



SAN FRANCISCO ZOO DIRECTOR'S BULLETIN

July 26, 2013

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

- **A Huge Step for Wellness – a VP of Wellness Is Hired!**

It is with great pride I announce the hire of a full-time animal wellness, research and welfare expert, Dr. Jason Watters. Dr. Watters is the editor of the esteemed *ZooBiology* publication and also has led the animal welfare team at the Chicago Zoological Society. He has been a leader in animal care for years and recently was the keynote speaker at an animal welfare conference in Chicago. I was so impressed with his speech that I offered him a job on the spot (well, after checking with Wayne, of course!). Dr. Watters is from the Bay Area, and he and his family will be moving here in early October. Dr. Watters will be continuing the work of esteemed Dr. Terry Maple who has been a consultant for San Francisco Zoo on a part-time basis. With full-time eyes on our wellness program, I know for certain that 2013-2014 will be a year of greatness and wellness for San Francisco Zoo!

ANIMAL NEWS

- **Gorilla Baby Born!**



Our adorable gorilla baby continues to thrive at the Jones Gorilla Preserve. The Zoo's dedicated animal care staff has started the process of transferring care from her first-time mother, Nneka, to her grandmother, Bawang, who not only reared Nneka but also acted as surrogate to Hasani. As with any surrogate situation, human intervention is required, and the "hand-off" to Bawang will take time. As Bawang acclimates to the change and learns to bottle-feed the baby herself, we do not expect to see the baby on exhibit for some time, even months. Nevertheless, we are setting up cameras outside the exhibit so that our visitors can see the baby via a monitor and enjoy her adorable cuteness. I will keep you posted on her progress – and any special viewing opportunities!

- **New Kids on the Farm**



The new San Clemente Island goat kids inside the Children's Zoo have been introduced to the rest of the herd and are having a blast! They are learning how to run in our morning stampede, to interact with guests, and are even venturing out to eat inside the barnyard. The older kids, approximately 3 ½ months old, and the younger kids, approximately 2 ½ months old, are doing really well. Stop by the barn and visit the kids soon. They are sure to make you smile.

MARKETING, MEMBERSHIP & PR

- **By George! It's a Prince.**



Given all the excitement across the pond so-to-speak, we just had to share our little “penguin prince” with everyone – Members and Non-Members alike – during March of the Penguins! Tomorrow at 9 a.m., four female penguin chicks and one stately male will make their way to Penguin Island to join their penguin peers. After studying hard at [“fish school,”](#) the chicks have learned how to swim and eat fish and are now used to human interaction through penguin socializing sessions. [The Class of 2013](#) will show us what they have learned as they waddle their way back to their new home. Through our naming raffle, one lucky Member will get to name one of the penguins and have an up-close encounter on Penguin Island. Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to celebrate all their hard work!

- **Breakfast with the Penguins**



Please join us for a special Breakfast with the Penguins on August 17, at 8:30 a.m., inside the Great Hall at the Lurie Education Center. Guests will feast on a delicious breakfast buffet and learn more about the fascinating lives of our Magellanic penguins from their proud caregivers. Like Breakfast with the Big Cats, this breakfast provides unique, up-close interactions with our penguins.

- **Gail Makes Great Radio**



After 30 years of tremendous service at the Zoo, our dedicated and hard-working veterinary technician Gail Hedberg retired last month. With great patience and talent, Gail hand-raised our 30-year old polar bear Piké, as well as many other species of Zoo babies over the years. Last week KALW's show *Cross Currents* aired a story about Gail and Piké and also showcased the other great adventures Gail has encountered throughout her career. She selflessly dedicated her time to improving the way of life of animals here at the Zoo and we wish her the best of luck. [Listen to Gail's story.](#)

EDUCATION & CONSERVATION

- **National Zoo Keeper Appreciation Week**



Every year the Zoo's Docent Council hosts a luncheon for all of our animal keepers in honor of National Zoo Keeper Appreciation Week. This year, our horticulture, hospital and maintenance staffs were invited to the luncheon as well. This is not just a "thank you" celebration for all the work they do in the Zoo, but it's also a chance for the Docents to get to know the staff members too. Aside from this annual event, the Docent Council generously supports the Zoo and its programs in

many ways all year long. This year, the Docents were able to raise enough funds to purchase two gorilla hammocks for our gorilla troop thanks to their sales of animal photo buttons. A big thanks to our Docents for their continued generous support of the Zoo!

- **Zoos and Aquariums Committed to Conservation (ZACC) Conference**

Established in 1995, this biennial conference's mission is to encourage and promote increased involvement of zoos and aquariums in support of field conservation - locally, nationally and internationally. Hosted by the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, the 9th ZACC Conference drew more than 200 zoo and aquarium officials, scientists, and wildlife experts, representing over 40 zoos and aquariums, as well as wildlife programs in 36 countries. Attended by the VP of Education and Conservation, Joe Fitting, this year's take away messages focused on the growing concern regarding the alarming rise in the illegal wildlife trade. ZACC hopes to increase resources aimed at curbing the illegal wildlife trade and to create campaigns to raise awareness among consumers about the growing "empty forests" phenomenon, where poaching and overexploitation has wiped out even small species such as bats, birds, and rodents. It is estimated that the illegal wildlife trade is worth multibillions annually.

FINANCE

- **Attendance**

On July 1, the Zoo started a new fiscal year with a budget based on 845,000 visitors. We are happy to report that 24 days into the new fiscal year, we are on budget! Actual visitor attendance through July 24, 2013 is 85,782 versus budget of 82,400 and is over budget by 3,382 visitors (4.1%). We also had a very strong Free Day for July with over 7,000 San Francisco residents taking advantage of free day!

OPERATIONS AND EVENTS

- **Painting, Paving, and Putting Up Aviaries**

Next time you're in the middle of the Zoo, make sure to check out the freshly painted Lion Fountain. The new coat of paint on this iconic centerpiece really makes it pop out! And speaking of popping out, what's NOT popping out are tree roots by the South American Tropical Aviary since this area has been dug up and repaved with a smooth finish. And in other parts of the Zoo, a new aviary is being erected to add additional space for our fine feathered friends.

PHILANTHROPY & DEVELOPMENT

- **Guardians and Penguin Socialization**

On July 20, nearly 40 Director and Curator-level Guardians and their family members met at the Avian Conservation Center for breakfast and a special socialization session with the Zoo's five new penguin chicks. These young birds have been gradually introduced to human companions and observers during the months of June and July, and the Guardian group was the largest gathering of humans that the young chicks had experienced to date. The penguin chicks were not only personally introduced to some of the Zoo's most loyal supporters, they swam for the first time! (Not all of them liked it initially.) All of these activities—socialization among humans and the gradual introduction to an aquatic environment—is done to prepare the young birds for life in the penguin colony. Of course, feel free to come watch these young birds graduate Fish School during March of the Penguins tomorrow at 9 am. And for those penguin lovers, who can never get enough of these charismatic birds, register for Breakfast with the Penguins on August 17. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit the Zoo's website [here](#).

- **Visit from Doelger Trustees**

You all may know the Doelger Primate Discovery Center, but for nearly five years, we had not seen any of the Doelger family or trustees. We thus were thrilled to host them to a special tour (primates, of course!) as well as a lovely lunch and catch them up on the Zoo's progress. They loved the rescue of our squirrel monkeys and hope to return to see the baby gorilla on exhibit. All in all, it was a great reunion with long-time SF Zoo supporters!

- **Noc'tails to Open Bug Exhibit!**

The Zoo's second annual Noc'tails Silent Disco will be held this fall on the eve of the opening of our next temporary exhibit, It's A Bug's Life. The event plans to draw more than 1,000 Bay Area hipsters, dancers, and animal aficionados to the Zoo. Live DJs will spin music wirelessly into hundreds of headphones (to not disturb the animals) while guests explore the new insect exhibit and historic Lion House, admire Penguin Island and enjoy a variety of outdoor cuisine. The courtyard surrounding the Lion Fountain will transform into a silent Studio 54 beneath the stars. Guests will experience how the Zoo connects people to art, culture, and other people in the process of connecting them to nature, while the lions, tigers, and penguins will experience groups of human beings silently swaying and twirling their arms to a primal "bug" beat!

FUN FACTS



Our newest residents to the Lipman Family Lemur Forest are red-fronted brown lemurs. Found in distinct populations in eastern and western Madagascar, these arboreal primates are mainly frugivorous, which helps their forest habitat by promoting seed dispersal. They live in groups and the females have both the feeding priority and the responsibility for finding resources. Their non-human predators include fossa and raptors, with specific alarm calls for predators from the air versus predators from the ground. Red-fronted brown lemurs are cathemeral, which means that they are active at varying times throughout the day and night, with more nighttime activity observed on nights with a bright moon. Their lifespan in the wild is 20 – 25

years. Main threats to red-fronted brown lemurs include habitat fragmentation and destruction, as well as bushmeat hunting. Please stop by the Lipman Family Lemur Forest and see if you can spot the Zoo's new pair!