tiger have each increased their range, a remarkable phenomenon; for virtually every species on the planet, ranges are diminishing because of climate change and human development. So, when several of the rarest species in the world are actually increasing their range, it's a big deal.

First and foremost, the news of the Amur leopard's range resurgence is truly incredible, given how near this species has come to extinction. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) declared the Amur leopard critically endangered, with only 60-80 estimated to exist in the wild, and about 200 living in human care.

Russia and China, the range countries of Amur felid species, began to take measures to preserve these cats from extinction. After steady advocacy from World Wildlife Fund and other conservation organizations, the Russian government created in 2012 the Land of the Leopard National Park in Siberia. Thanks in large part to the designation of the park, Amur leopard range has expanded to 2,350 miles, (about the width of the United States), almost triple the species' 860-mile range just two decades prior.

The development of Amur tiger range is less dramatic, but nonetheless still positive. While there isn't as much concrete data supporting the expansion of Amur tiger range, watchdogs of the species have observed the tigers branching into their ancestral hunting grounds, regions their forebears were previously forced to abandon due to human-wildlife conflict. Progress with this species has been more gradual, but it is a burgeoning success story for the Chinese government.

After economic development in the 1980's and 1990's saw the wild Amur tiger population of China fall to about 12 individuals, decades of concerted efforts to protect this species and its forest habitats has resulted in a rising population and growing range. With 50 tigers now living in the Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park (established in 2021) and rising populations of prey species such as deer and wild boar, conservationists have high hopes for the resurgence of this iconic animal, the largest felid species in the world.

Next, a recent survey revealed that, in just six years, snow leopard population in Bhutan has increased by nearly 40%. The snow leopard's situation is not as dire as the Amur leopard's, but the species has been classified as vulnerable by the IUCN, and conservationists have long speculated that the population will face greater challenges in the future as human development and climate change reduce range and prey species while increasing human-wildlife conflict. The survey results out of Bhutan are not only surprising, but incredibly encouraging for conservation efforts in the so-called "Third Pole" of the Himalayas. Meanwhile, the president of Kyrgyzstan reiterated his country's unwavering commitment to conservation, and called for even greater collaboration between snow leopard range countries.

Here in the Americas, conservationists have observed male jaguars crossing the US-Mexican border and entering their ancestral hunting grounds in New Mexico and Arizona – and jaguar advocates are working to secure a protected habitat for these once-natives of the Southwest. These two states house some of the greatest biodiversity in North America, supporting tens of thousands of plant and animal species. A 2021 study determined that this range has enough space and resources to support more than 100 jaguars, and activists are fighting to help this apex species return to the northern extents of its original range.

These developments prove the power that humanity has to stand in the way of extinction for these amazing animals, and underscore the need for continued conservation efforts.



2023 Events Recap



Presented by M&T Bank

The Fall Conservation Bash, presented by M&T Bank, was a celebration of all the momentous conservation achievements throughout the year – and boy, was there a whole lot to be proud of!

First and foremost, we had to celebrate a conservation milestone never before accomplished: the successful birth of the miracle Asian elephant twins Yaad and Tukada! In the year since they were born, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's elephant care team has learned so much from these unique brothers.

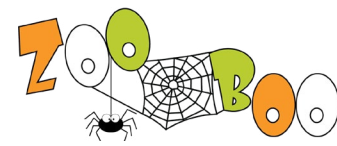
Other conservation achievements include the temporary acquisition of koalas Kolet and Kumiri from San Diego Zoo; construction of birdhouses during Party for the Planet; the birth of twin Amur tiger cubs, Coba and Zuzaan, to mother Zeya and father Thimbu in April; and the emergency incubation of ex situ endangered piping plover eggs.

Held on Friday, September 22, the Conservation Bash was an outdoor dining experience hosted in the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's courtyard. The ticketed dinner featured a delectable, themed cuisine, an open bar sponsored by Tito's Handmade Vodka, and conservation messaging explaining and celebrating the zoo's various conservation achievements throughout the past year.

Finally, the Gifford Foundation Raffle and Auction helped generate funds for future conservation work! Prizes ranged from custom animal artwork, to sports memorabilia, to gift baskets, and more! On top of that, the Friends raffled off a pair of half-karat earrings (donated by Hayden Jewelers), and 49 pairs of cubic zirconia earrings indistinguishable from the real pair.

In all, 134 guests came out to enjoy this fantastic food experience while reflecting on the many milestones met in the past year, raising more than \$43,000 in the process. Here's to another year of conservation accomplishments!

The Fall Conservation Bash celebrated previous work while raising funds for future conservation efforts. Thanks so much to our sponsors M&T Bank, C&S Companies, The Gifford Foundation, Hayden Jewelers, Visual Technologies, Triad Foundation, Tito's Handmade Vodka, and BPRK for making this possible.

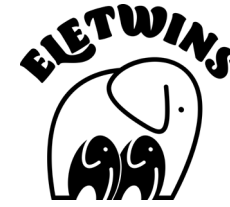


The fan-favorite Zoo Boo weekend series returned this year for another kooky-not-spooky Halloween season, and saw great engagement from our community. Over six weekend days in October, more than 3,400 guests visited our grounds to see

the terrifyingly-terrific transformation of our zoo grounds into a Halloween haunt! As always, the Wildlife Trail became the Spooky Stroll, coming alive with all sorts of monstrous decorations and insane installations. With 24 keeper talks, 13 treat stations, a crafts station, a selfie station, and a new prize wheel station, guests young and old had plenty of chances to find some fun. This year, our treat stations created an opportunity to highlight our conservation message, as we could advertise about the adverse effects of purchasing products which use palm oil, a near ubiquitous product that nonetheless is causing disastrous deforestation when farmed unsustainably throughout the world.

Thanks to more than 200 volunteers donating more than 600 hours of service, this year's Zoo Boo made for a monster month to remember! 3,400 guests attended Zoo Boo, generating nearly \$32,000 for our conservation mission.

As always, Zoo Boo was a success – but we couldn't have done it without the help of Community Bank, NA, Girl Scout Troup 60500, Matthews Auto, New York Life, Syracuse Orthopedic Specialists, and Tops Friendly Markets.



Hundreds of Eletwin fans Gather to Celebrate First Birthday!

A storm couldn't stop the fun on Sunday, October 22, when 987 visitors joined us at the Asian Elephant Overlook to celebrate the first birthday of our miracle elephant twins Yaad and Tukada!

Through a truly torrential downpour, our loyal guests looked on as the one-of-a-kind twins, together with their herd, "opened" their birthday gifts and devoured their birthday "cake" (made of the twins' favorite fruits, vegetables, and marshmallows).

And while it may have rained on Yaad and Tukada's parade, we appreciate the visitors who braved the elements to show these extraordinary calves just how special they are!



Holiday Nights returned for the third year, bringing festive lights, drinks, and entertainment to the zoo after-hours.

This year saw some of the highest attendance ever for Holiday Nights, and for good reason. Thanks to Friends of the Zoo staff and volunteers, we were able to install more than 10,000 lights throughout the zoo. In addition, P-Tech students from the city school district installed two of their own light displays. With more than 15 craft vendors, entertainment, Santa, ice carving demonstrations, S'mores, and more, there was something for everybody at this Holiday hootenanny. New this year, an expanded Holiday Market, plus adult beverages (such as a Bailey's spiked hot cocoa), offered even more to experience.

Holiday Nights wouldn't have been possible without the help of our volunteers. In all, 97 volunteers committed more than 600 hours of service to make this event a success. The event series broke multiple attendance records, bringing in 1,849 guests on Saturday, December 9 and 2,084 guests on December 16. Throughout the six evenings of Holiday Nights, more than 7,300 visitors explored our festive zoo grounds and enjoyed this special, nocturnal zoo experience!

Holiday Nights generated just under \$75,000 in revenue to support future conservation.

We're so thankful for the help of our generous sponsors Amazon, Alzheimer's Association, Bankers Life Conesco, Berkshire Bank Foundation, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, Tops Friendly Markets, and Wegmans.



The kid-friendly Noon Year's Eve event returned on the last day of 2023, and more than 2,500 guests joined us to ring in the "noon" year!

The first 1,000 attendees received free party hats, and a selfie station in the Banquet room gave guests the chance to photograph their fun! As the day neared noon, guests gathered at the digital countdown clock (donated by Leone Timing) in the main lobby and our zoo family shared cheer with a complimentary sparkling cider toast!

There was no better way to head into the new year than surrounded by community members of all ages, joined together in hope for another wonderful year.

Special thanks to Tops Friendly Markets for their sponsorship!



2024 Save the Dates



Breakfast with the Bunny
Sundays, March 10, 17, 24

Easter Brunch – Sunday, March 31

Members will have advance registration!
Check our social media and website for updates.



Zoo Run Run – Sunday, April 14

Get out and get moving on behalf of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo with our 5K zoo run! Walk or run – all levels are welcome. Build your team and support the zoo's mission.



Novelis Party for the Planet – Saturday, April 20

Our annual Earth Day celebration brings dozens of conservation groups and thousands of visitors to the zoo to spotlight nature conservation and saving species. Our Conservation Stations and Eco-partners offer fun activities, giveaways and tips on how we can all help protect our planet.



LGBTQ+ Family Day of Visibility
Sunday, May 5

Join us for a special day celebrating the rainbow of families in our community! Enjoy special keeper talks, exhibitors, entertainment, activities and much more!



Senior Citizen's Appreciation Day
Presented by Hills Insurance Service, LLC
Wednesday, May 8 | 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Join us for a special morning open house at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo created especially for senior citizens (62+)! Seniors enjoy free zoo admission till noon, complimentary continental breakfast from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., special keeper talks, and access to senior-specific exhibitors. Tour the zoo and walk around the zoo's scenic Wildlife Trail.
Registration required.



Mother's Day Brunch – Sunday, May 12

We invite you to join us for a wildly unique Mother's Day Brunch.
Members will have advance registration!



Tee Off FORE the Animals
Charity Golf Tournament – Monday, June 24

Spend a late-spring day playing golf for a very worthy cause on one of the most coveted golf courses in the state of New York – the elegant and historic Bellevue Country Club. This Captain-and-Crew tournament features breakfast on the cart, lunch on the course and a post-tournament dinner in the luxurious clubhouse, as well as on-course contests, animal greeters and 18 holes of championship golf.

These and many more events await you in the upcoming months. Best of all, these events help support the zoo's mission of animal care, conservation and nature education.



Scan the QR Code for all event information or visit, rosamondgiffordzoo.org/events



A ticket to the Gourmet Dinner series has fast become a hot commodity!

Throughout 2023, this unique dining experience was a consistent sell-out. The dinner series features a different theme each month, inspired by the various cuisines of our animals' range countries. The series brings in guests from all around Central New York, many of whom have become regulars at the dinners. The best part is that educational messaging accompanies all the delectable dishes, and guests can find even more enjoyment in the knowledge that their presence at the dinner is benefiting animal conservation.

2024 Dinner Pairings

Andean Bear – Friday, February 9

Penguins – Friday, March 8

Heritage Chickens – Friday, April 12

Harris Hawk – Friday, May 10

Flamingos – Monday, June 10

Amur Tigers and Amur Leopards – Friday, July 12

Asian Elephants – Friday, August 9

Bees and Pollinators – Friday, September 13

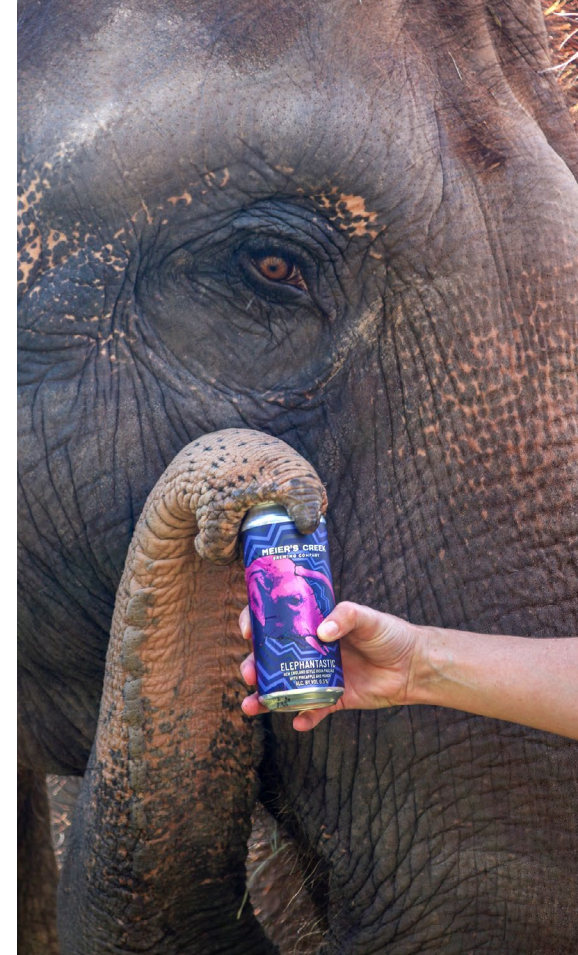
Dragons – Friday, October 11

Friendsgiving – Friday, November 8

Enrichment – Friday, December 13



* Schedule subject to change. Must be at least 21 years old to attend.



Zoo Conservation Collaboration with Meier's Creek Earns Award!

The Elephant Managers' Association hosts a national conference for elephant caretakers around the country to share their insights and research. Dallas Zoo and Fort Worth Zoo hosted this year's conference from October 2-5, and the Rosamond Gifford Zoo sent elephant care specialist Alinda Dygert to represent our elephant care team. She gave a presentation looking back on nearly a year of caring for the miraculous and unprecedented Asian elephant twins Yaad and Tukada.

The conference includes a craft beer competition, in which each institution is tasked with collaborating with a local partner to create the best elephant-themed brew. We are delighted to share that this year, the Elephant-astic IPA (brewed by our partner Meier's Creek) won the competition! This is the second year of this exciting partnership, and it was rewarding to take top honors. The greatest reward, though, is that sales of our craft beer generate restricted funds for in situ Asian elephant conservation.

We are proud to have shared our exclusive knowledge of caring for elephant twins, and our tasty pachyderm pint, with elephant caretakers from around the nation – but we're even prouder of the fact that this work will support our elephant herd and other herds across the country!



Tree of Life

Guests at the zoo will notice the new Tree of Life in our cafeteria, replacing the original Tree of Life in the upper lobby. Like a real tree, this vibrant exhibit will grow and expand over time.

The ten-foot-long, multi-colored tree display spans the wall as branches reach out with colorful leaves bearing dedications to loved ones. Of course, we retained the dedications from the previous Tree of Life, but also have ample room for new leaves and new memories!

The Friends envision the Tree of Life serving as a collection of more than just memorials, and encourage visitors to consider purchasing a leaf as a gift for the holidays or birthdays, a tribute, or just a milestone marker to remember an unforgettable day!

To purchase a Tree of Life leaf or to learn more, please contact:
Gina Rapasadi, Director of Philanthropy
(315) 435-8511 X8534
grapasadi@rosamondgiffordzoo.org



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Wild Beginnings!

Ages 1-3 | Mondays | 9:15 - 10 a.m. or 10:30 - 11:15 a.m.

Join the education team for a three-week program tailored just for the little ones, ages 12 months to 3 years. Each themed class includes animal biofacts, nature-themed sensory play, a story, and hands-on learning! Young ones will explore with their senses as they develop language and motor skills in this early-learning adventure.

Session 1: What Does a Leopard Eat for Lunch? | February 5, 12, 26

Session 2: B is for Bear: Animal ABC's | March 4, 11, 18

Session 3: Does a Snake Have a Tail? | April 1, 8, 15

Session 4: Scurry, Gallop, and Climb: How Animals Move | May 6, 13, 20

Tuition per session:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$50 per child/adult pair
Additional child (in same session) – \$25

Adventure Days!

Ages 3-6 | Saturdays | 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Do you know a child that is curious about the natural world? Join us for this unique hands-on adult/child exploration-style "Ed-Venture!"

Brilliant Bird Builders: The Creativity of the World's Feathered Creatures - February 3

Bizarre Creatures: Exploring the Stranger Side of Nature - March 9

Super Scaly Creatures: Incredible Reptiles - April 6

Animal Myths and Legends: Do Dragons Exist? - May 11

Tuition per series:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$30 per child/adult pair

EcosySTEM Explorers

Ages 6-12 | Saturdays | 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Learning Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics has never been more exciting! Join us for hands-on fun connecting to the animal world. This class uses a project-based learning approach to challenge your child to build, design and create beyond their wildest imagination.

Adventures Under the Surface: Biodiversity Below Ground - February 3

At Home in my Biome: Designing Animal Habitats - March 9

Decoding Cryptids: Real Adaptations of Mysterious Creatures - April 6

The Mechanics of Animal Movement - May 11

Tuition per series:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$30 per child

Kids' Night Out

Ages 6-12 | 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Looking for a night out? Drop your kids off at the zoo to party like an animal! Kids will enjoy pizza upon arrival, learn about animals, tour the zoo after hours, make crafts and play games all night long.

Session 1: March 15

Session 2: April 12

Session 3: May 10

Session 4: June 14

Tuition per series:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$40 per child

Family Adventures

10 - Noon

A learning adventure for everyone! Whether it's touring the zoo, playing games, making crafts or meeting animal ambassadors, this family-friendly program is a perfect opportunity to connect with your loved ones while also connecting to nature.

Animal Affection: A Wild Valentine's Extravaganza - February 10

Dragonology: The Facts and Myths Behind Dragons - March 24

Natures Kitchen: Foraging for Edible Plants and Creating Animal Diets - June 1

Tuition per series:
Members receive a 7% discount
Non-members – \$40 per child/adult pair

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

NEW! ZOO SCHOOL On the GO!

Ages 6 - 15 | 10 - 12:30 p.m. OR 1 - 3:30 p.m.

Learn at your own pace on a school trip or with your family and friends! This self-guided tour through the zoo incorporates biofacts, fun facts, games, and more to get you learning about some of your favorite animals while connecting with them in real time. Great for ages 6 to 15 with adult support/supervision, and includes extension activities for a fun challenge! **Created for groups of 5+ adults and between 10-20 kids**

Tuition per session: \$115 | Zoo admission included!

Must reserve a minimum of 24 hours in advance

One-Day Zoo Camp

Ages 6-12 | 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Join us for a dive deep into the incredible world of animals for a full day of Zoo Camp! Each camp day is different, allowing your child to explore something new about the animal world through hands-on science, artistry, technology, and engineering projects – whether they're registered for just one, or multiple, days! **For your convenience you can select to pre-order lunch from the Honey Bee Café during registration.**

Winter Break: Monday, February 19-Friday, February 23

Friday, March 29 | Wednesday, April 10

Spring Break: Monday, April 22-Friday, April 26 & Monday, April 29

Daily Tuition: \$65 per child | Members receive a 7% discount



SUMMER ZOO CAMP!

Week-long day camps for children ages 4-17

**Online registration for members begins:
Wednesday, March 6 at 9 a.m.**

**Non-member registration begins:
Wednesday, March 20 at 9 a.m.**

Pre-registration required;
a minimum number of
participants are needed
to run all programs.

Questions?
Call the education department
at
(315) 435-8511 x8506
or email education@rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

Sessions fill fast,
sign up today!

Register online at
rosamondgiffordzoo.org/learn
or
SCAN THE QR CODE
BELOW



Adult Zoo Camp

Why should kids have all the fun? Immerse yourself in elevated zoo experiences guaranteed to inspire your inner child. Join our education staff for an afternoon of hands-on projects, themed tours, insider animal stories, engaging activities, and more, while you learn how the Rosamond Gifford Zoo provides exceptional care for all your favorite animals.

Grown Ups (18+) only! | 1 - 4 p.m.

Non-members: \$60 | Members receive a 7% discount

Extraordinary Health Care: The Story of Success at the RGZ

Saturday, March 23

What happens at the zoo when a surprise elephant twin is born, a big leopard needs physical therapy, or a newborn monkey needs round-the-clock bottle feeding? Animals at the zoo need check-ups, vaccines, pedicures, dental cleanings, and more – find out how the team at the Animal Health Center works together to provide the highest quality medical care for everyone from the biggest elephant to the smallest frog.

The Deal on Diets

Sunday, April 14

Did you know every penguin at the zoo is hand-fed an exact number of fish, that elephants love jellybeans, and that the eggs our chickens lay are fed to other animals? Learn how animal diets are designed for optimal nutrition, where the food comes from, how it is prepared, and how animals receive their meals in enriching and healthy ways. We'll even share tips on how the food choices you make can help the animals of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and the planet, too!

Energizing Enrichment

Sunday, May 19

No bored animals here! Zoo residents have all their needs provided for them – and that includes enrichment for physical and mental stimulation. Novel foods and experiences promote natural behaviors and are just as important as veterinary care and proper nutrition for the health of animals in human care. Find out how the staff at the RGZ encourages animals to climb, pounce, dig, sniff, stretch, and snooze – you might even pick up some enriching ideas for the animals in your own life.

How Do You Design a Zoo?

Saturday, June 8

Why are the elephants in a different place than they used to be? Why do the Amur leopard and the black-and-white ruffed lemurs “alternate” in the same habitat? Why are the red wolves so hard to see in the summer? The design of a zoo contributes not only to your experiences as a visitor but also to the health and wellbeing of our animals. Discover what it takes to create extraordinary habitats through an exclusive look into our design process.

REGISTER NOW!
SCAN THE
QR CODE
BELOW



MYZOO JR.



SIAMANG APE ADLIBS!

These two siamang apes are trying to finish their duet, but they have writer's block!

Can you help these singers finish their love song?

Use the word bank below or come up with your own words!



When I met you, you were _____ along,
verb

_____ in the branches, singing a song,
adjective

Then, _____, you stopped in a tree,
adverb

Boy, was I lucky, you were looking at _____!
pronoun

You said, “ _____ are you?” I said, “Abe is my name!
pronoun

You're a siamang, too!” “Yes, we're one and the _____!
adjective

I'm Fatima, Abe, it is _____ to meet you.
adjective

Won't you _____ me up here and take in the view?”
verb

Now _____ we sing and together we climb,
adverb

Together _____ swing and together we _____.
pronoun verb

I'm one half of a _____, she makes me _____,
noun adjective

And _____ our song is a _____ you can't beat!
verb noun

WORD BANK

Nouns

- Pair
- Song
- Treat

Verbs

- Swinging
- Join
- Rhyme
- Singing

Adjectives

- High
- Complete
- Same
- Nice

Pronouns

- Me
- Who
- We

Adverbs

- Together
- Suddenly

Adopt
an
Animal



Senior Keeper
Special

\$55

Snow Leopard

Package includes:

A certificate of adoption, 4x6 color photo, animal fact sheet, 12" snow leopard plush, an adopt parent gift, copy of *MyZoo Magazine*, and listing in online adopt parent board for one year.



Adopt an Animal online at syracusezooevents.org/shop
Looking to adopt another animal at the regular rate?
Call (315) 435-8511 x8563 or
email giftshop@rosamondgiffordzoo.org



Novelis: Shaping a More Sustainable World



Last year, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo partnered with Novelis and designated the aluminum recycling company as our Sustainability Sponsor for years to come.

Novelis saw the changes we were making, such as cycling out wasteful plastic bottles for infinitely renewable aluminum cans – and they challenged us to go above and beyond in combatting plastic waste. Adjustments like these are a big step in the right direction, but we can't become complacent; we want to encourage and educate our community to be more intentional in the plastic products they use, and aware of the environmental effects of these products.

"Single-use plastic products have essential applications in the medical and technology industries, and we know that it is unrealistic to expect anyone to just wake up tomorrow and not use any plastic anymore," said Executive Director of the Friends of the Zoo Carrie Large. "But a significant amount of plastic products manufactured each year are wasteful, single-use products like plastic bags and bottles. In fact, Plastic Oceans (a leading organization raising awareness about plastic waste) estimates that more than 14% of all litter comes from beverage containers, and this percentage increases when you include caps and labels. By simply opting to not use plastic bottles, we can significantly reduce plastic pollution."

According to Plastic Oceans, single-use plastic products account for up to 50% of the 380 million tons of plastic produced globally each year. While some of that serves important purposes, much of it is unnecessary. Though using a plastic bag or disposable fork may not seem significant in the long run, wasteful single-use plastic like these pose very serious threats to our oceans.

There is so much plastic waste in the Pacific Ocean that a floating island of refuse, dubbed the "Great Garbage Patch", has grown to the size of some countries; scientists' estimates of the patch's size range from 270,000 square miles (roughly the size of Texas), to 5,800,000 square miles (roughly the size of Russia). The plastic problem is exacerbated by plastic's durability; it can take up to 500 years for plastic to decompose, and even then, it's never really gone. The plastic just gets smaller and smaller, eventually entering the digestive tracts and bloodstreams of the animals of the ocean. Some animals consume plastic litter outright; a recent study in Indonesia determined that individual manta rays were each consuming roughly 63 pieces of plastic every hour, while whale sharks were each consuming 137 plastic products every hour. Humans then consume these animals that have consumed plastics, and in this way, microplastics enter our digestive tracts and bloodstreams – and it is estimated that each human consumes 40 pounds of plastic in their lifetime.

"By simply investing in a reusable bottle, individuals can take a big step in reducing their contributions to the planet's plastic waste problem," said Large. "Encourage friends and family to adopt recycling practices, and review the products you consume to see if there are more environmentally friendly alternatives."

An aluminum can that is returned to a Novelis recycling plant can be recycled, repackaged, and back on a grocery store shelf in just 60 days. Next time you have the choice, consider the consequences of choosing a single-use plastic bottle rather than an endlessly renewable aluminum can!

MEMBER NOTES



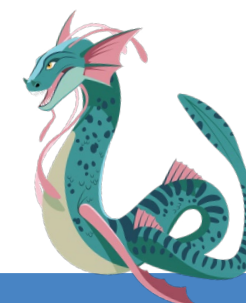
Look for these friendly faces behind the membership desk next time you visit the zoo!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP TEAM – Here to help our very nearest and dearest supporters (you!)

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo's membership team is here to support our members and guests with all their membership needs. Many of our team members are familiar faces that have grown within the Friends of the Zoo organization, and there's a few new faces that we are excited to welcome to the team!

Pictured from left to right:

Allison Angona, Membership Manager
Nhojsia (Sia) White, Assistant Membership Manager
Brenna Dwyer, Membership Lead Associate
Anna Cunningham, Membership Associate



Don't miss out on all the draconic fun this year – renew your membership now for a zoo experience like never before!

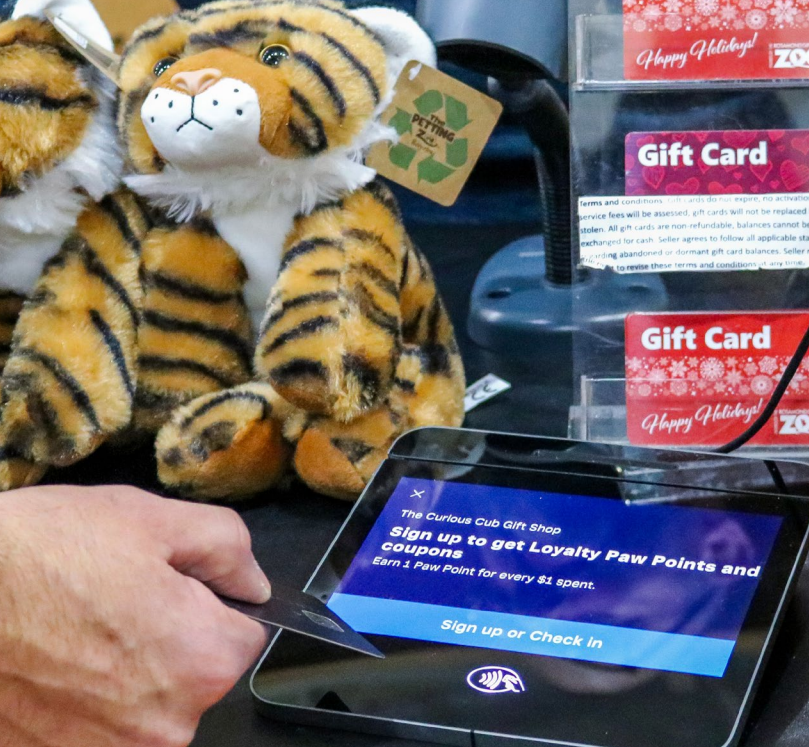
This year's member t-shirt features two of our newest (and cutest!) zoo residents – Amur tiger cubs Coba and Zuzaan!

The tiger cub pair made their debut on exhibit in September 2023 and have captured the hearts of zoo guests with their antics ever since. The cubs will continue to learn and grow under the care of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo this year, before continuing on to be ambassadors for the critically endangered Amur tiger species. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo participates in the Amur tiger Species Survival Plan (SSP), which seeks to contribute new generations of genetically diverse Amur tigers to the currently declining population.

Be sure to stop by the membership desk and redeem your FREE t-shirt—an exclusive perk for our zoo members! Additional shirts may be purchased for just \$15 each.

Questions?
Call at (315) 435-8511 x8503 or
email members@rosamondgiffordzoo.org










Save \$\$ with our Paw Points Loyalty Program!

Join our **Paw Points Loyalty Program**. All purchases at The Curious Cub Gift Shop, the Honey Bee Café, the Hofmann Hot Haus, and the Trunk and Tusk Canteen allow guests to accrue points for their purchases. With these points guests receive discounts and free items!

Make sure to enter your phone number during your next purchase to start earning points toward these discounts!

-  Free small fountain drink (50 Paw Points)
-  Free small drip coffee (50 Paw Points)
-  5% off Gift Shop sale (50 Paw Points)
-  10% off Gift Shop sale (100 Paw Points)
-  Sandwich & small fountain drink (200 Paw Points)



The Curious Cub GIFT SHOP

New in the Gift Shop!

Check out our new seasonal items, including newly arrived apparel and more! Stop in and see our great selection of conservation-themed gift items for the animal lovers in your life next time you visit.

Members Receive 10% OFF!

Best of all, your purchases benefit animal care at the zoo and conservation in the wild.



Can't come to the zoo? Scan the QR code to visit our online store or go to syracusezooevents.org/shop



Catering at the Zoo Helped Us Turn Our Dream Wedding Into a Reality

Sylvia and Jordan LeBaron invited friends and family to the zoo grounds on October 31, 2023 for a private wedding ceremony. Catering at the Zoo team delivered a truly remarkable wedding experience!

For this unconventional wedding, the Catering team capitalized on our Zoo Boo decorations, and supplemented them with even more spooky signage and eerie installations. The themed decorations and food throughout the evening combined to create one "hauntingly" memorable event!



The LeBaron's said that beyond the incredible experience of having private after-hours access to zoo grounds, guests raved over the decor and lauded the food. Indeed, guests were still talking about the food weeks after the wedding!

"Having the zoo to just family and friends of ours was so cool – like a dream come true!" Sylvia LeBaron said. "Now every time we come to the zoo, we get to re-live those magical moments that we had that night. Thank you to the Zoo team and Catering staff for making our day so perfect and effortless!"

Photo courtesy of Jeff Bachstein, with Bach Photo Images.

Catering at the Zoo is excited to offer a very special deal for the new year: Book a wedding to be held in 2024 and receive a 10% discount off the total price!

This offer is exclusive to weddings booked in and set for 2024. Not many people get to say they said "I do" as a herd of Asian elephants looked on with approval – but you can! Beyond the chance to tie the knot in a truly unparalleled setting, you, your partner, and all your guests will enjoy exclusive animal viewings with after-hours access to the zoo grounds, and savor a delectable dinner designed specially by Executive Chef Allison Walts and her talented team of culinarians.

Weddings at the zoo have quickly grown in popularity, and last year saw us host an array of unique and imaginative ceremonies, including a Halloween wedding and other themed ceremonies.

What better place is there for animal lovers to commemorate their love than here at the zoo? With a setting like no other and a discount that can't be beat, a zoo wedding promises a fulfilling and unforgettable day – because a wedding shouldn't be anything less than that.

Don't delay, book today!

To learn more about "Saying I Do at the Zoo," please contact our event specialist Stephanie Deibler events@rosamondgiffordzoo (315) 435-8511 x8543 or scan the QR code.





Get out and get moving on behalf of the
Rosamond Gifford Zoo at our annual 5K zoo run!

Sunday, April 14



Register NOW
to get started!

Scan the QR Code for details!

