

March - June 2020

BRANDYWINE ZOO NEWS



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The Zoo News is a publication of the
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Get to Know Our Development Director



Marcie Voight, with Alice the Harris Hawk, during her recent visit to Ireland

Born and raised in Alexandria, Virginia, and current resident of New Jersey, our Development Director, Marcie Voight, joined the Delaware Zoological Society in September 2019. Marcie has been helping small non-profits reach and exceed their fundraising goals for the past ten years.

She was inspired to pursue a career in fundraising at an early age when she volunteered for the Red Cross in high school. Being passionate about connecting donors with their desire to make a difference, Marcie is excited to be working at the Delaware Zoological Society supporting the Brandywine Zoo.

When not at the Zoo, you can find Marcie enjoying the great outdoors, more specifically somewhere on a beach or in the ocean. She loves to snorkel and learn about marine life and enjoys traveling and learning about different cultures. She has traveled throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Canada, and the US.

If not on a beach, you can also find her visiting with her sons in college, gardening in her backyard, or enjoying a good book.

The next time you visit the Zoo, stop by the Delaware Zoological Society offices and say hello.

Help the Brandywine Zoo celebrate its 115th Anniversary!

The Brandywine Zoo is celebrating its anniversary! Originally called The Wilmington Zoo, it got its start with only one pond and a handful of ducks and swans. In 1905, it officially became the Wilmington Free Zoological Association. By the end of the year, the zoo was home to a bear, two deer, and a variety of waterfowl. Over the years, the Zoo has continued to grow and change. In 1971, it was renamed the Brandywine Zoo!

Today the zoo is the only accredited zoo in Delaware and is committed to wildlife conservation, education and recreation.



Since 1905, the zoo has welcomed countless visitors and we would love to share some of your stories. We are looking for any photos that show the zoo throughout the years. These photos may be used in marketing and on social media.

Do you have any photos or memories you would like to share? If so, please email zoohistory@brandywinezoo.org Please include the names of the photographer, name of person in the photo, year (if you know it) and other any details you might remember. You can also mail them to: Brandywine Zoo, Attn: Anniversary, 1001 N. Park Drive, Wilmington, DE 19802



Animal ADOPT Parent Appreciation Morning

Have you ADOPTED one of our animals recently? Join us for a special morning at the zoo! We will be celebrating with keeper chats and animal training demonstrations just for our ADOPT Parents. There will be discounts in our gift shop, a raffle prize & more!

Saturday, June 6, 10am - 12pm
RSVP by June 2



For more details or to RSVP visit:
brandywinezoo.org/events/specialevents/



If you haven't adopted, it's not too late! Visit brandywinezoo.org/support to find out more



Zoo Director's Letter

By Brint Spencer, Zoo Director

2020 is going to be both an exciting and challenging year. Our new Madagascar exhibit is underway, the plans for the new animal services building are nearly complete and we hope to begin construction in July with an expected completion date of early 2021. The Delaware Zoological Society has rolled out a capital campaign to raise funds for the next phase of our masterplan, which will include a new entry complex, and mixed species exhibit featuring flamingos. This project will improve the guest experience with better entry and ticketing, gathering spaces inside and outside of the zoo's gates and ADA compliant walkways. A flock of flamingoes will make a bold statement in the new entry exhibit. Other species being considered for this space include parrots, ducks, sloth, pudu (the world's smallest deer species) and aquatic turtles.

Our challenges are projects beyond our control. Multiple street projects are being done in the Wilmington area in preparation for the major I-95 bridgework that will begin March 2021. Later this spring, DelDOT will be closing the Van Buren St. Bridge at the base of Monkey Hill for a three-month period to do work on the intersection of S. Park



Dr. and Van Buren. This is tentatively scheduled for April – June. This closure will impact some people who come to the zoo via the Delaware Avenue exit. Be sure to check the city of Wilmington and Zoo websites for up to date information and alternate routes to get to the zoo.

One other exciting note is that Delaware State Parks anticipates that the Josephine Fountain restoration project will finally be completed this year. After some unexpected delays, the work should be done later this year. In 1933, local attorney Ernest J. Smith dedicated the fountain to his wife Josephine. Smith also donated the cherry trees in this area in memory of his wife.

We look forward to Spring's cherry blossoms in the Brandywine Park along the river and a restored fountain. Later this year, we look forward to opening the largest exhibit project in the history of the Brandywine Zoo. We hope to see you at the Zoo!

Follow us on **Facebook** & **Instagram** for updates. Check [brandywinezoo.org/reimagined](https://www.brandywinezoo.org/reimagined) to see how you can help.

The *White-Faced Whistling Duck* doesn't quack, it whistles!

White-faced whistling ducks live throughout South America, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of the Caribbean and Central America. Unlike most waterfowl, white-faced whistling ducks often perch in branches and are known as tree ducks. Our pair of males, Banks and Webster, pictured on the cover, are four years old and came from Pinola Conservancy.



Madagascar - When the Pieces Come Together- Zoos working together for conservation

By: Mandy Fischer, Assistant Curator

Things are finally happening here at the Zoo and we cannot be more excited! After over a year of planning and designing our new Madagascar habitat, construction has started! This was a massive effort with many different groups coming together for a goal of reimagining our zoo! Delaware State Parks, the Delaware Zoological Society, the City of Wilmington and Brandywine Zoo staff all have a significant role in this adventure. Speaking of coming together...have you ever wondered where the zoo animals come from when a new habitat is built? Will the lemurs come from the forests of Madagascar? Is there a lemur equivalent of Amazon.com where we purchase them? We're glad you asked!

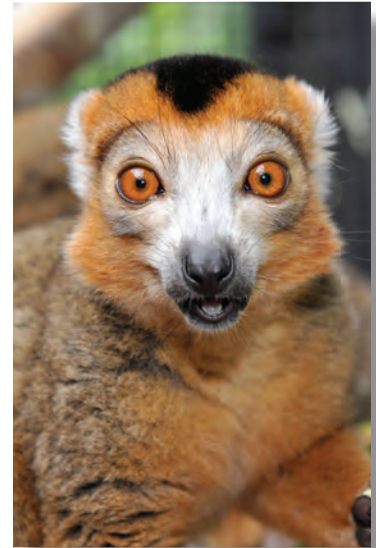


As an Association of Zoo's and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoo, we participate in the Species Survival Plan (SSP). This is a science-based strategy of responsibly breeding species in order to create a healthy population in human care and prevent global extinction. The SSP ensures that animals are exchanged and bred ethically and responsibly. When we first chose to bring lemurs to Delaware, we needed to decide which species (there are over 112 in Madagascar!) In US zoos however, the Prosimian Taxon Advisory Group (PTAG) manages only 10 species. Taxon advisory groups oversee the individual SSPs. After much research and consultation with the PTAG, we chose to exhibit black and white ruffed lemurs, ring tailed lemurs and crowned lemurs. Crowned lemurs are especially rare in zoos with a current population of only 30 animals! We wanted to do our part to help save this species so we asked for a breeding pair to be recommended to move to Wilmington by the SSP Studbook Keeper. This person is in charge of using scientific genetic data to make pairing recommendations that would produce healthy offspring and grow the population. We do not plan to breed the other lemur species, so we asked those studbook keepers to send us animals that are not currently being asked to breed. The result of all of this communication and data analysis is eight individual

lemurs coming from four different AZA accredited zoos! These animals were born in other zoos and not taken from the wild. There is no cost aside from airfare or transport fees.

Since the building is still under construction, we do not have the space in other parts of the zoo to bring all of these animals in at the same time. AZA zoos are partners in conservation and work very hard to help each other.

The Duke Lemur Center (DLC) in North Carolina did us a HUGE favor by bringing the female black and white ruffed lemur from Oklahoma into their facility to house until we are ready for her here. They even introduced her to the two male ruffed lemurs that are coming to Brandywine as well! The DLC will also be sending us a male crowned lemur. This spring, we will send some of our zoo keepers to North Carolina to pick up the lemurs plus spend some time in 'Lemur Boot Camp' learning the best practices of caring for these endangered species. At the same time, we will be arranging for a flight for the female crowned lemur to travel to us from Zoo Atlanta to be introduced to the male crowned lemur. Once the Madagascar building is complete, we will arrange to bring in the ring-tailed lemurs and introduce them to the other two species. The tale of how we get eight lemurs to live together in peaceful harmony though is a story for another day...



Docents: Doubling Time

By: Danielle Levredge, Volunteer Manager

While population ecologists use a mathematical formula $T_d = t \frac{\ln(2)}{\ln(1 + \frac{r}{100})} \approx t \frac{70}{r}$ to calculate

when a population will double in size and value, for our program and us it was simple: one calendar year!

Our 2019 Docent cohort came in at seven qualified and dedicated members that we continue to see embedding themselves in special projects and programs at the zoo. For 2020, we are celebrating fantastic growth to a core class of 16! Our current class includes teachers, a pharmacist, health care professionals, college students, Brandywine Zoo members, Delaware locals, exhibit design enthusiasts, and a 27 year Docent from Seattle Zoo. We even have a passionate transplant from Arkansas who moved to Delaware only twelve hours before their first day of training! The sheer dedication and energy of our Docents are keeping us on our toes this year and we could not be more enthusiastic. Both classes are mingling and connecting on incredibly creative ideas to grow our programs and incorporate their individual passions and skills (Teacher To-Go Kits, online exhibit models, tour-giving possibilities, utilizing their craftsmen skills and more!) There are and have been many changes for the Brandywine Zoo and we're thankful to be turning the corner on another prosperous season of volunteer engagement.



If you would like to get involved with the Brandywine Zoo at this amazing time of development and growth, not only in our physical landscape but also in our programs, please check our website at www.brandywinezoo.org/volunteer.



Volunteers Michele Marsili (left) Shomudro Gupta (right)



Keeper Jaime Kramlik and Volunteer Jayne Walmsley



Volunteer Lexi Houston




2020 Events

General Zoo Events

| | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------|
| April 4 |  | Scout Night | 4:15 pm - 6 pm |
| April 11 |  | Bunnyfest | 10 am - 12 pm |
| April 25 |  | Earth Day Celebration | 10 am - 2 pm |
| April 26 | | Animal Careers Conference | 9:30 am - 3:30 pm |
| May 9 | | World Migratory Bird Day | 10 am - 2 pm |
| May 15 | | Endangered Species Day for Schools | 10 am - noon |
| May 16 | | Endangered Species Day | 10 am - 2 pm |
| June 6 |  | ADOPT Parent Day | 10 am - noon |
| June 14 | | World Oceans Day | 11 am - 3 pm |
| June 18 |  | Family Fun Night | 6 - 8 pm |
| June 24 | | BZoo Member's Night | 6 - 8 pm |
| July 11 | | Stuffed Animal Vet Clinic | 10 am - noon |
| July 15 | | Family Fun Night | 6 - 8 pm |
| July 19-25 | | Keeper Week | |
| July 25 | | Fantastic Beasts and Wizarding Day | 10 am - 2 pm |
| August 11 |  | Family Fun Night | 6 - 8 pm |
| August 15 | | Honeybee Celebration | 10 am - 2 pm |
| September 5 | | International Vulture Awareness Day | 10 am - 2 pm |
| September 12 & 13 |  | Zippity Zoo Days | 10 am - 3:30 pm |
| September 25 (Must be 21+) | | Brew at the Zoo | 5:30 - 9 pm |
| October 15, 16, 17 Thursday - Saturday | | Boo at the Zoo | 5 - 7 pm |
| October 24 | | Animal Careers Conference | 9:30 am - 3:30 pm |
| November 7 |  | Scout Night | 4:15 - 6 pm |
| December 31 | | Noon Year's Eve | 11 am - 12:15 pm |

Breakfast Programs

| | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------------|-----------|
| June 20 & August 22 |  | Breakfast with the Beasts | 9 - 10 am |
| July 18 | | Christmas in July Breakfast | 9 - 10 am |
| December 12 | | Breakfast with Santa | 9 - 10 am |

Rethink Plastics Campaign kicks off with Brandywine Zoo's Green Team

By Jacque Williamson, Curator of Education and Conservation

In 2019, the Brandywine Zoo reinvigorated its Green Team in order to review internal practices and infrastructure to make them more sustainable and “green.”

We also developed public outreach campaigns to engage the public in these efforts and teach about more environmentally sustainable behaviors they can participate in themselves. Internally, we have begun auditing everything from energy and water use, to waste and purchasing.

Publicly, we are very excited to announce our new **Rethink Plastics Campaign**. The goal of this campaign is to have our guests, programs, participants, and local businesses rethink the everyday, disposable plastics in their lives. We're targeting single-use plastics in particular because these disposable items, while convenient in the moment, become trash forever.

What are Single-Use Plastics?

In short, single-use plastics are petroleum-based plastic goods that are meant to be disposed of after using once. Sometimes, this is after just a few minutes of use. This includes both packaging and serveware like bottles, wrappers, straws, cutlery, and bags. While some single-use plastic products are important, particularly in the medical field, others are simply part of our culture of convenience and are thrown away. There are more reusable and sustainable alternatives available for sale, such as straws, cutlery, bags, and beverage containers.

Why are Single-Use Plastics Bad?

The production of plastics is taxing on our environment and disposal, even recycling, is a challenge. Humans produce roughly 300 million tons of plastic trash annually, and over half of that is recyclable but

only about 10-13% gets properly recycled. Many plastic products are difficult or expensive to recycle. **Plastic straws, drink stirrers, and disposable cutlery all rank in the top ten types of garbage polluting the ocean.**

Plastic doesn't biodegrade, it breaks down with light exposure (photo-degrades), wave-action, or it oxidizes. This creates smaller and smaller buoyant particles of plastic (called microplastics) which both absorb and release pollutants as they are carried around the world by our oceans.

These microplastics contaminate our water and our food, and plastic chemicals are now common in our bloodstream. **Small pieces of broken plastic and**

bags can look like food to wildlife. Animals like sea turtles, birds, otters, and dolphins often mistake plastic trash for food, ingesting it and causing them to get sick. Plastic trash and microplastic pieces are often found in the bellies of both deceased marine and terrestrial wildlife, it gets caught around the legs, bodies, and necks of animals, making eating, breathing, or moving difficult to impossible. Both of these issues, ingestion and entanglement, are likely to

cause slow, painful, unnecessary deaths. In December 2019, a dead sperm whale washed up on the shores of Scotland with more than 200 pounds of trash in its stomach, and in March 2019 another emaciated whale died in the Philippines with 88 pounds of plastic trash in its gut. These are just a few examples of all too frequent occurrences, but with anywhere between 5 to 13 billion pounds of plastic trash in the ocean every year, it is hard to see an end in sight without people changing their behavior.



What is the Brandywine Zoo doing to help?

This year, in honor of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, The Brandywine Zoo is kicking off its **Rethink Plastics Campaign**. For this campaign, we're asking local area restaurants to join our campaign and make the switch from plastic straws and takeout cutlery to a more environmentally friendly option; only offering straws and cutlery upon request and/or switching to an eco-friendly (bamboo) or reusable (stainless steel or silicon) option. To join this campaign or find out more, visit **BrandywineZoo.org/Rethink**.



We recognize that it is important for businesses to still have straws available upon request, particularly for children or people with disabilities, so we've created **a resource toolkit** for interested businesses with information including how to train staff about your business making the switch, as well as a vendor/supplier list to order reusable or sustainable alternatives. We also have social media graphics available that businesses can use to announce they've joined the Rethink Plastics movement.

This year, we have also begun collecting plastic waste on-site at the zoo to recycle with **Eco-Plastic Products of Delaware**, a new, nonprofit in Wilmington, which takes types of plastic (but #3) and processes it into recycled plastic lumber for benches, picnic tables, and more.

We will also be carrying eco-friendly, reusable options in our Zootique gift shop this year, and in partnership with Waste Management, we will be giving away reusable straws and cutlery (while supplies last) during our **2020 Earth Day Party for the Planet** event on April 25.

What can YOU do?

We're asking our zoo members, guests, and the general public to join us in "saying no" to single-use plastics when dining out. By simply refusing straws or cutlery at the beginning of your service (or takeout order) you can cut down on the amount of plastic waste you are consuming. Just like many people have gotten used to carrying reusable shopping bags, you can also carry your own set of reusable cutlery and a reusable straw, so you always have an alternative on hand. We are encouraging all our supporters to share with their family and friends that they have joined us in saying "no thanks" to straws and cutlery by sharing some of our available social media graphics.

You can collect clean plastics and recycle them at **Eco-Plastic Products of Delaware**, or make Eco-Bricks by stuffing 2-liter soda bottles with soft plastics and donating them to Wilmington State Parks. Check out a **how-to video** from the **Alapocas Run and Wilmington State Parks** Facebook page for how to make eco-bricks and why they are collecting them.

Finally, learn more about single use plastics and think about what ways you can reduce the amount of plastics you consume, that make sense for your life. Maybe it's switching to reusable snack and sandwich bags, beeswax or linen food wraps, or carrying a reusable drinking bottle, straw, or cutlery set. Perhaps it's bringing a refillable coffee cup to Wawa or Starbucks, or skipping the plastic straws and stirrers in your drinks. Consider changing up your family's personal care and household products by purchasing bar shampoos, conditioners, dish soaps, detergents, solid lotion bars, and more. Have you ever tried to go plastic-free for a day, week, or month? When you start to think about the plastics in your life, you realize that there are endless ways to reduce your plastic consumption.

If you're interested in trying out some eco-friendly products, but aren't sure where to start, you can sign up for a monthly subscription with green-minded, plastic-free companies like Mighty Nest (**mightynest.com**) or GreenUp Box (**greenupbox.com**).

Construction update

By Brint Spencer, Zoo Director

After many months of meetings, emails, and conference calls the first of the zoo's master plan projects has finally started! The former llama, goat, parrot and capybara exhibits are now gone and the area is being graded to meet the needs of the new Madagascar exhibit. Staff have watched our old outdated infrastructure go away and

eagerly await the new exhibit. The first phase is exciting and there are many visible changes.

By removing the old wooden wall that formed the back of the former capybara exhibit, it opened up the sight lines and makes the zoo look larger.



The small shed near the former goat exhibit was used as a staging area and workspace for the zoo keepers working in this area. However, in the 1970s this building had been the zoo director's office. It was originally built to look like a barn and at one time it had a silo on the side that was removed decades ago.



The llama steps and llama enclosure fences have been removed. The new Madagascar exhibit will extend across the area where the steps had been. The electrical lines that are currently above ground in this area will be moved underground. This will help protect the lines and make the zoo more attractive.



Some portions of the old walkways are being removed to allow underground utility work. New walkways will be ADA compliant to make the new exhibit accessible for all of our guests.



Once the old structures are cleared and underground water and sewer lines located, the contractors will start to lay out the new exhibit. By the end of March, the new holding building will be started by pouring the footings and running new utilities.

Delaware Zoological Society Executive Director's Letter

Dear Members, Supporters,
and Friends,

I hope that you have enjoyed our latest issue of ZooNews. I have known that I would be writing this, my final letter to you for a while. To prepare for it, I have been listening to the song "One Last Time" from Lin-Manuel Miranda's Hamilton, in which George Washington tells Alexander Hamilton that he plans to not seek a third term as President. The line that I find especially prescient is, "If I say goodbye, the nation learns to outlive me when I'm gone."

I have spent the last twelve and a half years with the Zoological Society. I just completed five years as Executive Director, after seven years on the Board of Directors. It has been the best job that I have ever had. We have built a fantastic team at the Society and while you may not know them or see them, they are the real reason why the Society has succeeded over the last few years. We have seen more progress in these five years, than in decades.



However, the inveterate wanderer that I am has been feeling the pull for a new challenge and adventure. My five years here have been the longest stop in my career, which is a testament to our Board and staff and my love of the work that we do. I have had the honor to serve three Board Presidents, Megan, Joan, and Arlene. Each was a pleasure to work with in their own unique ways.

These are exciting times at the Zoo. We are all looking forward to the big changes that are finally coming to this community jewel.

I cannot wait to come back to see Madagascar and all of the in-

credible changes that are coming to the Zoo. We would like your support for our capital campaign, Our Zoo Reimagined, to keep the momentum and progress moving forward. In addition, I hope that you will welcome and support the next Executive Director, as you have me.

Best regards,
Mike

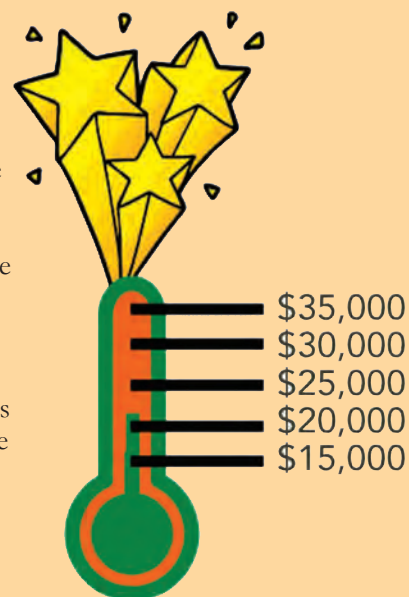
Great things are happening here at the Brandywine Zoo because of YOU!

With your donations and support of our Zoo, we are making significant upgrades and enhancements to our animal habitats, camp programs, education programs, and traveling zoo.

Your support is also helping programs such as the Andean Condor Species Survival Plan, which re-introduces captive-born condors into the wild in Columbia. 2020 is looking to be a great year as we prepare for a new season with exciting Zoo programs, fun events, and unique habitats. Construction on our new Madagascar habitat has begun and we will share photos on social media.

If you have not had a chance to donate to the 2019-2020 annual fund, I invite you to do so today. To date, we have raised just over \$21,000 on our way towards our goal of \$35,000. Every donation big or small makes a difference in the lives of the animals who reside with us and affects the programs we offer children and families who visit us.

Donations can be made by visiting our website or by mailing them to: Delaware Zoological Society, 1001 N. Park Dr. Wilmington, DE 19802. Again, THANK YOU for all you do for our Zoo!



Delaware Zoological Society

1001 North Park Drive, Wilmington, DE 19802



Delaware Zoological Society
supporting the BRANDYWINE ZOO



**DELAWARE
STATE PARKS**

The Brandywine Zoo is managed by the Delaware Division of Parks and Recreation with the support of the Delaware Zoological Society.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity and the diversity of its work force.

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Please let us know when you move; don't miss special invitations and Zoo News. Email to memberships@brandywinezoo.org or call 302-571-7788 Ext. 215.

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**BREW
AT THE
ZOO**

**SAVE THE DATE
September 25**

Non-Profit
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Brandywine Zoo Capital Campaign



We're excited to announce, the construction crews are on-site, and our Zoo's transformation has begun. Drive by the Brandywine Zoo, and you will notice things look quite different. New fencing has been placed between the Zoo and N. Park Drive at the far end of the Zoo, as Whiting-Turner Construction Company begins moving the earth, removing boulders, and tearing down the former Llama habitat.

This construction is just the beginning as we set our sights on the new Madagascar habitat. Anticipated to open in Fall 2020, the nearly 4,000 sq. ft. habitat, which is part of Phase 2 of our Master Plan, will be home to three species of Lemurs and Radiated Tortoises. After completion, guests will have an opportunity to learn about these animals, which are native to Madagascar.