

BRANDYWINE

ZOO NEWS



IN THIS ISSUE

One Cool Cat 3
 Paper Butterflies Arrive in Mexico... 4-5
 Annual Fund Supporters Thank You!... 6
 Update From The Zoo Director 7
 Zoo Camp: How Many Years? 8-9
 Board of Directors Spotlight 10
 Welcome Scarlet/Kid's Corner 11
 Zoo, Zoo, Who's at the Zoo? 12-13
 Thank You 2023 Sponsors 14
 DZS Executive Director Message 15

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

On the Cover:

The Brandywine Zoo recently welcomed Scarlet the red panda. More about Scarlet and red pandas on page 11.



Scout Night!

APRIL 6
 4:30-7PM

Enjoy an evening at the zoo at this special event just for scouts and their families!



brandywinezoo.org/learn/scoutprograms/#scout-night

One Cool Cat!

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

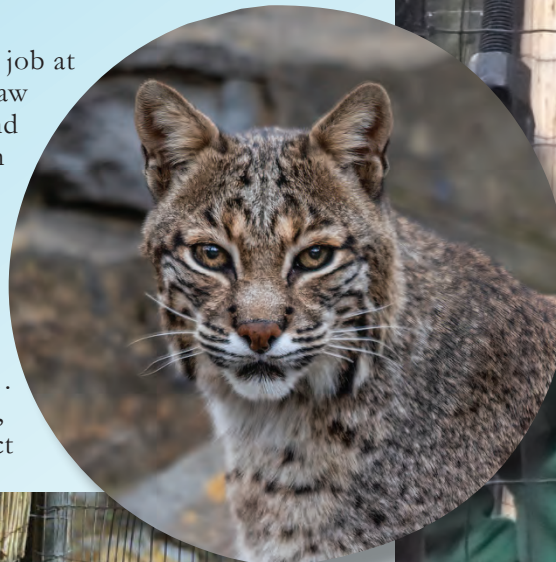
While walking through the zoo one day, I happened upon a training session between keepers and the bobcat, Squeakers. Afterward, I was told a very cool story about her by the zoo's Animal Training Coordinator, Leah Newman. I already knew Squeakers was awesome, but this new information elevated her to Totally Rad. The public needed to know too so we created a social media post, maybe you saw it. Let's dive a little deeper now.

Training zoo animals has many benefits. It provides enrichment and stimulation for the animal, their brain working to assess the situation and learn new behaviors. It creates a bond between the animal and trainer, while also teaching the trainer details specific to each animal which can be useful in various circumstances. It allows the animal choice to participate in their own medical procedures. Some of you can probably attest to how "fun" it is to pill a cat. Now imagine that cat simply opening its mouth and voluntarily swallowing the pill after you say a specific word or phrase. That's kind of what we're talking about here. A trained cat reduces stress for both of you making the situation so much better. Less stress also means better overall health. And yes, cats can be trained. Squeakers is proof!

Shortly after starting her job at Brandywine Zoo, Leah saw potential in Squeakers and developed a training plan for her. Fourteen years later and this one feline has helped about 50 keepers cultivate valuable skills. Now that's an impact! Leah says Squeakers is very smart... and very food motivated, which makes for a perfect

training subject. Operant conditioning is the method by which Leah and the zookeepers train our animals. It uses positive reinforcement, where you give the animal something good for doing what you ask. These rewards are often in the form of food, and Squeakers' favorite is raw chicken but she also likes hard-boiled eggs. She knows about 20 behaviors which include allowing us to use a stethoscope and listen to her heart and lungs, entering a containment space (kind of like a pet crate), and getting onto a scale. Leah says she is very patient but a stickler for consistency, which makes her a great teacher.

Now don't you agree that Squeakers is Totally Rad? Keepers from Brandywine Zoo have gone on to work at facilities across the country, many of them taking what they learned from this little bobcat and applying it to other animals. You could say Squeakers' teachings have gone national! We thank Leah for what she has done for Squeakers and all the other zoo animals in her program. Yet another Totally Rad female at Brandywine Zoo.



Keeper Leah training Squeakers



Former keeper Laura training Squeakers

Paper Butterflies Arrive in Mexico

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist



Photo by Estela Romero

Vicente Guerrero Elementary — Symbolic Monarch Migration

If you attended our Mighty Monarch Day event in September, you had the opportunity to color a paper butterfly that would be sent to Mexico in conjunction with the Symbolic Migration project. Well, they arrived in November at Vicente Guerrero Elementary School in the Las Palmas Community near El Rosario Sanctuary. Our 75 butterflies were divided into 3 folders, which are referred to as Ambassador Butterflies. The ambassadors were decorated by myself and our Conservation Education interns. The program asks for images from the departing location, so zoo and Park logos and photos were used along with migration information in both English and Spanish. One folder even had artwork from two of our Animal Ambassadors, Maggie the armadillo and Tintam the bearded dragon. Their biographies were provided in both languages too.

A woman by the name of Estela Romero has the fun job of delivering Ambassador Butterflies to schools. She hops in her white 1977 VW Beetle, complete with a flag of each country hanging out the window, and drives up and over the mountain roads to the excited



continued on the next page

continued from page 4

school children. Each year, the project follows a different theme and this year was water. Estela taught about the importance it has to the butterflies, but also to people and a special animal of Mexico, the axolotl. Scan the QR code to see more photos from Vicente Guerrero Elementary and read about delivery day. You can see our Ambassador Butterflies in the hands of students on the right side of the class photo! If you colored a paper butterfly, you'll be notified when "migrants" return, along with letters from the school children. We expect that to be April or May.

The Symbolic Migration project exists as a partnership between Journey North and Monarchs Across Georgia. It unites people of the entire North American continent because monarch butterflies inhabit parts of Canada, the United States, and Mexico over the course of a year. Those of us in the US and Canada are lucky to see all life stages, from egg to adult. Residents of Mexico only see monarchs in adult form, but some get to experience something we would consider lucky too- tens of thousands of butterflies roosting together! During the fall, monarchs fly to oyamel fir forests in central Mexico. At the mountain latitudes, temperature and moisture conditions provide them suitable habitat to overwinter. It wasn't until 1975 that scientists discovered this secret location! The area is now protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve. Continued conservation of monarch butterflies clearly relies on Canadians, Mexicans, and Americans all doing their part.



Please use QR code or visit symbolicmigration.org

BRANDYWINE ZOO
SIP & STROLL
HAPPY HOUR

Save the dates:
June 20th
July 11th
August 8th
September 12th

Thank You!

On behalf of all of us at the Delaware Zoological Society of the Brandywine Zoo, thank you for your Annual Fund support in 2023! Your donation directly helps us inspire love of animals and the desire to protect them with innovative programs for children and adults; supports outreach and local conservation programs; and funds the magic behind the scenes that makes the Brandywine Zoo a special place.

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**If you wish to
make a donation,
use this QR code
or visit our website at
brandywinezoo.org/fund.**

Thank you!



Update from the Zoo Director

By Brint Spencer, Zoo Director

The start of a new year at the zoo is a time to reflect on the year that has just passed and the opportunities of the coming year.

The zoo had a strong year in 2023 with a 12% increase in attendance compared to 2022 and a 30% increase over the 5-year attendance average. Our events continue to grow with most of them having a >20% attendance increase. Sip & Strolls have become a very popular way for guests to experience the zoo in the cool of the evening.

The zoo welcomed its first ever crowned lemur baby. Reign will stay with her parents to learn parenting skills as an aunt when her mother gives birth again. A male pudu was also born this summer and recently transferred to the Nashville Zoo as a mate for their female as an AZA SSP recommendation.

The zoo is so much more than a collection of animals and there are things that happen that most people are unaware of. Early in December the zoo was contacted by a hospice chaplain who was working



with a patient who loved sloths. The zoo arranged for her to come and visit the sloth with her family shortly before she passed. It is easy to take the work we do for granted. It is not until you have an experience like this that you realize how much it may mean to somebody else. Kudos to the zoo staff who made this experience so successful!

Looking forward, 2024 promises to be a fun and exciting year. Our animal population has two recent additions we are excited about. A new female red panda named Scarlet has joined Sherman and our female pudu is

being joined by a new male named Teo as an SSP recommended breeding.



Hospice patient visits with J-Law the sloth.

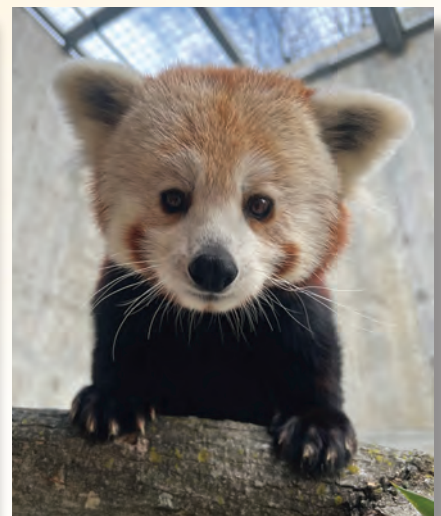
The zoo hosted a new Valentine's Day trivia event entitled Birds & Bees with questions about mating, dating and reproduction in the animal world for adults 21+. There are a lot of things to be excited about as we move into the new year. There will be old favorite events and some new surprises. Come out this year and see what's happening at the Brandywine Zoo.



Southern pudu Teo



Crowned lemur Reign with mom Sophie



Red panda Scarlet

Zoo Camp: How many years?

By Meghan Hoopes, Camp Director

We have a tradition at Brandywine Zoo's Summer Camp. On Fridays, as the week is coming to an end, each camper gets to add a paint handprint, along with their first name and camp year, to our bathroom walls. Now in 2024, the walls, which used to be a boring white, are covered with handprints of all colors and sizes. The campers love to get creative, mixing paints to get just the right color, planning gradients from one side of their palm to the other, or swirling blobs of color into abstract patterns before applying their hand to the wall.

This past summer, several returning campers proudly showed me their handprints from previous years. If you check the walls, there are many repeating names. A large percentage of our campers return for multiple years of camp. In commemoration, we had our 2023 Zoo Camp returners pose with the handprint wall, holding up a finger for each year of camp they had attended. Some of these photos you can see, alongside this article. The record, with 14 years in camp, is our Assistant Camp Director Cassie. She spent eight years in camp as a camper, three as a VolunTEEN (our teen assistant counselors), and three as a counselor. For her photo, we needed to recruit the help of four campers to add in the additional fingers she needed.

The reason why so many of our campers return year after year, and even graduate into volunteer and staff positions, is not difficult to figure out. Summer camps, in general, are a fun way for children to spend their time off from school, to get kids active, improve their social skills, and increase their self-confidence. But on top of all that, at Brandywine Zoo camp, campers get excited about animals and wildlife conservation through zoo visits, live animal presenta-

tions, crafts, games, and much more. Our returners are excited to see the animals that visit the camp room each year, asking after them by name. They are proud to help teach new campers games like Poison Dart Frog and Condor Feather, camp favorites that go back over a decade. They are happy to remind me of silly times in past camps, games played in our Nature Play area, trips to the river in the park, and animal facts they still remember learning, despite the many months that have passed.

For our 2024 Zoo Camp, we will have weekly camps open for ages 4-17, starting June 10th and continuing until August 23. Registration opens on February 5. Camp slots sell out fast, so if you are considering Zoo Camp for your camper, head to our website at brandywinezoo.org/camps to learn more and register. Whether it is their first year or 15th, this summer there is something fun for every animal lover at the Brandywine Zoo.



Cassie



Board of Directors Spotlight

By Bill Montgomery, Board President

Brief Bio

Bill Montgomery has been a “neighbor” of the Brandywine Zoo for most of his life. He was born in the Wilmington hospital just across the Brandywine River, lived in Midtown Brandywine (just east of the hospital) for 43 years, and for the past 4+ years, now lives in the Hamilton House Condominium on Shallcross Avenue about a half mile away in the Trolley Square area.

He is a retired public administrator who spent his career in a variety of positions including stints as a social worker, child abuse prevention specialist, chief of staff for Wilmington City Council, director of the Delaware General Assembly’s non-partisan Division of Research, chief of staff for Wilmington Mayor Jim Baker, and court administrator for the Delaware Supreme Court.

How long on Board?

Bill was hired as the first executive director of the Delaware Zoological Society in 2013, a position that required his service on the DZS Board. However, in 2015 he received “an offer I couldn’t refuse” and he left the DZS to return to State service at the Supreme Court. At that time, Bill expressed his desire to continue on the DZS board and his fellow board members agreed, so he has continued to serve ever since. He was just elected board president in December 2023.



Why serve on Board?

“My late wife, Lyn Doto, and I always felt that it was our civic duty to support local organizations like the Zoo, the Grand, the Delaware Art Museum, and others, that improve Wilmington’s quality of life and do so much to educate children. It’s an honor to serve on the DZS board.”

Favorite thing?

“Every time I walk in the Zoo, I remember coming here as a child with my family, or stopping in with my wife on our walks around the Brandywine. The Brandywine Zoo holds many happy memories for me.”

Tidbit?

“Within weeks of being hired, an enormous tree fell on the Monkey House. The keepers on duty that day were pleading with the firefighters to be allowed back into what was left of the building to rescue the monkeys, but the firefighters were concerned that the massive tree might shift and kill someone. They finally relented and said they’d give the keepers one hour to mount a rescue effort. I went in the wet, pitch-black structure with the keepers and held a flashlight for them as they moved methodically from enclosure to enclosure rescuing the agitated animals, placing them in carriers, and handing them one-by-one out the back door to their fellow keepers waiting on the outside. Without a moment of hesitation about their own safety, these brave women risked their lives to save the animals in their care.”



CARACAL FACTS

These strongly built felines have tan to brick red coats, distinctive tufted ears and long legs, especially their hindquarters.

Some may mistake the caracal hissing meaning for aggressive behavior, but these sounds are a form of cat communication. They use sounds like hisses and growls to express their mood, much like a content purring cat.

They have relatively short, flat faces with dark markings above their eyes and cheeks. Their large, dark tipped and tufted ears give caracals a rather regal appearance.

Welcome Scarlet

By Amy Haddock, Assistant Curator/Registrar

Scarlet is a three-year-old red panda that came to us from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Virginia as part of the AZA Species Survival Plan. Scarlet will be a companion for Sherman, who is an 11-year-old red panda at the Brandywine Zoo. Scarlet is interested in what her keepers are doing. She loves bamboo and grapes.



You can help red pandas by being an educated consumer and making smart purchases. You can also donate to the Red Panda Network, which has become a world leader in efforts to save red pandas and their habitat. They use an integrated, landscape-level approach to conservation that is built on the support and participation of local communities. Their conservation programs extend to over one million acres of forest and 50% of Nepal's red panda range!

Red pandas are listed as an endangered species. The population of red pandas has decreased by over 50% in the last 20 years due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and climate change. Life in the Himalayas is heavily impacted by the changing climate. Melting glacial ice not only affects red pandas, but it also affects the livelihood and public health of people who live in these areas.

Local communities are key to red panda conservation. Red Panda Network works with the people who live alongside red pandas to secure sustainable livelihoods and live harmoniously with local wildlife.

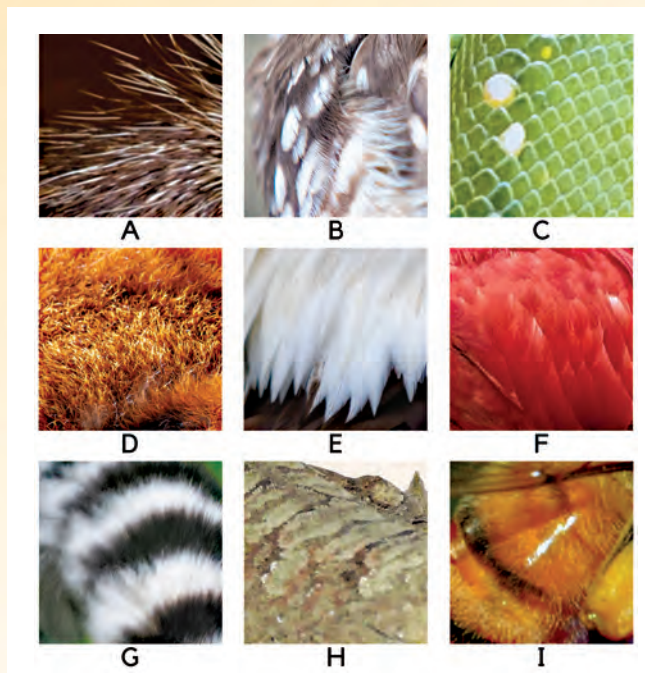
Red pandas are managed by the Species Survival Plan and considered a signature program, meaning it is on track for long term sustainability.

Come visit Scarlet and Sherman at the Brandywine Zoo and learn more about how you can help red pandas.

Sources: IUCN and Red Panda Network

KID'S CORNER ACTIVITY

By Meghan Hoopes, Education Programs Coordinator



**All of these close-ups are of an animal that lives at the Brandywine Zoo!
Can you figure out which animal is in each photo?**

Kid's Corner answers on page 15.

Zoo, Zoo, Who's at the Zoo?

By Amanda Austin, Early Childhood Educator

Brandywine Zoo at Warner Elementary's Early Years Program

Starting in 2022, the Brandywine Zoo education team received a grant from the Laffey McHugh foundation to provide programming and field trips for Warner Elementary's Early Years Program (EYP). Located just up the hill from the Brandywine Zoo, the EYP provides education for students ages 3-5, with the majority of the student population having autism or other learning needs.

While the original grant proposal was for virtual programming, when classes returned to in-person in the Fall of 2022, I decided to pivot and developed three series of 5-week, in-person programs to be held at Warner EYP that began in January 2023. With the help of our education docents and seasonal interns, I visited the EYP twice a week for 15 weeks throughout the year to teach about various Zoo animals, both exhibit animals that guests may see at the Zoo and ambassador animals that live "behind the scenes". Teachers were also given supplies and activities to do in the classroom and outdoors throughout the week to reinforce the lessons about that week's animal. Examples of activities ranged from a craft to make a millipede, measuring how high students could jump compared to an armadillo, or a shape scavenger hunt on their nature walk. Funding also allowed students, faculty, and parents to visit the Zoo for a free field trip at the end of each 5-week session.

The focus of the program was to not only teach students about the Zoo's animals, but also to support the students in learning about their emotions, to strengthen their empathy for animals and each other, and to encourage them to explore outdoors even in an urban setting.

Each student received a storybook each week to take home for their personal libraries from the Zoo's Diversity Storytime list. One of my favorite quotes about books is that they act as "mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors" (Rudine Sims Bishop). Books act as windows to allow us to see unfamiliar worlds, and they become sliding glass doors when they transport us to these new places, helping us empathize with those who have different stories than our own. Stories can also act as mirrors, allowing us to see ourselves within the story and helping us to feel seen, heard, and understood.

Through song, dance, play, and storytelling, students were able to connect to animals they had never seen or heard of before. One of the most rewarding parts of this program for me was when a child would have that "a-ha" moment and form a special connection with an animal or realize that we are more similar to some animals than we may realize. Who knew that skinks eat their vegetables too, that bobcats are excellent at hide-and-seek, or that red pandas climb trees like we climb the playground! These similarities helped students connect to the animals, but also helped them be brave if they were nervous about seeing an animal they had never heard of before.



continued on the next page

continued from page 12.

I was amazed at seeing a particular student who was nervous about meeting one of our ambassador lizards, however by the end of the session, was feeling brave and came up for a closer look and asked questions about him. Talk about an “a-ha” moment!



An unexpected benefit that teachers and staff discovered through the Zoo programming was an increase in reading and literacy, thanks to the printed Zoo songs that were posted in the “Zoo Room” where we would have our sessions. Students would often read along while we were singing, and the Zoo song even became a part of the school’s culture, with teachers singing it to

help students work through difficult transitions or emotions.

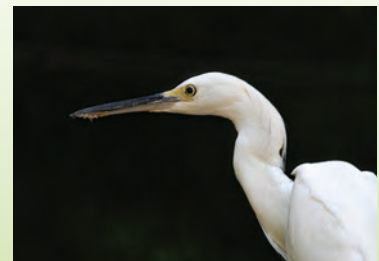


This program has been rewarding for me in more ways than I can describe. It has helped me rediscover what a wonderful community we have here in Wilmington, and I look forward to continuing programs at Warner EYP. I would like to send a special thank you to the Laffey McHugh Foundation, Patricia Dallas, Alyce Rouse, all the Warner EYP teachers and support staff, Zoo docent Ruth Williams, and our amazing Conservation Education interns and staff that have helped me along the way. Warner students, I can’t wait to see you at the Zoo (Room) in 2024. See you later, alligator!



Brandywine Zoo’s Snowy Egrets

The Brandywine Zoo has three female snowy egrets: Patch, Chessie, and Rook. They came to us in 2021 from the St. Louis Zoo.



Fun Fact

Long, wispy plumage grows on the snowy egret’s back, neck and head during breeding season. In the 1800s, snowy egret populations were decimated due to the popularity of these plumes in fashion. With the help of protections that started in the 20th century, populations have recovered.

www.brandywinezoo.org

Hooray for all the sponsors that supported us in 2023!

Thank You!

If your organization would like to sponsor an event at the zoo, please email events@brandywinezoo.org.



Join us for Brew at the Zoo! Friday, May 31st, 5:30-8:30pm.

Visit the link or scan the QR code for more details.

See you there!

brandywinezoo.org/brew-at-the-zoo

Delaware Zoological Society Executive Director Message

I hope you are all as excited about the return of the Zoo News to print format as we are.

The Zoo News has been a staple of Zoo membership for years. During covid, because of the financial challenges it created for us, we had to revert to an electronic-only version of this important publication.

While we were able to maintain the quality content the Zoo News has long been known for, somehow it just didn't feel the same.

We heard from many of you, how you missed its arrival in your mailbox. To be honest, we all missed it too.

Well, it's back and it's here to stay.

And we have you, our valued members, to thank for that.

We've seen member attendance at Zoo events surge over the past few years. Gift giving in 2023 was very successful (our annual fund campaign begins in November each year and runs through October and the 2024 campaign is off to a very good start!). We ran a special "gift membership" campaign during the holiday season and saw a record number of gift memberships opened. In fact, overall membership is at the highest we've seen in many, many years.

For our household membership families, we hope you've been able to take advantage of our partnership with the



Mark Shafer

Delaware Children's Museum and The Delaware Museum of Nature and Science. By joining at the household membership level, you have earned two free guest passes to each of these wonderful organizations.

In 2024, we plan to celebrate you, our loyal and valued members. We are kicking off the season

with our Members-Only Event. Please plan to join us on April 23 for Taco-Tuesday night at the zoo. We'll be offering tacos, ice cream, churros and soft drinks. We'll have animal encounters and face-painting for kids (if an adult manages to slip into line to get their face painted, that's ok too).

We also plan to announce special members-only offers throughout the season beginning with: "Bring a guest for free" during the month of April. We'd love to have you help us show off this gem of a zoo to your friends. We'd love to hear from you too. We receive valuable feedback via the guest surveys submitted by members and non-members. But I invite you to email me directly (mshafer@brandywinezoo.org) to let me know what you like, what we can do better, or just to share anything on your mind.

We want the Brandywine Zoo to be as important to you, as you are to us.

BRANDYWINE ZOO
MEMBERS ONLY
April 23, 5-7pm *Night*
brandywinezoo.org/events/members-only-event

KID'S CORNER ANSWERS

- A: Porcupine
- B: Burrowing Owl
- C: Green Tree Python
- D: Red Panda
- E: Bald Eagle
- F: Scarlett Ibis
- G: Ring Tailed Lemur
- H: Mossy Prehensile Tailed Gecko
- I: Honey Bee

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 302-407-4416.

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FRIDAY MAY 31ST
5:30 - 8:30PM



Upcoming Events & Programs

- Spring Kick Off.....March 16
- Scout Night.....April 6
- Party for the PlanetApril 20
- Members Only Event.....April 23
- Stuffed Animal Vet ClinicApril 27
- Sensory HourApril 13, May 11
- Native Plant Sale.....May 25-27
- Brandywine Zoo Online AuctionMay 1-8
- Guest Bartending at BBC Tavern and GrillMay 2
- Brew at the ZooMay 31
- Little Nature Explorers.....Ongoing Sessions
- Summer CampsJune 10 - August 23



For More Information, visit www.brandywinezoo.org
and follow us on social media for updates @brandywinezoo

