

BRANDYWINE

ZOO NEWS



IN THIS ISSUE

DZS Digital Media Internship 3
 Ambassador Highlight - Ball Pythons .. 4
 By Request Only (Straws)..... 5
 Hidden Falls Habitat is Ready! 6-7
 Kids Corner 8
 EcoPlastics Get an EcoGarden 9
 Monarchs Here and There 10
 Crowned Lemur Birth..... 11
 Upcoming Events and Programs..... 12

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

On the Cover:

Meet Marzo, a male common squirrel monkey, seen here eating a piece of pear. He and squirrel monkey Frederick were born at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago and will now reside in the new multi-species habitat "Hidden Falls" at Brandywine Zoo. Squirrel monkeys use their long tails to assist with balance while traveling through forest canopy. Squirrel monkeys live in tropical forests of French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, and northern Brazil. Learn more about "Hidden Falls" and the animals that will join Marzo and Frederick. See pages 6-7.



Friday, October 16 • Saturday, October 17
Sunday, October 18 • 10AM-3PM

Tickets: brandywinezoo.org/boo

Friday, September 18: 5-8PM • Rain or Shine Event
 Lively after hours FUNDRAISER for the Brandywine Zoo

With great food and more!

BRANDYWINE ZOO

Must be 21+ to attend
brandywinezoo.org/brew

DZS Digital Media Internship

By Robb Dehney, DZS Board Member

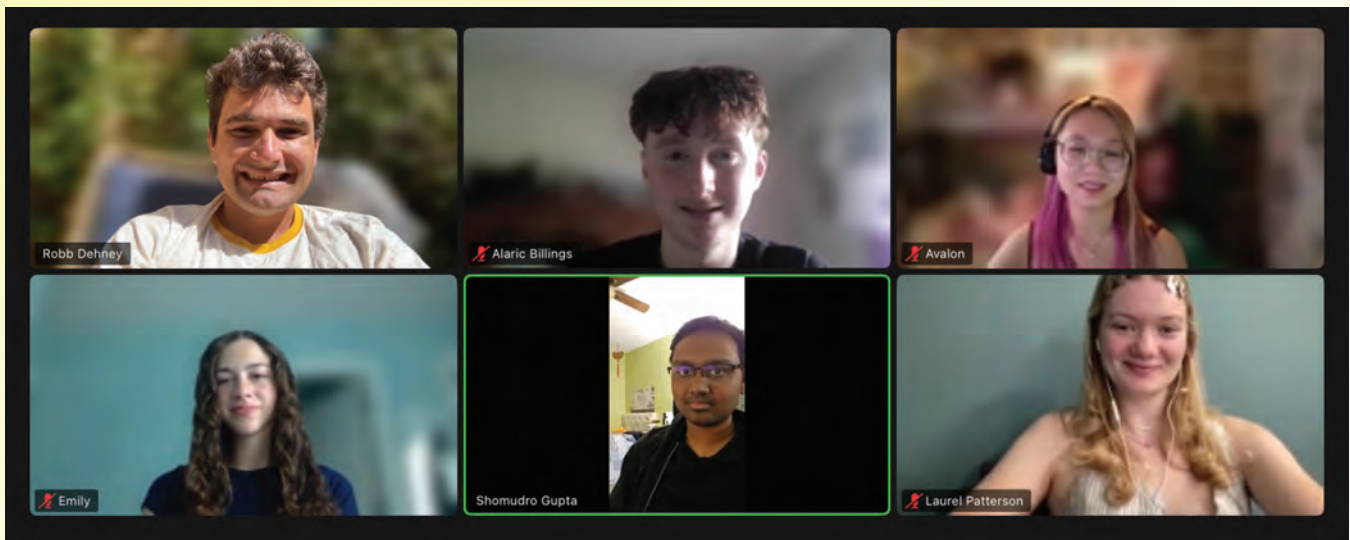
If you've been following our social media accounts lately, you may have noticed a bit more content than usual. That is, in part, thanks to the inaugural DZS Digital Media Internship—a Gen Z–focused program that is helping us show up in new ways while giving students real experience in marketing strategy, content creation, and data analytics.

The internship is modeled on professional marketing groups, and team members are responsible for everything from idea generation through performance tracking. Board Member Robb Dehney leads the program, working alongside the interns as they strategize and deliver their content. Avalon Pope (Wilmington University) and Laurel Patterson (University of Vermont) are furthering their non-profit marketing experience and honing their design strategies. Meanwhile, Shomudro Gupta brings a deep knowledge of Association of Zoos and Aquariums best practices. High schoolers Emily Haldeman (Middletown High School) and Alaric Billings (Odessa High School) support the team as they develop skills in design, storytelling, tagging, and editing.

The team's content can be found on our Instagram and brand new TikTok accounts (@brandywinezoo), where it is posted in a consistent cadence. On Mondays, the team focuses on local events. On Wednesdays, the team highlights our animals, including ambassador animals that guests may not see in-person at the Zoo. On Thursdays, the team highlights our conservation partners and our impactful work.

Overall, the team is learning to employ a data-informed approach to experimentation, which will drive real-time shifts in strategy. They are working together, learning from each other, and delivering results. As Dehney put it, “watching the team congeal and grow has been one of my most rewarding experiences as a board member. I am especially proud of our camaraderie and the culture of experimentation we have developed together.”

If you haven't already, follow @brandywinezoo on TikTok and Instagram to see what the team has been working on.



Patagonian Mara Key Facts

Weight & Length: Adults typically weigh around 8 kg and measure between 69 to 75 cm in length.

Diet: Strictly herbivorous, primarily grazing on grasses, shrubs, and roots.

Social Structure: Unlike most rodents, maras are highly social and strictly monogamous, mating with the same partner for life.

Behavior: They are diurnal (active during the day) and are known to shelter their young in communal crèches to protect them from predators like pumas and foxes.

Ambassador Highlight - Ball Pythons

By Alex Carper, Brandywine Zoo Interpreter

Polly and Sally are Brandywine Zoo's ball python ambassadors. Ball pythons are native to the grasslands of west-central Africa. They make good zoo ambassadors due to their relatively small size, docile temperament, and overall gentle demeanor. As ambassador animals, it is their job to help guests leave with a positive impression of their species and snakes in general.

As constrictors, ball pythons are not venomous. They use their forked tongue and special heat-sensing pits around their mouth to find their prey: rodents, small mammals, and birds. Polly and Sally both have the standard color variation, but each snake's coloring is unique to them, like a fingerprint! Polly has a more chocolate base color, while Sally is more yellow in color. Can you tell them apart in the pictures?

Despite doing almost everything together, Polly and Sally have very different personalities.

While on program, Polly is more laid back and enjoys soaking up the body heat of her handler and taking in all the compliments she gets from guests. Sally is very outgoing and curious about her surroundings and new friends. In their time off, Polly and Sally are often seen coiled together, basking under their heat lamp, or soaking in their pool.

Polly and Sally's easy-going personalities make

them great ambassadors and give them a sense of approachability that helps some guests overcome their fear of snakes. This makes them a privilege to work with.

Ball pythons might seem like fun and easy pets for first-time owners, but we do not recommend snakes as first pets because they have intensive heating, humidity, and diet requirements; they also need exotic vet care and can live a very long time. Ball pythons have an average life expectancy of 30 years under human care.



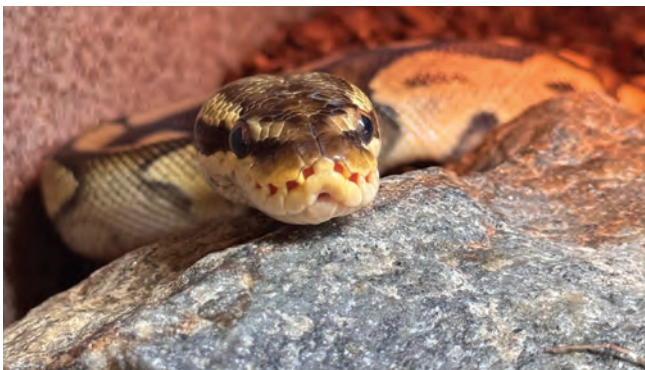
Polly has a more chocolate base color, while Sally is more yellow in color.

We can help ball pythons and other exotic pets by doing our research and ensuring we can provide proper care for an animal's entire life before bringing them home. When choosing a pet, one important consideration is where they come from. Never buy a "wild caught" pet.

Instead, take the time to find a reputable breeder or rescue. We can all

help local snake species by staying calm and leaving them alone when we find them outside. We can also help them by avoiding the use of rodenticides and poisons as these are harmful to any animal that comes in contact with it.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about Polly, Sally, and their snake relatives. They hope to see you SSS-oon at the Brandywine Zoo!



By Request Only

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

Whether you order a glass of water, soda, or even a cocktail, they typically have something in common- plastic straws. Do you get them even though you don't ask for them? Well, that's illegal and has been for almost a year.

On July 1, 2025, Senate Bill 51 went into effect, making plastic straws an item to be served **by request only** at dining establishments throughout Delaware. Receiving them automatically is, therefore, against the law. These days everyone should know why laws are being passed to mitigate single use plastics like straws, but here are a few reasons in case you don't. These products can harm wildlife if they get into the environment,



which many do. They are made of chemicals that leach into our food and drinks. They do not break down but fragment into microplastics causing further damage. Their production pollutes our air, soil, and water. Plastic straws have been collected at every litter cleanup the zoo has organized. Ironically, we're on track to pick up more this year than last! The opposite should be true if the law was being properly followed.

Marketing has made straws ubiquitous with refreshing drinks and good times. But don't be fooled! Straws are often quite bad once the fun is over. Whenever you order a drink, take matters into your own hands and say, "no straw please".



Thursday, July 16: 5-7PM

Family Fun Night
at the Brandywine Zoo

Enjoy \$1 Hot Dogs and \$1 Soft Drinks.
Members: FREE • Non-Members \$2

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ZOO



Tickets must be purchased at the gate for this event!

brandywinezoo.org/family-fun-night

Hidden Falls is Ready!

By Karen Galanaugh

The new \$2.5 million multi-species habitat will formally be dedicated with two public events on Thursday, July 23.

Animal residents planned will include common squirrel monkeys, prehensile-tailed porcupine, Patagonian maras, green iguana, and red-footed tortoises. These species were chosen for their compatibility and similar care needs. The zoo created a carefully managed mixed-species habitat that supports animal welfare and natural enrichment. The animal mix is compatible with the overall focus of the Brandywine Zoo to feature animals from the tropical and temperate areas of North and South America, Asia, and Africa.

The habitat features naturalistic landscaping, carefully managed mixed-species spaces, and immersive viewing areas that let zoo guests observe animal behavior from multiple vantage points designed to encourage learning and close observation.

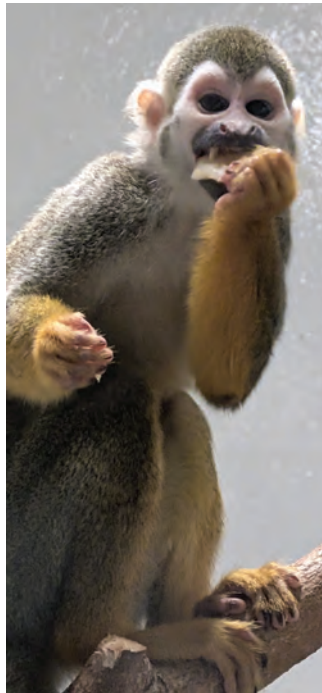
The habitat includes a building and an outdoor area. The outdoor area is a 320-square-foot space that rises 15 feet and features both natural and artificial trees, as well as a filtered, UV-sterilized recirculating stream.

The indoor building is climate-controlled, with heat, air conditioning, and humidity management to support the animals year-round. A viewing window allows zoo guests to see the animals comfortably during cooler weather.

The habitat design emphasizes enrichment, privacy areas, and space for natural behaviors. The zoo's animal care team consulted with species specialists and veterinarians throughout the planning and design process. The habitat was created with species-appropriate environments in mind, using native plants, water elements, and energy-efficient facilities.

The construction affiliate for Buccini/Pollin Group, BPGS Construction of Wilmington, Delaware, was the primary contractor managing the build.

The staff have planned signage and educational stations to provide zoo visitors with information about each species, their conservation status, and ways to help protect wildlife and habitats.



OPENING AND DEDICATION

Most, if not all, of the animals are expected to be in the habitat by July. A formal dedication will be held there on Thursday, July 23, at 11 AM - Noon, with officials, donors, civic leaders, and members of the press in attendance. The public is welcome, and regular admission will apply (members free). A Sip & Stroll celebration with live music and refreshments will follow on that same evening from 5:00 - 7:30 PM. Tickets will be available online and at the gate.

WE'RE HERE!

Marzo and Frederick are common squirrel monkeys. Both are males and were born at the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. Squirrel monkeys use their long tails to assist with balance while traveling through forest canopy. Squirrel monkeys live in tropical forests of French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, and northern Brazil.

Patagonian mara (hare) looks like a cross between a large hare and a capybara. We welcome two males from the Animal Adventure Park in New York. Found in central and southern Argentina, this species is Near Threatened (ICUN Red List).

Ricky and Lucy, red-footed tortoises, come to us from the Newport Aquarium in Kentucky. This species is found in South America from Panama to Argentina, and on the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Barbados. Ricky and Lucy are five years old. Red-footed tortoises can live over 50 years, and at the age of 10 years weigh 20-30 lbs.

The green iguana joins the habitat as a solitary young male brought to us as a confiscation by the Delaware Department of Agriculture. This species is most threatened by the illegal pet trade. Green iguana is found in the Amazon Basin including parts of Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil. They are invasive on some islands in the Caribbean and parts of the United States. The green iguana has a primitive third "eye" on top their head called a parietal eye; this group of photosensitive cells can detect movement and changes in light and is thought to help them evade overhead predators.

The prehensile-tailed porcupine gets its name from its tail, which is used to grasp when climbing and perching in trees. Over half of the weight of the tail is made of muscle, making it easy to hang upside down. Prehensile-tailed porcupines spend most of their time in trees. They are found in the South American forests of Venezuela, Guiana, Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Trinidad, and some extreme northern sections of Argentina.

“Because of You” by Mark Shafer

We extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who helped bring this to life.

We couldn't be more excited about welcoming guests to the zoo's newest habitat, "Hidden Falls". More than four years ago, we began planning a space that would replace two aging habitats with one flexible environment—one that could support a variety of species and give guests a chance to enjoy the animals while they stayed comfortable and out of the elements.

We're so proud to see that vision come to life.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the generosity of so many supporters. More than 500 individuals contributed to this project, with gifts ranging from \$5 to \$50,000. We were also honored to receive foundation support from The Longwood Foundation, Laffey-McHugh, Chichester duPont, Ellise & Rosa McDonald, The Welfare Foundation, Crestlea, Crystal Trust, Rockford Woodlawn, and the Donald and Martha Dewees Foundation. In addition, we are grateful for financial support from the State of Delaware.

To each and every person who gave—whether your gift was large or small—thank you for helping make "Hidden Falls" possible.





KID'S CORNER ACTIVITY

By Alex Carper, Zoo Interpreter

Brandywine Zoo-o-Logic Puzzle

Use the table and clues to figure out where each animal is native to and what they like to eat!

Hint: Each animal's diet and native range is unique to them, so you can cross out the other animals and possible diets or native ranges for that animal (shown below).

	herbivore	carnivore	nectarivore	insectivore	omnivore	worldwide distribution	Africa	Europe	North America	South America
Greek Tortoise										X
Giant Anteater						X	X	X	X	✓
Honey Bee										X
Sandhill Crane										X
Caracal										X
worldwide distribution										
Africa										
Europe										
North America										
South America										

Clues

- Giant anteaters are native to South America.
- The Greek tortoise does **not** eat meat; the caracal does not eat fruits or vegetables.
- The nectarivore can be found on almost every continent.
- Honeybees and giant anteaters have specialist diets, which means they only eat their favorite foods: nectar and insects.
- The sandhill crane is **not** native to Europe or Africa.
- The herbivore is native to Europe.
- The nectarivore, the caracal, and the animal that is native to Europe are all different animals

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Brandywine Zoo-o-Logic Puzzle Answers

- The Greek tortoise is an **herbivore** from Europe. Their diet consists of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and fibrous plants and grasses.
- The giant anteater is an **insectivore** from South America. In their natural habitat, anteaters eat up to 30,000 ants and termites a day! At the Brandywine Zoo, Lancaster gets a pelleted insectivore diet that is supplemented with hard boiled eggs and soft fruits.
- The honey bee is a **nectarivore** that was introduced globally in the 17th century. They are now kept as livestock around the world and are important pollinators.
- The sandhill crane is an **omnivore** that is native to North America. Like most omnivores, they are generalists, which means they are not picky eaters!
- The caracal is a **carnivore** from Africa. Caracals play an important role in maintaining the prey populations in their ecosystem.

www.brandywinezoo.org

EcoPlastics Get an EcoGarden

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

Attention pollinators: head over to 18 Germay Avenue in Wilmington this summer for a new hotspot in town serving your favorite pollen and nectar flavor- native!

On May 15th, close to 60 native plants were placed into two new garden beds at EcoPlastic Products of Delaware. Amazingly, not a single one was purchased! Local gardeners answered the call and supplied us with coneflower, bee balm, milkweed, violets, ragwort, asters, spiderwort, nodding onion, stonecrop, Solomon's seal, phlox, and prickly pear. That last one is a type of cactus by the way, and yes, it's native to Delaware! Two early growth yellow-twig dogwood bushes were also donated and planted out front. This selection ensures flowers are in bloom during spring, summer, and fall. Such a difference from a blanket of non-native grass!

Why did we do it? Plenty of reasons! Pollinators like birds, bees, and butterflies are in decline. Ideal habitat such as field and meadow is being lost to development at a rapid pace! Those that do remain are often sprayed with pesticides as a deterrent against unwanted insects. Unfortunately, chemicals rarely discriminate but instead negatively impact beneficial species as well. Since pollinators are critical in getting us healthy food like almonds, strawberries, and broccoli, we should help. Gardens like this, in turn, provide them with food. It's one big circle! Therefore, we encourage adding any number of native plants to the landscape, which is why projects like this are so rewarding.

The Brandywine Zoo is a proud partner in both the SAFE Monarch Network and SAFE North American Songbirds programs. They stand for Saving Animals From Extinction and exist under the Association of Zoos & Aquariums to focus efforts for conservation of select wildlife. A number of initiatives in the two plans overlap because monarch butterflies and songbirds benefit from similar things like elimination of pesticides and creation of habi-

tat. Installing gardens like the one at EcoPlastic Products helps us achieve goals driven by the program. The resulting education and community engagement through

conversations, signage at the site, social media posts, and articles like this, expand our impact for the cause.

We were very fortunate to work with such willing and open-minded staff at EcoPlastic Products. Many thanks go to Cheryl, Queenn, and Crystal. They and others are part of a non-profit tackling the plastic pollution problem. Clean items made from numbers 2, 4, and 5 can be dropped off on Thursdays for eventual use as something very different. Once sorted, chipped, melted, and molded, they become picnic tables, signposts, parking lot blocks, benches, bicycle racks, and garden bed borders (just like the set around our pollinator gardens!). The best part? They can accept items that aren't recyclable curbside! Bread tags, clothing hangers, DVD/CD cases, zip ties, yard signs, and even Easter grass are some of the plastics welcome there. Utilizing items like that means EcoPlastic Products directly diverts waste from our landfills. Keep up the good work!

None of this would have been possible without home gardeners Linda, Kathy, Laura, Sandy, Tom, Pixie, and Kristina. It was lovely of you to spread the joy of native plants through division of current growth or seed starters. All of which will make for some very happy insects! Another group of very important people to shout out are those who did the actual

planting. Luvina, Lisa, Mark, Nick, and Deanna got the job done without complaint. Your hard work is greatly appreciated!

Whether you're a regular to EcoPlastic Products or dropping things off for the first time, we hope you see the gardens growing and flourishing out front. Along with colorful flowers should be a variety of pollinators enjoying them too.



Monarchs Here and There

By Jen Klotz, Community Engagement Specialist

No, this won't be about King Charles' visit to the United States. We're talking butterflies of course! Exciting news came in March when the World Wildlife Fund announced an increase in the overwintering population of the eastern migrating species. Aerial surveys have been conducted in Central Mexico each year since 1994. However, starting in 2004, numbers have only hit the threshold (amount scientists say is needed to maintain a healthy population) twice. Ergo, the overall trend has been downward, but this recent news represents the highest count over the past decade, and 64% more than last year! Let's hope the new upward trend continues.

While weather plays a significant role in migration success, we can't control it, so what can we do? Create habitat! Add native plants, especially milkweed, to any space like balconies, patios, or porches at home, work,

or place of worship. Equally as important is what NOT to do- spray pesticides. Even chemicals targeted for use on specific insects, like mosquitos, will kill almost any it comes into contact with. Do your best to find alternatives instead.

Not long after receiving the good news about counts in Mexico, did we have our own excitement at the zoo- a female monarch laying eggs!!! It was April 13th when these photos were taken, and she had indeed "bombed" our milkweed sprouts with eggs - 82 of them. It all happened

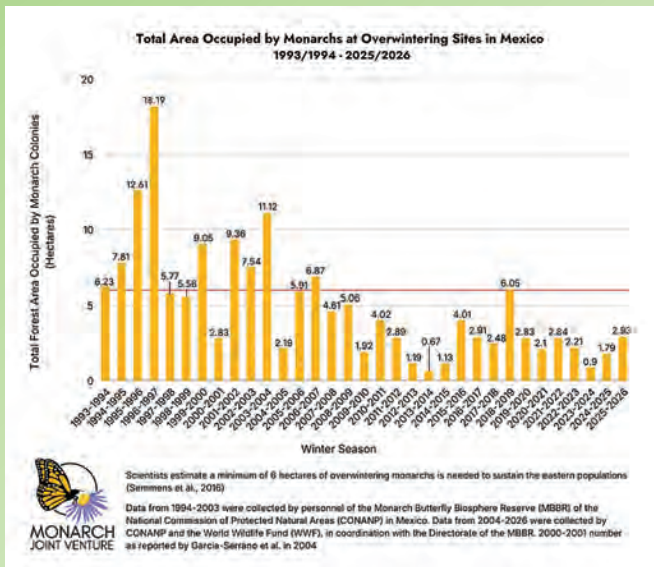


Female monarch butterfly laying eggs on milkweed sprouts in the zoo

at least a month earlier than expected! Conditions along the migration route for her ancestors must have been fantastic. See, she didn't make the entire trip here from Mexico. It started a number of generations before her, breeding, laying eggs, growing, transforming into butterflies and flying a little further north each time to start the cycle over again. Staff has been monitoring her offspring ever since with hopes of seeing new adult monarchs fly through the zoo. Making their own royal visit you might say!



Monarch eggs on common milkweed in patch at zoo



BRANDYWINE ZOO

SIP & STROLL

HAPPY HOUR

BRANDYWINE ZOO

June 18 • July 23
August 20 • October 22:

5PM-7:30PM

TICKETS: brandywinezoo.org/sip

Crowned Lemur Birth Announcement

By Amy Haddock, General Curator/ Registrar

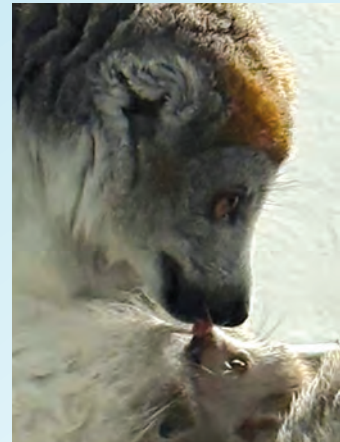
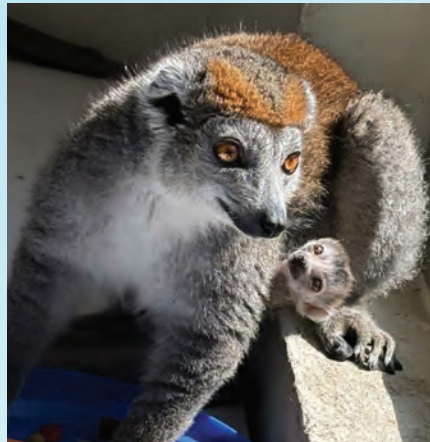
Crowned lemurs Sophie and Kipp have had another successful birth this year. This is the pair's fourth offspring since coming to Brandywine Zoo. Sophie and Kipp were paired together through a Species Survival Plan (SSP) in 2020. SSPs are conservation breeding programs where vulnerable species in human care are optimally matched for genetic diversity to increase the population. Kipp was born at the Duke Lemur Center in 2016, while Sophie was born at Zoo Atlanta in 2018.

The lemur infant born at Brandywine Zoo is a significant contribution to the crowned lemur population. Crowned lemurs are an endangered species, and their population is in decline. They are threatened by deforestation and habitat loss caused by other land use conversion, such as charcoal production and mining for sapphires and gold; the illegal pet trade; and hunting for bushmeat.

The crowned lemur family will be on the Madagascar exhibit while the infant is still being carried around by Sophie. Once the infant starts to venture out on their own, the crowns

will need to stay inside for important family bonding time. Sibling Kipp Jr (KJ) who was born May 31, 2025, will stay with the family to watch Sophie raise this year's infant. This teaches him skills for when he will have his own offspring someday. As part of the SSP program he will be recommended to be paired with a female and then go off to start his own family.

It is still too soon to determine the sex of the infant; a name will be chosen soon. Check the Delaware State Parks and Brandywine Zoo Facebook pages for updates as the baby progresses.



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.

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.

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**Dedication
July 23**
(See pages 6 & 7)

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



Upcoming Events & Programs

- Keeper Talks Daily, June – August
- Keeper Talks Thursday thru Sunday in September
- Creature Features Weekends, April – October
- Storytime Thursdays, June - August
- Sip & Stroll..... June 18, July 23, August 20, October 22
- Litter Getters July 18, August 16, September 7, October 25
- Family Fun Night July 16
- Sensory Hour August 9
- Brew at the Zoo September 18
- Mighty Monarch Day September 27
- Boo at the Zoo..... October 16, 17, 18
- Little Nature Explorers Ongoing
- Zoo Tunes Select Wednesdays @ noon



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

