

BRANDYWINE

ZOO NEWS



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

## On the Cover:

Marco is one of the two Lesser Madagascar hedgehog tenrecs that live at the Zoo as animal ambassadors. Marco and Tahiry live behind-the-scenes but may make an appearance during educational programs or events occasionally.

Learn more on page 4.



## Volunteer Spotlight

By Karen Galanaugh

## Who is this guy taking photos?

That's Jim Smigie, our official photographer for the Brandywine Zoo. Jim donates his photography for use by the zoo. Jim served in the U.S. Coast Guard and worked in the specialty chemicals and electronics industries for several companies, including Dupont and ICI, before retiring. Jim and his wife, Katherine Ward, are generous supporters of the Delaware Zoological Society. Jim's favorite zoo resident is Sandy, the Sandhill Crane.



# Delaware Zoological Society Executive Director Message

As we come to a close of another fun year here at the Brandywine Zoo, I want to take this opportunity to say thanks to you, our most valued members. Your support continues to be so very critical to all we strive to achieve.

Many of you are new to the zoo. We ran a very successful membership gift campaign at the end of 2023.

Over 100 “gift memberships” were purchased and given out last year. We are hoping, of course, that those gift recipients enjoyed their membership and plan to renew. We will continue with the gift campaign this fall. If you’d like to send a gift membership, please contact our Membership Coordinator Carole Webber ([memberships@brandywinezoo.org](mailto:memberships@brandywinezoo.org)). Membership is at one of the highest points in our history and we take great pride in that.

We’re also excited to tell you about our upcoming Zoobilee Gala (Saturday March 22, 2025 at the DuPont Country Club). We are running this fundraising event in support of our Capital Campaign. Our next project is to upgrade two existing spaces into one new multi-species complete with a viewing window into the winter holding area. This new habitat will provide high-quality flexible



Mark Shafer



animal space and also will double the vertical height of the existing habitat for controlled flight for the zoo’s toucans. Save the date invitations will be going out soon. I hope you all will be able to come out and help us raise funds for this much needed habitat upgrade.

Finally, I’d like to ask you to contribute to our annual fund. We rely heavily on the generosity of the community, and membership in particular, to help us continue to provide the programming and conservation efforts we employ. The funds we receive via the annual fund campaign help us to make a difference both locally as well as internationally (we support several international conservation organizations). An annual fund appeal communication will be going out to you shortly. If you’re able to contribute, we would be most grateful.

In the meantime, I hope to see many of you at our upcoming special events, including Boo at the Zoo (October 18, 19, 20), Spirits at the Zoo (October 25), our 21+ costume party, Santa at the Zoo (December 7, 8) and Zoo Year’s Eve (December 31)—this year we will have two ball drops!

A colorful promotional graphic for the Zoobilee 25 event. The word "ZOOBILEE" is written in large, stylized, multi-colored letters. Below it, "25" is written in a large, red, blocky font. To the right, the text "March 22, 2025 DuPont Country Club" is displayed. The Brandywine Zoo logo is in the top right corner. At the bottom, there is contact information: "development@brandywinezoo.org" and "OUR ZOO Re-imagined" with a logo featuring a toucan and a flamingo. A line of text at the bottom states: "This event is in support of the Brandywine Zoo Capital Campaign".

# Ambassador Highlight - Tenrecs

By Amanda Austin, Early Childhood Educator



“Oh look, a hedgehog!” If that was your first thought after seeing Marco or Tahiry, you wouldn’t be the first. However, they are different from the hedgehogs we might be more familiar with. On the cover of this month’s issue, you can see Marco, one of the two Lesser Madagascar hedgehog tenrecs that live at the Zoo as animal ambassadors. Marco and Tahiry live behind-the-scenes but may make an appearance during educational programs or events.

“But hedgehog is even in their name!” you might think next. And you would be correct! However, Lesser Madagascar hedgehog tenrecs are so named because they look similar to hedgehogs, not because they are closely related. Tenrecs are more closely related to elephants than to hedgehogs! Through a process called convergent evolution, hedgehogs and tenrecs evolved similar traits in response to certain environmental conditions in different areas of the planet. Both species have spines on their bodies, and when threatened, tenrecs will curl into a ball with their spines out to ward off potential predators. Nobody wants a prickly meal!

This species of tenrec is naturally found in the dry forests of Madagascar, an island off the southeastern coast of

Africa. Tenrecs use their whiskers and keen sense of smell to navigate their surroundings and find food. Speaking of food, members of this species are insectivores, meaning they eat, well, insects! Tenrecs have small eyes and don’t have the best eyesight. This is okay because this species is mostly nocturnal, or more awake at night, spending their days resting in tree cavities. Since Marco and Tahiry are education animals, they will rest during some parts of the day and are active in other parts of the day, so they are ready to help our education staff with programs.

Though Marco and Tahiry are the same species, they also have their own personalities! Marco enjoys zooming and climbing around his habitat and snacking on mealworms. Tahiry enjoys curling up in a cozy blanket-lined den and will gently walk onto a staff member’s hand when she’s ready to go on a program. Knowing each individual’s personality is important for our staff so we can provide the best care for them and keep track of any important changes. It’s amazing how much personality can be in such a small animal!

Thanks for learning more about Marco and Tahiry, we hope to see you at the Zoo soon!



# Butterfly Research Continues

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

You've all seen it and can identify it immediately- the monarch butterfly. With its distinct black and orange wings, this species is widely known yet struggling to survive. As milkweed is its only host plant, that which the caterpillar eats, planting more is critical to help them. Brandywine Zoo has multiple locations with butterfly weed and swamp milkweed flourishing. This marks the second season staff has participated in the citizen science program called Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (mlmp.org), or MLMP for short. A partnership of the Monarch Joint Venture and University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum, MLMP instructs participants to check their milkweed for any life stage of monarch butterflies. While at a workshop in Madison last year, I was trained how to monitor and now train Conservation Education Interns to do it onsite here.

Each week they inspect all parts of the plant for eggs or caterpillars (of which there are 5 instar stages). Any sighting of adults nearby is also recorded, along with plants in bloom and rainfall data. There was much excitement after a check in July when they found 14 eggs! Great disappointment followed however, when zero caterpillars were seen the following week. This was likely due to predation, as caterpillars are on the menu for spiders, various bugs, and even birds. There was also

heavy rainfall during that time, which may have contributed to some mortality. However, we have started seeing adult butterflies more often in the past few weeks, so I believe September will yield better results. That means the zoo might set the stage for members of one of the most impressive migrations of all- the journey to oyamel fir forests in Central Mexico. Any pupa that emerges in the fall will head there, more than 3,000 miles away. Our interns will be watching!





We had our 11th annual Brew at the Zoo on May 31, 2024, and raised over \$27,000 for important animal conservation and public education missions of the Brandywine Zoo! We simply could not have done it without the support of the generous vendors and sponsors (listed to the right), and the help of our wonderful volunteers, board members and zoo staff. The sold-out crowd was wowed by Phung Luu and his free flight birds and jammed out to Green Eggs and Jam while enjoying delicious food and beverages from our fabulous vendors. We're grateful for the good weather, great turnout and the support of our members, patrons, and donors. Stay tuned for details about Brew at the Zoo 2025!

### Special thanks to our Brew vendors & sponsors

- Bellefonte Brewing Company**
- Del Pez**
- Dogfish Head Beer & Benevolence**
- Franks Wine**
- GF&M (Gordon, Fournaris & Mammarella, P.A.)**
- Hy-Point Farms**
- Iron Hill**
- Kid Shelleen's**
- Lucky Shot Coffee Company**
- Prime Hospitality**
- Santa Fe**
- Stitch House**
- Wilmington Brew Works**



### K9 Demonstration



### Prehistoric Times



# Pride Day



# World Oceans Day



# Storytime with Smokey Bear



# CLA Is Over but Makes Lasting Impact

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist



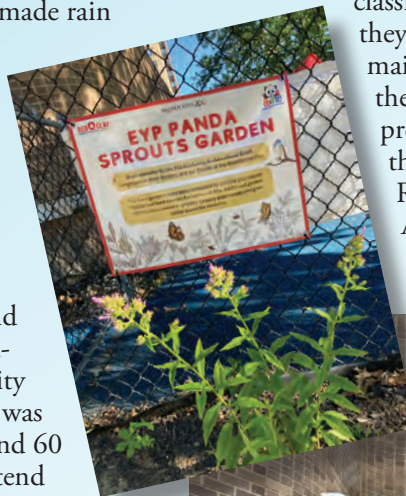
August 17th marked the final session of this year's **Conservation Leadership Academy**. Since March, teens spent a full day with our Community Engagement Specialist once a month for a deep dive on a variety of topics. Human-wildlife Conflict, Water Conservation, and Backyard Habitats were a few of them. They engaged with and saw presentations from professionals in the field such as Tristate Bird Rescue, USDA APHIS, DE State Parks, and local garden designer, Plant Lady Lucy. Service-learning opportunities were offered for specific sessions as well as the overall program. We conducted a litter pickup as part of Plastic Pollution and made rain barrels for Water Conservation. Throughout the 6-month program, students came together for a group project to install and maintain gardens at a local preschool.

The Early Years Program at Warner Elementary (EYP) is a wonderful partner of the zoo and we were so happy to help them receive a GroMoreGood Grassroots Grant from The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation and KidsGardening to fund the CLA project. Additional funding came from fellow community members at Congregation Beth Shalom and was wonderful help in achieving our goals. Around 60 children, up to and including 4yrs of age, attend the program at EYP. Many have been identified with disabilities, primarily autism, and over 95% are

children of color. The addition of these gardens allowed for outdoor classroom opportunities, a better connection to nature, and therapeutic benefits for both students and staff. Clearly, wildlife will benefit too! Native pollinator plants were chosen to help bee, butterfly, and other insect populations. This in turn, supports songbirds that feed on insects. The same birds may even find shelter amongst the new plants.

Special gardens were created in a more secluded area at the school. They contain edible and sensory plants. Exposing children to herbs at a young age can prevent picky eating and expand food interests. Sage, oregano, cilantro, thyme, and parsley are some that were planted. Sensory sensitivity can occur in people of all ages, and we already knew several preschoolers had this challenge so we wanted to install a garden that would connect to them in additional ways. Colorful Swiss chard, fuzzy Robin's plantain, plus scented mints and lemon balm create additional stimulation and learning opportunities. Many of these were potted so they can be moved as needed.

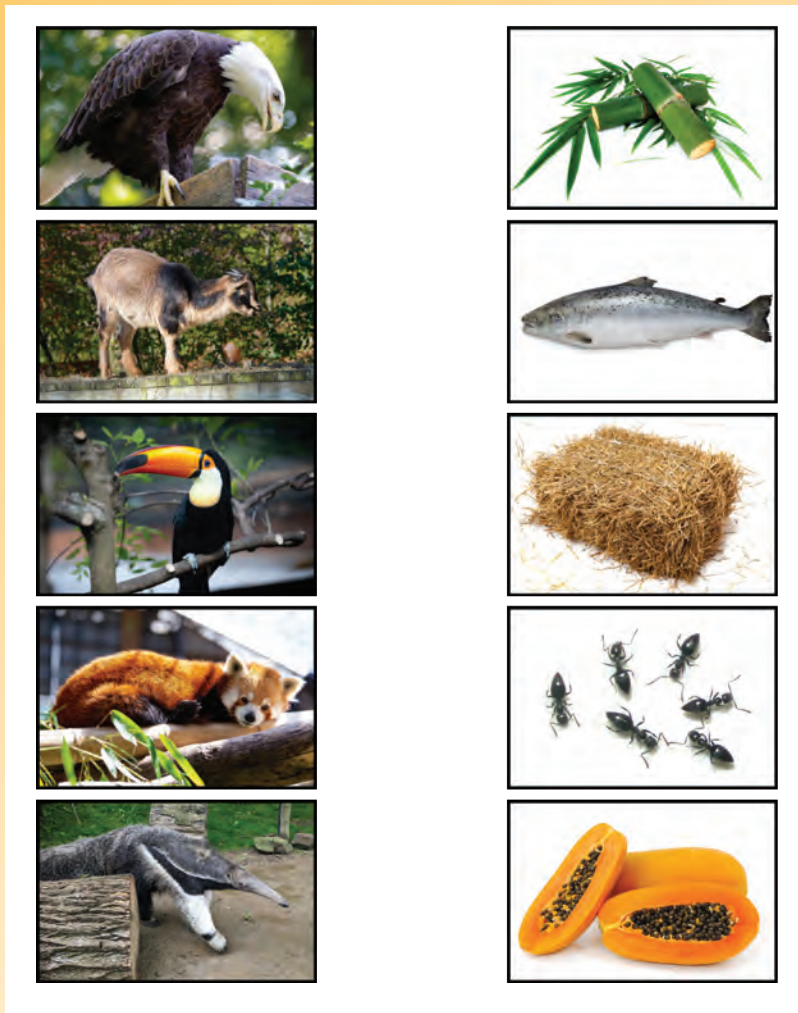
This type of project could not be completed overnight or by a single person. The expansive scope was conveyed to Conservation Leadership Academy teens as they worked through the various steps it takes. Either through classroom exercises or hands on activities, they experienced planning, execution, and maintenance. Our hope is for the skills they developed to translate across future projects at school and beyond. Special thanks go to Dr. Patricia Dallas, Alyce Rouse, Lucy Dinsmore, and Amanda Austin for their roles in making the Panda Sprouts garden a reality.





# KID'S CORNER ACTIVITY

By Meghan Hoopes, Education Programs Coordinator



## What's for Dinner?

Can you match the animal to the food it eats (the most)?

Visit **SANTA** AT THE **ZOO**

December 7th & 8th 10am-12:30pm

Get your photo with Santa!

Members: \$4 • Non-members: \$8  
 Tickets: [brandywinezoo.org/santa/](http://brandywinezoo.org/santa/)

**Zoo Year's Eve** AT THE **ZOO**

December 31  
 10am-12pm & 12-2pm  
[brandywinezoo.org/zoo-years-eve](http://brandywinezoo.org/zoo-years-eve)

[www.brandywinezoo.org](http://www.brandywinezoo.org)

Answers: bald eagle – fish, goat – hay, toucan – fruit, red panda – bamboo, giant anteater – ants (and other bugs)

# Member Spotlight

Meet Kim Sisk. Kim is a member of the Delaware Zoological Society that supports the Brandywine Zoo. Animals and photography are her passions. She and her wife make frequent visits to the zoo where Kim can take lots of photos. Take a look at some of her spectacular photos here. Thank you, Kim, for supporting the zoo and capturing these beautiful images. If you'd like to support the zoo by becoming a member, visit [brandywinezoo.org/support/membership](http://brandywinezoo.org/support/membership)



Kim (left) and Ellen (right) at The Wilds in Cumberland, Ohio.

# Bye, Bye Birdies

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist



While not an actual bird, the term “snowbirds” does apply to a migratory species. Dark-eyed juncos arrive in our area as temperatures drop and winter approaches. Ironically, this term is used for people who do just the opposite! They leave northern climates for warmer weather down south. Many think temperature causes certain bird species to migrate, but it is more about food than frost.

During the spring and fall each year, millions of birds travel. The abundance of food like bugs, seeds, and berries changes with the seasons, so they must go where the food is. Here in Delaware, many will start heading south in the coming weeks if they haven't already. Most will fly to South America but some smaller species like hummingbirds log less miles to Mexico or Cuba. As you can imagine, the trip is quite dangerous. Power lines, buildings, storms, and predators are just some of the hurdles they must overcome. We can help!

Something as simple as a window has the power to kill millions of birds per year. Studies show, injuries sustained before they fly away from a strike often lead to death

later. Make your windows visible to them by adding strike prevention treatment like Feather Friendly or CollidEscape dots. You can see those particular decals on windows at the zoo! There are other methods too. American Bird Conservancy is an expert on this topic, so check their website for more suggestions.

If you are reading this while enjoying a cup of coffee, make the switch to bird-friendly varieties and help birds even more! The numerous coffee farms in South America have become overwintering sites for migratory birds. Therefore, it is crucial they are healthy and sustainable. Certified by the Smithsonian Institute, bird-friendly coffee comes from farms providing ideal habitat composed of a layered forest of native plants maintained without pesticide treatment. Many of the additional bushes and trees provide extra crops for the farmers to sell. Coffee grown on these farms consistently scores highest in taste tests. All this makes bird-friendly coffee a triple win! Stop in at our gift shop for a bag.



Treating your windows for bird strike prevention and supporting the bird-friendly coffee initiative are just two ways to help millions of birds that migrate and those that don't. For more, seek out resources from organizations like Cornell Lab of Ornithology or Audubon. Don't forget, if birds can thrive in a space, so can many other species, creating the biodiversity we all need.

**October 25, 5:30-8pm**

**SPIRITS AT THE ZOO**

Enjoy Halloween spirits without the kids!

**Tickets: [brandywinezoo.org/spiritsatthetoo](http://brandywinezoo.org/spiritsatthetoo)**

Members: \$5 • Non-members \$10 • Drink Tickets: \$6

# 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](mailto:memberships@brandywinezoo.org) or call 302-407-4416.

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## Best Place for a Birthday Party

LEARN MORE ON OUR WEBSITE  
[brandywinezoo.org/events/birthday-parties](http://brandywinezoo.org/events/birthday-parties)

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S.  
Postage Paid  
Wilmington, DE  
Permit No. 601



# Upcoming Events & Programs

World Migratory Bird Day ..... October 12

Boo at the Zoo..... October 18, 19, 20

Spirits at the Zoo..... October 25

Scout Night..... November 2

Sensory Hour ..... November 9

Santa at the Zoo ..... December 7, 8

Zoo Year's Eve ..... December 31

Little Nature Explorers ..... Fall Session



For More Information, visit [www.brandywinezoo.org](http://www.brandywinezoo.org) and follow us on social media for updates @brandywinezoo

