

April - June 2021

BRANDYWINE

ZOO NEWS





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Jennifer Lynch\*\*

## PHOTO

## CONTRIBUTIONS

David Haring

Daisy Fiore\*\*

Robin Sutker\*

Rebecca Pilkington\*

Brint Spencer\*

## WRITERS

Jennifer Lynch\*\*

Robin Sutker\*

Daisy Fiore\*\*

Brint Spencer\*

Mark Shafer\*\*

## DESIGN/PRINTING

Professional

Duplicating, Inc

\* Delaware State Parks Staff Member

\*\* Delaware Zoological Staff Member

The Zoo News is a publication of the  
 Delaware Zoological Society.

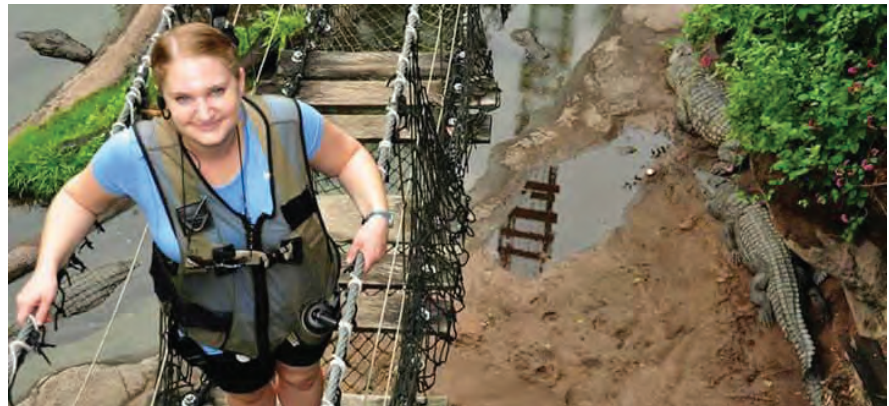
## On the Cover

The black and white ruffed lemurs are the largest of the Zoo's three lemur species, weighing ten pounds each! Whether enjoying the afternoon sun on exhibit or through their den windows, you will be envious of their seemingly laidback lifestyle. Come visit the NEW Madagascar exhibit, where one female and two male lemurs will be cohabitating with the ring-tails, crowns, and radiated tortoises when the weather warms up. Beans (the female), AJ, and Reese are excited for those long, lazy, and sunny summer days!



Photo by:  
 David Haring

## Meet Daisy



Hello everyone! I'm Daisy Fiore, the new Assistant Curator of Education and I'm thrilled to be joining the Brandywine Zoo! I'm coming most recently from Disney's Animal Kingdom where I've had many different jobs, including primate keeper, conservation education tour guide, park trainer, animal welfare researcher, and animal nutrition keeper. I have a BA in anthropology and ecology and an MA in biological anthropology, both from the University of Colorado Boulder.

I'm currently working on my PhD in anthrozoology with the University of Exeter. My project focuses on human-wildlife conflict between wildebeest and local Maasai pastoralists in Kenya. I'm most passionate about primate conservation and I love working with high schoolers and adults.

I'm excited to be here in beautiful Delaware and join the wonderful staff of the Brandywine Zoo as we inspire people of all ages to care about nature and act as stewards of planet Earth!

# Update from the Zoo Director

By Brint Spencer, Zoo Director

2020 is behind us and we are moving forward with a positive direction. The vaccines bring hope but are not a cure. We will still be wearing masks, disinfecting and social distancing at the zoo to protect our animals, our guests and ourselves. But there is a new optimism and excitement in the world and certainly at the Brandywine Zoo.

We have learned a lot about ourselves and done new and exciting things during the pandemic. Some of us learned we could work remotely (for better or worse). However, our animal care staff has been at the zoo every day providing the same excellent animal care they always do. Zookeepers are essential personnel and regardless of weather events or pandemics, know that the animals count on them every day. In addition to daily care they have been improving some of our animal enclosures and preparing for new species coming in for the season.

Our education staff has had to be very creative and learn new technologies and ways of teaching to reach remote audiences. Who had heard of Zoom 15 months ago? They created a whole virtual zoo to continue providing quality programming to former visitors who were now remote. Many of our traditional camp programs were canceled, but evolved into *Camp in a Box* where themed crafts and activities were delivered to participants. Groundhog Day became a live virtual experience that was viewed by >1,200 students.



Our zoological society was hit hard by the lack of income from traditional sources while we were closed and then opened with reduced capacity. Our guest services staff developed an online gift shop which offers traditional souvenirs and plush along with self-guided discovery tours. These tours allow children to have a socially distanced educational experience when they do visit the zoo this spring. A number of larger fund raising events were cancelled last year. This year the zoo has created a series of evening Sip & Stroll events to allow guest to explore the zoo after hours with a beverage. Check the website

for additional information about these and our other events. We have a new online ticketing system where guests can preorder tickets for different time slots. This allows us to maintain an appropriate number of guests on grounds for social distancing and provide a safe and enjoyable visit for everyone.

Covid has changed a lot in the world, but it has not changed our core values. We are committed to excellent animal care, excellent education programs and excellent guest experiences. This season we will have new species, updated facilities and new programming. There are new adventures waiting and new memories to be created with your family and friends. See you at the Zoo.



◀ Brazilian rainbow boa is a powerful snake and is a stealthy hunter. They live in tropical climates throughout most of Central and South America, where they hunt at night.

The green tree python has very distinct coloration. The adult can be any one of a variety of shades of green. Juveniles can be yellow or red with white spots, and turn to their eponymous green coloring as adults. ▶





# The Traveling Zoo Goes Virtual!

By Daisy Fiore, Assistant Curator of Education

The Traveling Zoo is always a fun challenge, but when you can't travel it's a bit problematic! We have been offering virtual programming since COVID began, but this winter and spring the education department decided to expand even more into the virtual world. Using Zoom, Webex, or other video conferencing platforms we are bringing our animal encounters and classrooms programs to kids and classrooms via the internet!

Our live virtual debut took place on Groundhog's Day with quite a bang! Over 1,200 people (mostly school kids) attended this fantastic live event. They got the chance to visit the zoo grounds and animals virtually with education host Meghan Hoopes, who asked our animals to guess whether we were in for six more weeks of winter or an early spring. We provided themed worksheets for classrooms to follow along with this event. Feedback from the event was outstanding and teachers were excited for more. We quickly followed with a weekend of events for Valentine's Day and GALentine's Day. In a follow up survey for Valentine's Day respondents applauded our unique take on the holiday and fun atmosphere and asked for more.

We've continued to offer our virtual programming, but in the month of March we took a break from live events so we could gear up for the most important month of the year: **Earth Month!** April is going to

be our biggest month yet for virtual content and live events, and we are thrilled to be bringing so much material to kids, families, and citizens of Delaware. We'll be offering two live virtual events. On April 1st we'll be kicking off Earth Month with a live event starring our animals and featuring fun and creative ways to challenge ourselves to be more sustainable and Earth friendly. On April 22nd we'll be celebrating Earth Day by going on a virtual journey around the world with our animals, as we learn about their wild habitats and

the threats their wild cousins face.

Earth Day is all about celebrating wildlife and wild places, and no one does that better than the Brandywine Zoo!

We are delighted to offer all-new virtual programming for a crucial audience—middle and high school students. Throughout the month of April, we will be presenting our first-ever Earth Month Sustainability Series through social media. These short videos will present different

environmental problems facing our planet, and they will challenge students to think critically about solving sustainability problems with a positive, we-can-do-this approach. These videos are free, compliments of the Brandywine Zoo and Chichester DuPont Foundation Grant.

We have many virtual events planned for this summer, so stay tuned as we explore new opportunities in our virtual world!



## BRANDYWINE ZOO EARTH MONTH LIVE !

EARTH MONTH KICK OFF  
APRIL 1, 11 AM

EARTH DAY  
APRIL 22, 11AM

**\$5 FOR HOUSEHOLDS**  
**\$15 FOR CLASSROOMS**

CLASSROOM REGISTRATION  
COMES WITH WORKSHEETS!

# What's New At The Zoo?

By Robin Sutker

The frost of winter is finally (hopefully?) wearing off, and flowers are blooming. Spring is always an exciting time at the Zoo – animals are more active, keepers can be seen training and enriching (as they do year round!), and sometimes even new exhibits take shape! With a focus on mixed species exhibits, you will be able to see the new Madagascar exhibit on full parade this Spring. Three species of lemurs, radiated tortoises, and helmeted guineafowl will be out exploring the entire exhibit now that the weather is warm enough. As coinsurers of dirt (i.e. they love a good dirt bath), the guineafowl are temporarily vacationing with the sandhill crane in the Zoo's historic stone enclosures, while the new grass and soil continue to settle in the Madagascar exhibit.



As with all tropical species at the Zoo, the lemurs and tortoises are on exhibit daily, weather dependent. They will normally be on exhibit with access to their indoor space above 50 degrees, but wind, storms, and precipitation may vary their exact exhibit times. The warmer the day, the better your chance of seeing them!

Mixed species exhibits can be tricky to get right, ensuring all animal species are able to coexist with enough access to resources (food, space, water, shade, etc.).



It is always important to consider predator/prey relationships as well, so as not to provide any undue stress to the animals. Madagascar joins South America and Barnyard at the far end of the Zoo as the three most diverse exhibits – including some combination of mammals and

birds, with the occasional reptile. Moving from Spring to Summer this year you may see a few new species appearing at that end of the Zoo, so keep an eye out!





# Construction Update

Madagascar is complete and the lemurs and radiated tortoises are enjoying the spring sunshine. Now we are turning our construction hard hats to the other end of the zoo. Our new Animal Care Center (ACC) is starting to take shape along Monkey Hill. This facility will be about 3 ½ times larger than our current animal hospital and will greatly enhance our ability to care for our animals.

The zoo is committed to being a good neighbor and part of that commitment meant that this building would have a low profile since it sits on the perimeter of the zoo. The exterior will feature a stone façade on the base and natural wood above that complement the other structures in the zoo and surrounding park.







Inside the building, there will be expanded treatment, lab and office space for the vet staff. Expanded animal holding areas will have indoor and outdoor spaces. Other special features include a built in pool for aquatic species and circadian rhythm lighting. These lights will be on timers and come on with a low warm light that replicates dawn. During the day the lights will get brighter and replicate mid-day sun before returning to the warm light of sunset.

backfill will go in. After that the interior space will be graded and sub floor water and electric lines will be installed before the floor is poured.



Overseeing this project is “Dr. Sam” our new construction mascot. You can follow Dr. Sam on our social media platforms to learn about the status of the project and see some of the special features we are adding.

Large retaining walls have been poured and form the back of the building. Foundation drains have been installed and the area behind these walls are being waterproofed, insulated and the soil back filled. Over the next couple of weeks, a 6” water line that had to be rerouted will be reconnected and then the final





## Meet Robin

I decided when I was eight years old that I wanted to be a zookeeper, and even with other passions and hobbies along the way, I grew up to fulfill my childhood dream. I grew up on Long Island, 40 minutes east of New York City – not exactly prime wildlife country! I graduated from Penn State University in 2010 with a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science, and a minor in Biology. After graduation, I went on to work at several zoos as a zookeeper, with more than 100 different species, from millipedes to giraffes to alligators – and nearly everything in between. I regularly call myself a generalist, as there isn't an animal I wouldn't work with. Childhood dream: check!

During my time as a keeper, I was active in the American



Robin Sutker, Assistant Curator and Assistant Zoo Manager

Association of Zoo Keepers, honing many skills that would one day help me join the ranks of zoo leadership. I also earned my M.A. in Biology from Miami University's Project Dragonfly in 2017, which included field work in Belize, Borneo, and Namibia and a focus on resources for zooquaria, keepers, and animals.

Today, I oversee the daily operations of the Brandywine Zoo and the animal department, guiding the next generation of keepers. My journey to become a keeper is now complete, but luckily with a world of animals the learning never ends. I can't wait to see how the Zoo's Master Plan evolves over the next several years and introduce new animals and experiences to Delaware!

The Brandywine Zoo is excited to announce a new happy hour series to **Sip & Stroll** through the Zoo and enjoy an adult beverage from Bellefonte Brewing or Liquid Alchemy Beverages. Fun animal encounters and activities for all ages! Experience a wild evening out at the Zoo on Wednesday nights and appreciate a close encounter of a wild kind!

- May 5 and 19
- June 16 and 30
- July 14 and 28
- August 4 and 18

From 5-7pm

**Non Member Adults \$10, children \$7**  
**Brandywine Zoo member \$5 adult,**  
**\$3 kids**

Alcohol is available for purchase, must show valid ID. Social Distancing will be maintained and masks are required when not eating or drinking. Tickets are limited to allow for social distancing within the zoo and is a rain or shine event.





# Brandywine Chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (BAAZK)

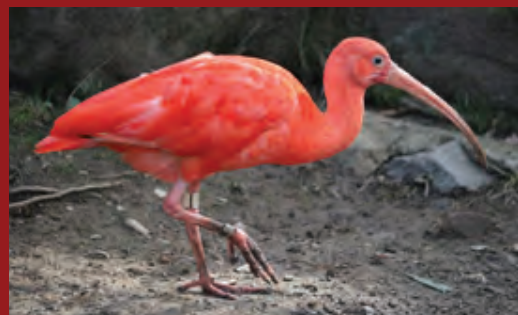


What do you do when there's a pandemic and your small chapter of a national nonprofit conservation organization cannot meet in person or hold large in person fundraisers? Much like the rest of the world, you improvise! BAAZK has continued to work towards supporting professional development of zoo keepers and conservation of animals and our natural environment. Conferences have been switched to virtual across the nation. Our members have been meeting over Zoom monthly to share ideas and work on plans.

In February, our chapter held an online animal art sale. We took the money raised from the sale and matched it to donate to the AZA Employee Relief Fund in an effort to help our fellow zoo professionals living in the recent power outages and freezing temperatures in Texas. This fund sends aid to employees of AZA members in times of natural disasters. In addition to this donation, our chapter sent postcards of support to our fellow AAZK members in Texas, some who had previously worked at the Brandywine Zoo. You see, the zoo community may span the globe, but we are still a small community. Ask any zoo keeper if they know keepers at other facilities and the answer will undoubtedly be yes! We truly have a 6 degrees of separation situation here at Brandywine Zoo!

On May 15th, we will be holding an online native plants sale to benefit Trees for You and Me. Trees for You & Me is an annual financial campaign to fund tree-planting. AAZK has partnered with Polar Bears International to raise awareness and funding for the benefit of urban tree-planting and tropical reforestation. We are also working on holding some webinars with guest speakers you will just love and a used book sale in the fall, among other things. Follow us on **Facebook @BZAAZK** for updates on our events and look for us at upcoming zoo happenings!

The scarlet ibis is related to herons and pelicans but distinguished by a long slender downwardly curved bill. Ibises and herons are in the suborder Ardei, which are classified as long-legged birds, found near fresh or brackish water, and generally feed on small aquatic animals.





# Delaware Zoological Society Executive Director Message

First of all, I'd like to welcome everyone back to a new season at the Brandywine Zoo. 2020 was as challenging a year for our beloved Zoo as any in our 115 year history. I am so proud of how our staff adjusted to all the challenges presented and so appreciative of all the support from our membership and community. We learned a lot this past year and I know we'll put that learning to good use.

We'll continue with the many practices we put in place last year that made our guests feel like the zoo was a "fun and safe" place to visit- timed reservations to help with capacity considerations.... hand sanitizer stations throughout the zoo... mask wearing compliance.... disinfecting common areas throughout the day....socially-distanced "creature features" and keeper talks.

We will be bringing back our popular "Storytime" this year. And, we'll be adding to our virtual offerings that have been so incredibly well-received. We are developing a number of "self-guided" activities for our young guests so they can better explore and learn about wildlife and conservation in a safe manner. We've even opened a virtual gift



Mark Shafer

shop. Now you can purchase many of our most popular Zootique items from your phone or home computer via our website.

And, of course, we have our new Madagascar exhibit! The lemurs and Radiated tortoises are here and ready to meet you all. We've also added a new evening series we're calling "Sip & Stroll" which will run every other Wednesday night from 5-7pm beginning in May (look for emails with more details).

We will also be introducing the "Join our Flock" campaign to celebrate Phase 3 of our Zoo Re-imagined Campaign. With Phase 1 (Madagascar) complete and Phase 2 (Animal Care Center) well on its way (completion date is scheduled for this fall), we are turning our attention to fund-raising for a new Zoo entryway which will include Chilean Flamingos as part of a new South American habitat. Our campaign will allow you to make a donation by purchasing a lawn flamingo that we will display with your family's name at the zoo!

So, we have lots going on and can't wait to see you all back here at the Brandywine Zoo.



<https://brandywine-zoo.shoptightspeed.com>





# 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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AQUARIUMS**

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

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## Upcoming Events

April 17 and 18 ..... Scout Days

April 24 ..... Earth Day @ Zoo

May 5, 19..... Sip & Stroll @ Zoo 5-7pm

May 8 and 9 ..... Scout Days

May 18..... Virtual Endangered Species Day

June 16, 30 ..... Sip & Stroll @ Zoo 5-7pm

July 14, 28 ..... Sip & Stroll @ Zoo 5-7pm

Aug 4, 18 ..... Sip & Stroll @ Zoo 5-7pm



**ENDANGERED  
SPECIES**

