

BRANDYWINE

ZOO NEWS



IN THIS ISSUE

DZS Executive Director Message	3
Literacy at the Brandywine Zoo	4
Celebrate the Season with...Trash?	5
A look back at Zoo Events	6-7
MLMP is Spreading its Wings	8
Kids Corner	9
Robb Dehney	10
Zoobilee Gala	11
Upcoming Events and Programs	12

Board of Directors

William S. Montgomery, President
 Arlene Reppa, Vice President
 Serena Wilson-Archie, Second Vice President
 Gabriel Baldini, Treasurer
 Amy Hughes, Secretary
 Robb Dehney
 Cameron Fee
 Candice Galvis
 Bruce Jameson
 Megan McGlinchey
 Bruce Miller
 Michael Milligan
 Cathy Morris
 Richard Rothwell
 Daniel F. Scholl
 Francie Warther

Ex-Officio

Mark Shafer, Executive Director
 Brint Spencer, Zoo Director
 James Wagner, DNREC

Support Staff

Melanie Flynn, Visitor Services Manager
 Kate McMonagle, Marketing &
 Special Events Manager
 Carole Webber
 Membership Coordinator

EDITOR

Kate McMonagle**

PHOTOS

Amanda Austin*
 Rhonda Bowman
 Linnea Hummel*
 Jen Klotz*
 Emily Slagle*
 Jim Smigie

WRITERS

Amanda Austin*
 Karen Galanaugh
 Meghan Hoopes*
 Linnea Hummel*
 Jen Klotz*
 Mark Shafer**

DESIGN/PRINTING

Professional Duplicating, Inc.

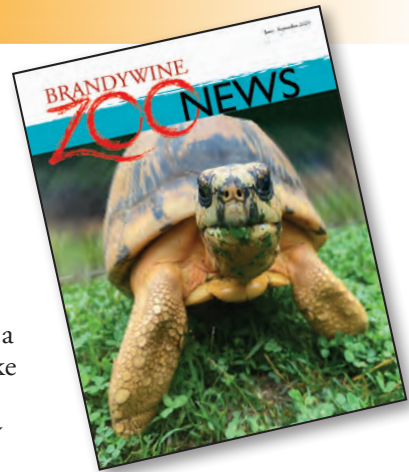
* Delaware State Parks Staff Member

** Delaware Zoological Staff Member

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

On the Cover:

"Meet Atsimo, the zoo's oldest resident! This radiated tortoise is estimated to be between 52-62, but he's sure got a spunk in his step! He enjoys scratches and showers from his keepers, and will never say no to a cherry tomato. Radiated Tortoises like Atsimo are considered a critically endangered species and suffer greatly from habitat loss and poaching for domestic and international food and pet markets."



Cover photo by Linnea Hummel*

Check Out Our Radiated Tortoises!



Brandywine Zoo has four radiated tortoises. You can find them in the Madagascar habitat along with the lemurs. See you at the zoo!

Delaware Zoological Society Executive Director Message

We are off to a great start.

As you can imagine, as an outdoor venue, we are very dependent on having good weather if we hope to achieve what we need to achieve financially. And, in this part of the world, springtime weather can be very unhelpful. But, so far, so good. We've seen strong weekend attendance, and with schools soon letting out for summer, fingers crossed, we'll continue to welcome record crowds.

But not everything we do is weather dependent- cases in point: our Capital Campaign's Zoobilee Gala (held on March 22, indoors, at the DuPont Country Club) and our just completed Guest Bartending Event held at the BBC Tavern in Greenville. The Gala was SOLD OUT and generated net revenues of over \$112,000 for our next exhibit upgrade- our multi-species habitat (combining two of our older exhibits adjacent to the concessions stand). We are still short of our financial goal of \$1.8MM but hope to raise the final dollars over the summer months in order to begin construction in November. If you can help out, please click use the QR code below and make a donation of any amount.

On May 1, we held our second consecutive BBC Guest bartending event and were fortunate enough to raise \$8,400. These dollars are applied to our "general operations" which



Mark Shafer

include our educational and conservation efforts. We had a new cadre of guest bartenders this year, including Kristin Chambers, Ali Monaghan, and Brandywine Zoo members, Lauren Duddy & Vivek Reddy. The event was a blast, and we made many new zoo friends.

Of course, fundraising for a non-profit is a never-ending activity. We held our on-line auction during the first week of May (the astute of you will realize that's a third fundraising event we held that doesn't require great weather!). With the help of many of you, we were able to generate over \$6,300 in revenues. We thank all the local businesses and friends of the Brandywine Zoo who donated items to auction off.

So much for indoor activity. The animals are outside so so are we. We're looking forward to seeing many of you at this year's Brew at the Zoo (Friday May 30th) or at one of our many Thursday evening Sip and Strolls (June 26, July 24, August 21, September 25).

We ask a lot of our members; I am acutely aware of that. But you all always come through. As I have just completed my fifth year in the role, it continues to be an absolute pleasure to serve as the Executive Director of the Delaware Zoological Society. Between the guests I get to interact with and our extremely dedicated staff, it's such a wonderful place to work. I feel very lucky.



Literacy at the Brandywine Zoo and Beyond

By Amanda Austin, Early Childhood Educator

Do you remember the first book you read that made you feel truly seen, like the author was peeking into your mind, writing a story just for you? Or rather, what was the last book that presented an idea, perspective, or piece of culture that was new to you? Books have the magical ability to help us feel both understood and to take us to new and wonderful places. One of my favorite quotes is by Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop, who described books as “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors”. Literacy is an integral part of my job at the Brandywine Zoo, and I’m fortunate to offer reading or storytelling opportunities in a large portion of my programming.



Every Thursday morning in the summer, guests can join Zoo staff for Storytime, where a book from our internal library is read aloud and paired with an activity or learning more about one of the Zoo’s animals. Each week is a different book and theme, from Insect Week to lemurs to bird-safe gardens! This program is designed for families with preschool- to elementary-aged children, but all are welcome of course! No need for an extra ticket, Storytime is included with Zoo admission.

Did you know the Zoo has a Little Free Library? During your next visit, you can browse the Little Free Library’s books, “check out” a book and read in our Nature Playground, or take a book home. We are always accepting donations of gently used books to help stock our Little Free Library, and accept a wide variety of books that have animal themes and characters, themes of child development and diversity, topics of nature, native wildlife and conservation, field guides, and Delaware history. There is also a selection of books in the Zoo gift shop that rotates seasonally, so be sure to check there too!

Other programs I design and lead include storybooks as a component to the program. The program Little Nature Explorers has a circle time section that includes reading a storybook about that week’s animal. I also like to offer extra storybooks that families can read during the free

play portion of the program, that can be about the animal of the week, their habitat, or the current season.

Another program that has a literacy component is Panda Cubs programming for local Wilmington school Early Years Programs (EYP). For this program, I visit EYP students each month with a different ambassador animal - or education animal that lives behind-the-scenes. Before seeing the animal, we sing a Zoo song with lyrics shared with teachers or posted on the wall so students can read along, and I also read a storybook to help the students get ready to meet the animal. The best part, though? At the end of the program, students receive copies of books from our diverse Storybook List to take home or keep in the classroom. This wouldn’t have been possible without the amazing support of our program sponsors, the Laffey McHugh Foundation (2023) and the M&T Bank Charitable Foundation (2024).

You may also see social media posts from the Zoo with book recommendations for specific nature- or animal-themed days. Curated by Zoo staff, these posts include book suggestions for readers of all ages and cover a variety of themes. We actively work to keep our libraries updated with books from diverse authors with characters and stories that reflect the multitude of experiences within our community. From board books to field guides, picture books to memoirs, there is a reading opportunity for everyone at the Brandywine Zoo. Where will your next reading adventure take you?



Celebrate the Season with...Trash?

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

When we have nice weather and warm days, it's great to get outside. What's not great is seeing trash along the streets, in the bushes, or scattered across the grass while you are out there! Public places like parks, playgrounds, and baseball fields shouldn't also be dumping grounds for people's trash. That's why we decided to start offering Seasonal Litter Cleanups this year.

On designated days for spring, summer, fall, and winter you will find us armed with buckets and litter pickers walking different areas surrounding the zoo. Weather pending of course, and it did NOT cooperate in January! It was unfortunate to lose that opportunity but the turnout for our April cleanup was wonderful! More than two dozen volunteers scanned every inch of the route along portions of 18th St, N. Broom St, 19th St, and Van Buren St. Some even accepted the challenge of removing trash that had fallen into storm drains. It was like a game of Operation!

Due to the potential for rain, documentation of what was collected did not occur during the cleanup, but afterward in the education classroom. Quite the task but our volunteers took it head on and managed to track even the smallest trash. Cigarette butts are often listed in cleanups as the most collected item. Our total was 626! Food wrappers came in second at 114. Odd findings included a CD, hair extensions, and an air freshener. All the data was submitted to Clean Swell, a citizen science project through Ocean Conservancy. The information helps

scientists and policy makers tackle the topic of trash around the world! There's even an app for that.

Our next cleanup will be held on July 12th at 9am. If you would like to join us, RSVP by emailing communityengagement@brandywinezoo.org or calling the Education office at 302-407-4406. It's helpful to have a headcount so we can prepare supplies accordingly. July may have additional activities along these lines too, so keep your eyes and ears out for more!



Participants scout 18th Street for trash



Participants tally items they collected during litter cleanup

A Look Back at our Winter & Spring Events

Birds & Bees Trivia Night



Party for the Planet



Stuffed Animal Vet Clinic



Scout Night



Member Gathering at Blue Ball Barn



Members Only Event



MLMP is Spreading its Wings

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

As part of the zoo's conservation efforts toward SAFE Monarch initiatives, we conduct onsite research in the form of citizen science. The **Monarch Larva Monitoring Project** gathers observational data from volunteers nationwide to better understand the distribution and abundance of breeding monarchs. The knowledge is then used to inform and inspire monarch conservation. There are currently three locations throughout the zoo where milkweed grows in patches. This is where we monitor for any life stage of the butterfly, including eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises, and adults. Look for signage marking the sites and please be careful in those areas.

While staff and interns at the zoo have participated in this project for three years, 2025 is the first time we have trained anyone from another organization or interested residents. Two workshops were held in the education classroom during the spring. One was specifically for staff

from Delaware State Parks, as we hoped to grow our impact on helping this imperiled species. We are happy to say 5 parks will be conducting their own MLMP monitoring with milkweed at their sites! Although smaller in attendance, the public workshop allowed us to reach further into the community on this important matter. Then our workshop went on the road for a short trip to Hagley Library to train interested staff and volunteers. They plan to monitor the milkweed that can be found in their pollinator garden.

Monarch butterflies were sighted in Delaware and surrounding states in late April as they make their northern migration from Mexico. Learning where they go, which species of milkweed they prefer to lay their eggs on, and the success or failure of



Participant searches for life stages on fake milkweed.



Community Engagement Specialist, Jen Klotz, speaks about monarch butterfly biology.



Participants engage in a moth/butterfly activity

those caterpillars is valuable data for scientists and policy makers. For example, over 30 papers have been published using MLMP data. If you would like to conduct your own observations, please visit www.mlmp.org. Citizen science has proven valuable for a vast array of projects around the world. We look forward to continuing our project participation and teaching others to do the same!



Book an Animal Encounter!

[brandywinezoo.org/
learn/animal-encounters](http://brandywinezoo.org/learn/animal-encounters)

KID'S CORNER ACTIVITY

By Meghan Hoopes, Education Programs Coordinator

Can you spot all 10 differences?



www.brandywinezoo.org

Robb Dehney

By Karen Galanaugh

Zoo Camp Kid → Camp Counselor → Board Member, Delaware Zoological Society.

Robb Dehney's earliest memories are of visiting the animals at Brandywine Zoo. He attended zoo camp every summer for many summers and says it had a tremendous impact on his view of the natural world.

Robb recalls the song, "Save the Animals, Save the Earth*," that he sang at the conclusion of every camp session. "Save the animals, save the Earth. How much will it cost, what's it worth? You can't put a price on the beauty of nature. Save the animals, save the Earth."

"I was inspired by the Zoo camp counselors and staff", says Robb, "who devoted their lives to the animals in their care and to passing their passion along to the next generation."

As a teen, Robb volunteered as a camp counselor for a year. "It was a great experience. I tried to convey that we need to love and protect these creatures."



Robb Dehney, DZS Board Member with Lauren Barczak-Domingo, Curator of Conservation Science & Learning, Brandywine Zoo at ZOOBILEE.

Robb's passion for animals of all kinds has never dwindled. He took college undergraduate classes in consumer and ecological ethics and studied animal law at Harvard Law School.

Robb became a vegetarian at an early age and is now vegan. Robb remains grateful to his parents for respecting his conviction and accommodating his decision for over twenty years now.

Although he lives in California, Robb is an active board member of the Delaware Zoological

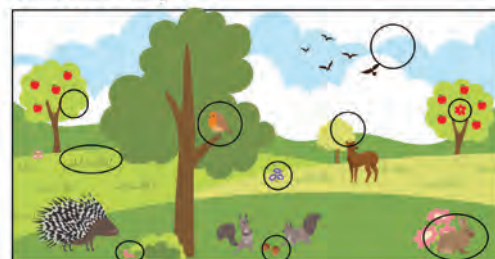
Society and often visits Brandywine Zoo throughout the year.

"As a board member, I have the honor and privilege of protecting and perpetuating the experience I had for the next generation of Delawareans. I hope they carry the love of animals and nature in everything they do throughout their lives."

*Save the animals. Save the Earth. Music & Lyric by Lois Skiera-Zucek



Answer Key



ZOOBILEE Gala

By Karen Galanaugh

The Brandywine Zoo celebrated its 120th Anniversary with a fundraiser dinner dance, called ZOOBILEE, at the Dupont Country Club on Saturday night, March 22, 2025, sponsored by, DELMARVA POWER – AN EXCELON COMPANY, EVERGREEN WASTE SERVICES, KIZMET STUDIOS, and WSFS, plus many other contributing businesses and individuals. Funds raised will help transform the zoo to benefit the animals, guests, and community. See the plans on our website in the Our Zoo Re-imagined section.

Guests at this sold-out event enjoyed dancing to the fabulous What The Funk band, cocktail hour with silent auction, delicious dinner, an enticing five-item live auction, a message from Dan Ashe, President of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the presentation of The Brandywine Zoo Champion Award to Mr. Verino Pettinaro, a well-known Delaware businessman (retired), for his dedication and support over the years that have made a lasting impact on the Brandywine Zoo.

Delaware Governor, Matt Meyer, ESQ and Lieutenant Governor, Kyle Evans Gay, ESQ made supportive remarks as did William Montgomery, President of the Delaware Zoological Society (DZS) Board of Directors, Mark Shafer, Executive Director of DZS, and Brint Spencer, Director of the Brandywine Zoo. Other officials in attendance included: Secretary Greg Patterson, Delaware Department of Natural Resources &

Environmental Control, Delaware State Senator Dan Cruce, Delaware State Senator Nicole Poore, Delaware Representative Krista Griffiths, Delaware Representative Debra Heffernan, and New Castle County Executive, Marcus Henry.

The event was organized by the Delaware Zoological Society Zoobilee Committee under the leadership of Candice Galvis. So many volunteers contributed time and services, and they are greatly appreciated. We wish to thank the underwriters: Nancy Horisk and Scott Sherr, Chief Justice E. Norman Veasey & Suzy Veasey, Barnes and Thornburg LLP, CDA Engineering, Inc., Geo-Technology Associates, Inc., WL Gore, Bruce Miller, Prickett, Jones & Elliott, BPGS Supporters, and the many table sponsors and supporters that attended and contributed to the capital campaign for Our Zoo Re-imagined.

The Delaware Zoological Society raised \$112,000 at Zoobilee, but we still need \$400,000 to get the projects rolling. Contributions to the Our-Zoo-Re-imagined Capital Campaign are welcome. Please contact Mark Shafer at (302) 407-4413 or email mshafer@brandywinezoo.org.

Please enjoy the ZOOBILEE event video created by sponsor Matthew David Silva of Kizmet Studios,
www.kizmetstudios.com.



Photographs by Rhonda Bowman

Delaware Zoological Society

1001 North Park Drive, Wilmington, DE 19802



Delaware Zoological Society
supporting the BRANDYWINE ZOO



**DELAWARE
STATE PARKS**



See Page 10
for Details.

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.

ACCREDITED BY THE
**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

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.

Printed on recycled paper

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



Upcoming Events & Programs

Keeper Talks	Daily, June-August	
Storytime	Thursdays, June-August	
Creature Features	Weekends, April-Oct	
Sensory Hour	June 13, July 6, August 17	
Pride Day	June 21	
Sip & Stroll.....	June 26, July 24, August 21, Sept 25	
Family Fun Night.....	July 10	
Folk Art Friday: BZ 120th Exhibit (Blue Ball Barn)	July 11	
Mighty Monarch Day	Sept 27	
Little Nature Explorers	Ongoing	



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

