

A publication of the Seneca Park Zoo Society

ZOONOOZ

JULY 2024

CARING FOR AGING ANIMALS

SENECA PARK ZOO'S
PLANS FOR THE
FUTURE

Walter Brooks
Amur Tiger

 Seneca Park
Zoo

Seneca Park Zoo inspires our community to connect with, care for, and conserve wildlife and wild places.

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Development:
585.336.7205

Private events:
585.295.7399

Nov. 1 – March 31:
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
last entry at 3 p.m.

April 1 – Oct. 31:
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
last entry at 4 p.m.

**MEMBERS MAY
ALWAYS ENTER
AT 9:30 A.M.**

LETTER FROM

Pamela Reed Sanchez
President and CEO
Seneca Park Zoo Society

On My Mind:
Ten Years of Joy
and Hope

Ten years ago today, my life became immeasurably better, as I am writing this on the anniversary of the day I started working for the Seneca Park Zoo Society. I could never have foreseen what this journey would look like, though I remember being honored and thrilled to take on this role at a critical time in the Zoo's history. We were about to embark on creating a new long-range strategic plan, which would outline the future of Seneca Park Zoo.

Since that time, we've rebranded from "The Natural Place for Families" to "Connect. Care. Conserve." We've constructed new habitats for snow leopards and red pandas, opened the five-acre expansion of Animals of the Savanna, designed and built the Trailside Café, redefined our relationship with Monroe County, welcomed more than 3 million people to the Zoo, and reached 400,000 people through our education programs – and likely the same number through our community outreach programs.

We've expanded our camps, added camps for kids with special needs, become sensory-inclusive certified, created the award-winning Wildlife Action Crew for teens, and partnered with organizations like Autism Up, Golisano Children's Hospital, and Rochester School for the Deaf to expand access to the Zoo for all.

We've extended our service to our region, through the growth of community science programs, creation of the urban ecology workforce development program, and leading community clean-ups. We also created a native pollinator seed mix scientifically proven to restore native habitat.

And over this past decade, the world has gotten warmer. Political differences seem to have grown larger and more divisive. We've



survived a global pandemic and are still feeling its after-effects.

One thing that brings us all together is nature. Time at the Zoo, and time in nature, is precious. We find our own humanity by immersing ourselves in the wonders of wildlife. We begin to notice how fragile our ecosystems are, and that we all can do something to protect our planet for the sake of all the species we love.

What I've learned in the last ten years is that joy and hope are essential to moving people from being a casual zoo visitor to taking action.

I'm asking you to help me celebrate my ten-year anniversary by noticing both Joy and Hope on your next Zoo visit. Is it the Joy you see in a child's face when seeing an elephant raise their trunk? Maybe it's the Joy of finding all the Panamanian golden frogs, or the smile you suddenly have while watching the red pandas chew bamboo. Allow yourself to experience wonder, awe, and Joy.

And where or how do you find Hope while you're at the Zoo? Is it in the ZooTeens sharing their knowledge? Is it on the signage you read? Is it on the faces of the myriad people who come together here?

Please share your stories with me! Send me an email at preedsanchez@senecazoo.org, and tell me about the Joy and the Hope you experience at the Zoo. Or come tell your Zoo story on Thursday, August 8 during Member Week.

And thank you all for being a part of my first decade at Seneca Park Zoo Society. See you at the Zoo!

Caring for Aging Animals

By Beth LaPierre,
Director of Marketing and Communications

How long does a tiger live? How long can a tiger live? Are these numbers different if the tiger is in human care versus in its natural range? What about an elephant, or an otter? At zoos, we use the term “median life expectancy” or MLE to convey how many years a typical animal of a certain species lives. Yet that number can be confusing when not fully understood.

Let’s think about this concept first as it relates to humans. We know that for people who live to their first birthday, the median life expectancy in the U.S. is 77.5 years; in contrast, the maximum longevity documented worldwide is 122 years. This means that about half of the human population will die before 77, and half will die after. Very few people can expect to reach 122. A person that lives to be 88 well exceeds the median life expectancy for humans and is not thought of as having died young because they didn’t live to be 122. Similarly, an African elephant may live to be 50 or older, the equivalent of a 116-year-old human, but that is uncommon.

Many animals at Seneca Park Zoo can be considered ‘geriatric,’ as they have exceeded the MLE for their species. For example, Amur tiger Katya turned 19 this year, exceeding the median life expectancy of 16 years. The MLE of African elephants is 39 years. Lilac, Genny C., and Moki are Golden Girls at ages 45, 45, and 41. Sailor, our North American river otter is 16, exceeding the MLE of otters by four years.

While all animals in our care are monitored very closely, older animals receive even more focus and special protocols. Just as when humans age, we are likely to begin having age-related illnesses, animals too begin to slow down, might lose mobility, are prone to gastrointestinal issues, and more. Appetites are tracked and keepers

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Kristen Matteo
African Elephant

will note how many pounds of meat or how many mice are eaten. Muscle and fat composition is measured. Zoo Keepers observe animal behavior and record any behavior that is out of the norm. All this information helps tell the story of how a particular animal is doing.

These observations lead to interventions and more evaluations. For example, because Sailor has shown signs of stiffness in his back legs, his movements are tracked using an otter mobility assessment. Elephant care staff videos of the elephants in their stalls overnight, noting how many hours they sleep and how many times they were up and down. During an examination and X-ray, veterinary staff reviews observed that olive baboon Pimento had osteoarthritis in her elbow. She now receives laser therapy to treat the condition.

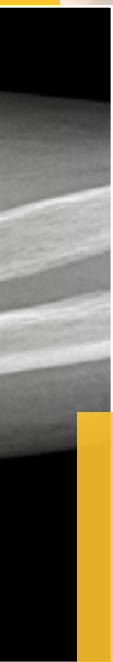
Animals that are at or above median age have their blood drawn every four months. Just like in humans, bloodwork can tell us a lot. One of our beloved residents, African elephant Genny C. is well over the MLE for African elephants at 45 years old. Elephants have large veins in the back of their ears from which the blood is drawn, and Lindsay Brinda, our Elephant Manager, will hold a catheter in the ears steady while Animal Health teams collect blood. Genny C. shows has shown signs of degenerative joint disease – similar to osteoarthritis in people – for more than 10 years. It is most obvious in her carpi, or “wrists,” but affects her knees as well, causing stiffness in her joints. Her appetite and interactions with her herd mates and keepers have stayed normal, but there is no doubt that Genny C. and our other African elephants are aging. Keepers and veterinary staff manage Genny C.’s comfort using a combination of therapies. She receives glucosamine and omega fatty acids as part of her diet. She also receives an anti-inflammatory (phenylbutazone) and an analgesic (gabapentin) daily, with additional pain medications administered when needed.

To supplement traditional medicines, veterinary staff also use laser therapy and medical acupuncture treatments. Veterinary staff monitor her organ function, nutritional status, and immune system through frequent bloodwork. Equally important, elephant care staff has implemented management strategies to make sure Genny C. is comfortable. For example, they created a hill in the barn to give her the opportunity to lie down more easily. Keepers are ensuring that she has access to soft substrates, high quality food, and positive social interactions with Lilac and Moki. While Genny C.’s behavior is normal in many ways, veterinary staff are always concerned about any discomfort she might be experiencing. There is no cure for degenerative joint disease, and the condition will progress. Several of Genny C.’s caregivers have known her for over 20 years, so they are attuned to any behavioral changes, and veterinary staff continue to adjust her care as needed.

Often, animals need to be anesthetized for routine and nonroutine exams. Many of our older animals are sedated once every three years for a full exam; sedation is always risky in any animal, and as animals age, the risk of sedation outweighs any potential benefits.

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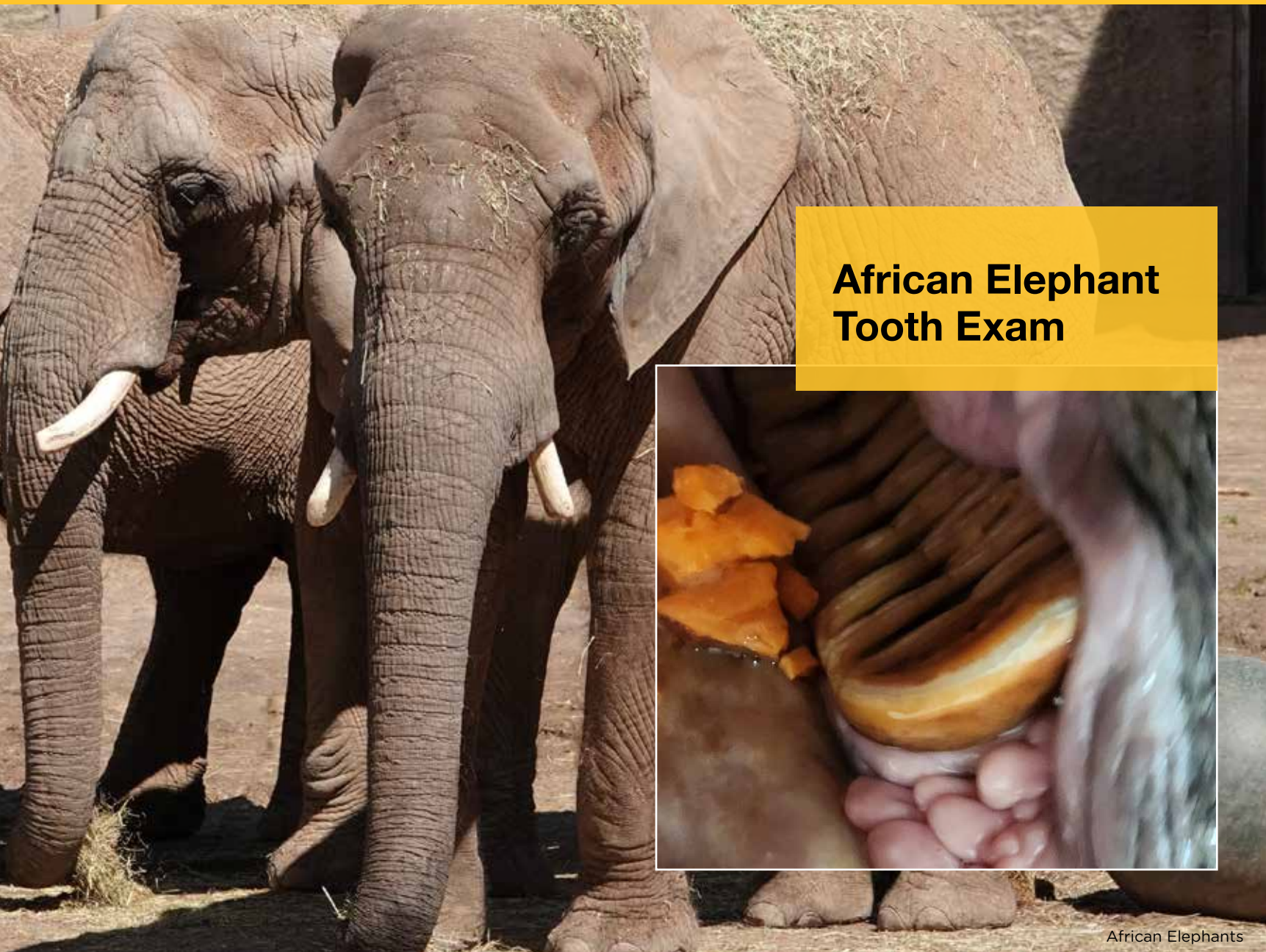




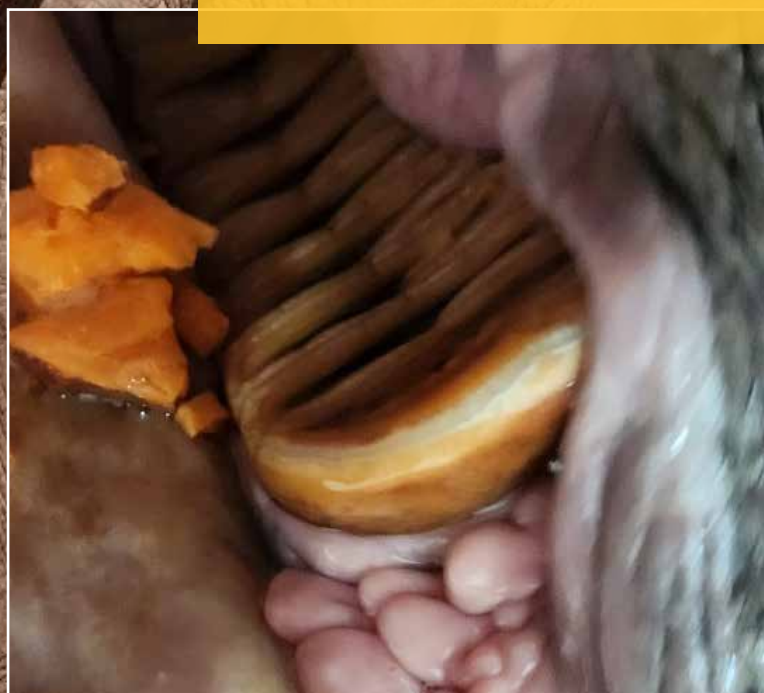
Olive Baboon X-Ray



Olive Baboon



African Elephant Tooth Exam



African Elephants

Occasionally, intervention requiring sedation is medically necessary. A few months back, Chester, our male African lion, was showing signs of a potential digestive issue common in big cats; Animal Health and Veterinary teams anesthetized him, and a full exam was conducted, including ultrasound and hands-on exam.

“As an animal ages, its GI tract can be more sensitive, and we can see constipation, especially in feline species. Diet changes can help, and we’ll even use treatments like Miralax™ just like with humans,” says Dr. Chris McKinney, Veterinarian at Seneca Park Zoo. If an animal is required to be sedated, Animal Health may also decide to complete more routine procedures at this time, like teeth cleaning or imaging to avoid putting an animal under anesthesia more than is necessary.

Pimento, our oldest olive baboon, gets a triannual examination where we do bloodwork, x-rays, and an ultrasound. We monitor animals under anesthesia very closely including heart rhythm and carbon dioxide output using monitors like those used at a human hospital.

Whenever possible, animals participate in their own healthcare, and staff use daily trainings for this. Have you ever seen our keepers out on the Rocky Coast shore going through exercises with our sea lions? While you might think they are putting on a “show”, many times our keepers are doing an exam. How do their teeth look? How are they moving? Are they showing any hesitation or signs of discomfort? When elephant keepers have our African elephants open their mouths to throw a bit of sweet potato in, they are also examining their teeth and tusks.

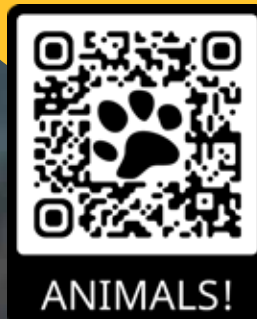
Having so many geriatric animals in our care is a true testament to the amazing care our Animal Health and Animal Care teams provide. With so many of our beloved species living over their median ages, we do have to plan for the future. How do we avoid having an empty habitat?

As an AZA-accredited Zoo, Seneca Park Zoo works with other AZA facilities across the country to determine the best possible home for each animal for breeding and for an organization’s facilities. AZA Taxon Advisory Groups (TAGs) assess the conservation needs of different taxa and work to develop recommendations for conservation and population management. TAGs are AZA experts on issues related to their taxa including husbandry, veterinary care, conservation needs and challenges, research priorities and more. The TAG also manages Species Survival Plan (SSP) Programs and Studbooks.

David Hamilton, General Curator at Seneca Park Zoo, is the Program Leader for AZA’s small carnivore TAG. Small carnivores include species like the North American river otter, red panda, and meerkat. As Program Leader, Hamilton is responsible for developing a Regional Collection Plan (RCP) which carefully outlines how AZA animal populations should be managed. “The TAG is really working towards sustainability of the species at accredited zoos and

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**Learn more
about all our
animals!**



Whenever possible, animals participate in their own healthcare, and staff use daily trainings for this.



African Lion Constipation

aquariums, but also in the species' natural range by advising on field research and other natural range conservation initiatives." Hamilton explains.

What if an animal ages out of breeding but their match has not? This was the case with our North American river otter pair, Ashkii and Sailor. At age 16, Sailor is very much outside his recommended breeding age. As an AZA-accredited facility, Seneca Park Zoo participates in many SSP (Species Survival Plan) programs. Each SSP Program is a cooperative animal management, breeding, and conservation effort aimed at ensuring genetically diverse, self-sustaining populations; there are SSPs for approximately 300 species. Collaboration among AZA-accredited zoos is crucial. One of the key outputs of each SSP is a Breeding and Transfer Plan. These plans detail the current demographic and genetic status of the population, recommending breeding pairs and transfers to maintain a healthy, demographically stable, and genetically diverse population for the long-term future. When Sailor aged out and the Zoo needed a new breeding partner for Ashkii, the SSP determined Gary was an ideal match, and so he was transferred to Seneca Park Zoo in 2023.

While new baby animals are always exciting, the Zoo is home to so many well-known and well-loved animals. Our staff and our community know Katya the Amur tiger likes to lay on her log house in the early afternoons. They know exactly what time of day Chester the African lion will start his daily roaring and when it's Sailor's turn on otter habitat. They know that Pimento the olive baboon wears the pants in the family and that Anoki would rather wait for floating treats to reach her than jump in her pool some days. We know these animals won't be with us forever, and until they are no longer here, we will provide them the best possible care to ensure their well-being.

We know these animals won't be with us forever, and until they are no longer here, we will provide them the best possible care to ensure their well-being.



Amur Tiger
Erick Machajewski



River Otter
Wayne Smith



African Lion
Walter Brooks

EVENTS

► NATURE POETRY CONTEST

AUGUST 16 – SUBMISSION PERIOD CLOSURES

Calling all poets! Submissions for the Nature Poetry Contest: Words Into Water are open through August 16th. Our theme for 2024 is “Water Into Words,” taking inspiration from water, bodies of water, waterways, rain, or water in any form that inspires you, as water is the lifeblood of nature. We seek submissions of poems by writers of all ages and backgrounds, referencing water in some way and grounded in an ethos of conservation. Submissions in both English and Spanish are encouraged. There is no fee to enter, so let your words flow!

Dates: April 22 – August 16

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/2024-nature-poetry-contest



► WINE FOR WILDLIFE

OCTOBER 4

Wine for Wildlife brings together wineries and wine enthusiasts for an afterhours tasting at the Zoo. Guests will enjoy a unique evening of sampling international and regionally produced sustainable and environmentally friendly wines.

During the night, guests can learn more about winemaking, discover delicious vintages, experience fun animal programming, savor small bites, and leave with a deeper understanding how thoughtful wine production can connect and reinforce a healthier ecosystem. This one-of-a-kind event is designed to introduce wine lovers to sustainable and environmentally friendly wines that are new to them and empower them to make a difference through the wines they choose.

Date: Friday, October 4, 2024

Event Time: 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm at the Zoo

Tickets on sale August 1st!



▶ REDWINGS X SENECA PARK ZOO NIGHT

AUGUST 13

Join Seneca Park Zoo for a night at Innovative Field. The first 1,000 fans through the gate will receive a Seneca Park Zoo lion cap.

Date: August 13, 6:45 p.m.

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/redwings2024



▶ ZOOPARENT MAKES A GREAT GIFT!

PURCHASE ONLINE

Looking for the perfect birthday gift or Graduation present? Look no further and give the gift of a ZooParent adoption package!

To commemorate their special day, each ZooParent Package includes:

- A personalized adoption certificate for the animal of your choice
- Species fact sheet
- 4' x 6" matted photo of your animal
- Plush toy

Your ZooParent gift also directly benefits animals at Seneca Park Zoo! ZooParent proceeds provide enrichment items that encourage mental and physical stimulation, preserving and challenging the instincts and adaptations unique to each species.

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/zooparent



**ZOOPARENT
MAKES A
GREAT
GIFT!**



EVENTS

► TRIVIA SAFARI @ RADIO SOCIAL WITH GAME NIGHT ROC

JULY 24

Join Game Night Roc and your favorite Ambassador Animals for a night of wild trivia that supports your Zoo!

6:30pm Animal Meet & Greet with the ZooMobile 7:30pm Trivia

\$10 to register

Dates: July 24

Location: Radio Social, 20 Carlson Rd., Rochester 14610



► SUSTAINABLE TABLE AT THE JACKRABBIT CLUB

AUGUST 10

Do good by eating well with our friends from Good Luck at a very special evening of learning and dining. The night begins at 5pm with a panel discussion featuring Good Luck's farmer partners, then guests are seated for a family style multi-course meal that features sustainable wine, meat, and produce, and a special selection of cocktails. Your ticket includes your welcome beverage, a custom menu including selections for a variety of dietary needs, and your donation to the Seneca Park Zoo Society.

Date: Aug 10

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/table

Tickets on sale soon: \$125

Location: Jackrabbit Club, 40 Anderson Ave, Rochester 14607



► ZOOBREW

**JULY 12/AUGUST 16/
SEPTEMBER 6**

Everyone's favorite 21+ happy hour event will be back on four Friday evenings throughout the summer! It's the only event in town where you can help save elephants from extinction just by attending! A portion of each ticket sold will go towards elephant conservation. Guests enjoy live music from multiple bands throughout the Zoo, animal experiences, and more.

Dates: July 12, August 16, September 6

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/zoobrew

Members get a 20% discount by purchasing tickets ahead of time through the Member Portal at senecaparkzoo.org!



► JUNGLE JOG

JULY 21

Join us for our 35th annual Jungle Jog 5k run and walk, and the 3rd year of our three-race series celebrating the transformation of the Seneca Park Zoo. This year's medal will interlock with 2022 and 2023, bringing together the last piece of the puzzle as we move another step closer to new experiences coming to the Zoo. Don't miss the chance to complete your collection! ***This year's race is featured in Rochester Runner of the Year Series for 2024!***

Date: July 21, 8 a.m.

Learn More: senecaparkzoo.org/junglejog



EVENTS

► CONSERVATION AWARENESS DAYS

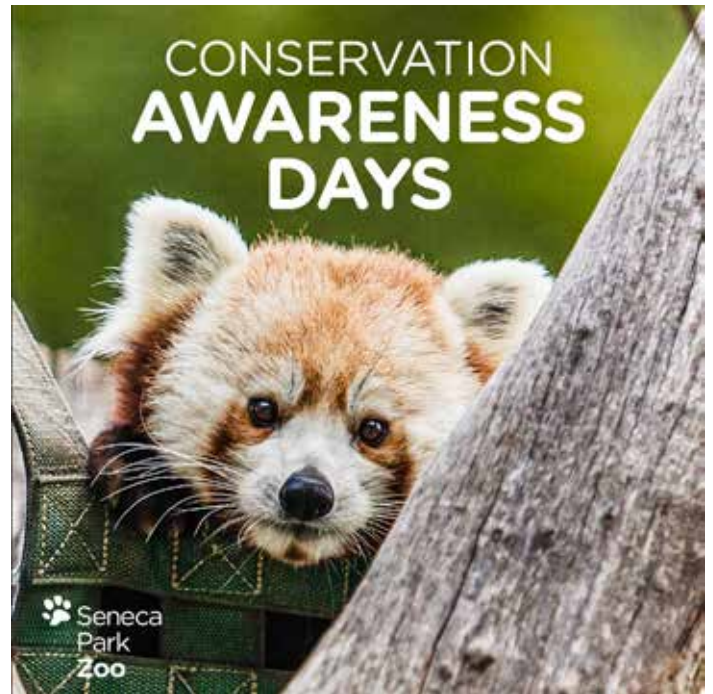
JULY 13, 14/JULY 27, 28/AUGUST 17, 18

We love celebrating and learning about different species as part of our annual awareness weekends! Mark your calendar to make plans to visit us onsite as we will have plenty to do and see for these weekends. Stay tuned to our social media and website for more information as these dates get closer!

Dates: July 13 + 14 – Frogs!

July 27 + 28 – Endangered Species

Aug 17 + 18 – Genesee Trail Weekend



► COMMUNITY CLEANUPS

**JULY 17/JULY 31/AUGUST 10/AUGUST 24/
SEPTEMBER 14**

Join like-minded neighbors to help clean-up our local green spaces. You'll be amazed at the impact a focused group can make in just three hours. Help us make Rochester a cleaner, greener city! Please dress for the weather and bring water to stay hydrated. Tools, bags, and gloves will be provided and all ages are welcome to attend.

Date: July 17, July 31, August 10, August 24, Sept. 14

Register: senecaparkzoo.org/cleanup



▶ PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION MEMBERSHIP!

Level up your membership – become a Partners in Conservation Member!

Seneca Park Zoo Partners in Conservation members are some of our most powerful supporters of education and conservation programs. Get more from your membership by becoming part of Partners in Conservation, the Zoo's premiere member program with levels starting at \$500.

PIC Membership includes:

- **INVITATIONS** to exclusive events like Brunch with the Keepers and Family Night.
- **ACTIVITIES** for Partners in Conservation families including ZoolInsider tours to go behind the scenes and Animal Enrichment Opportunities to help create the items that keep Zoo animals healthy and engaged.
- **FREE** tram and giraffe feeding tickets
- **EVENT TICKETS** to ZooBrew and more

Scan here to see all Partners in Conservation membership levels and benefits:

senecaparkzoo.org/partners-in-conservation



Eric Caballero



Eric Caballero
Olive Baboon



CALENDAR

Mark your calendars for what's next at your Zoo.

► 2024 MEMBER APPRECIATION WEEK

SATURDAY, AUGUST 3 – FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

A full week of celebrating YOU, our amazing members. Every day this week will feature an extra special member perk or activity. Thank you for being part of our community and thank you for supporting conservation.

Details below and more information at senecaparkzoo.org/event/member-appreciation-week

Saturday, August 3: Member Pin Launch Day

Introducing the 2024 member pin! Grab this year's pin all week long when you check in at the member booth. While supplies last.

Sunday, August 4: Popcorn Day

Pick up a complimentary box of buttery delicious popcorn when you check in today!

Monday, August 5: Prize-A-Palooza

All day long we'll be having member surprise giveaways and prizes. You could go home with some sweet member swag, extra time on your membership, unique animal artwork, and more!

Tuesday, August 6: Bring-A-Guest Day

Share your Zoo visit with a guest of your choice! One additional guest per membership.

Wednesday, August 7: Member-Created Animal Enrichment

Participate in creating an enrichment item or activity to place in the habitat of one lucky species.

Thursday, August 8: YOUR ZooStory and ZooMobile at the Zoo

We invite you to preserve your favorite Zoo memory for posterity at the YOUR ZooStory recording booth.

In the afternoon, meet some of our ambassador animals that you would not typically see on your visit with a ZooMobile presentation right here at your Zoo.

Friday, August 9: Member T-Shirt Day

Wear your Zoo member t-shirt today for a reward at the Member Entrance! Save \$2 when you purchase a member t-shirt today.

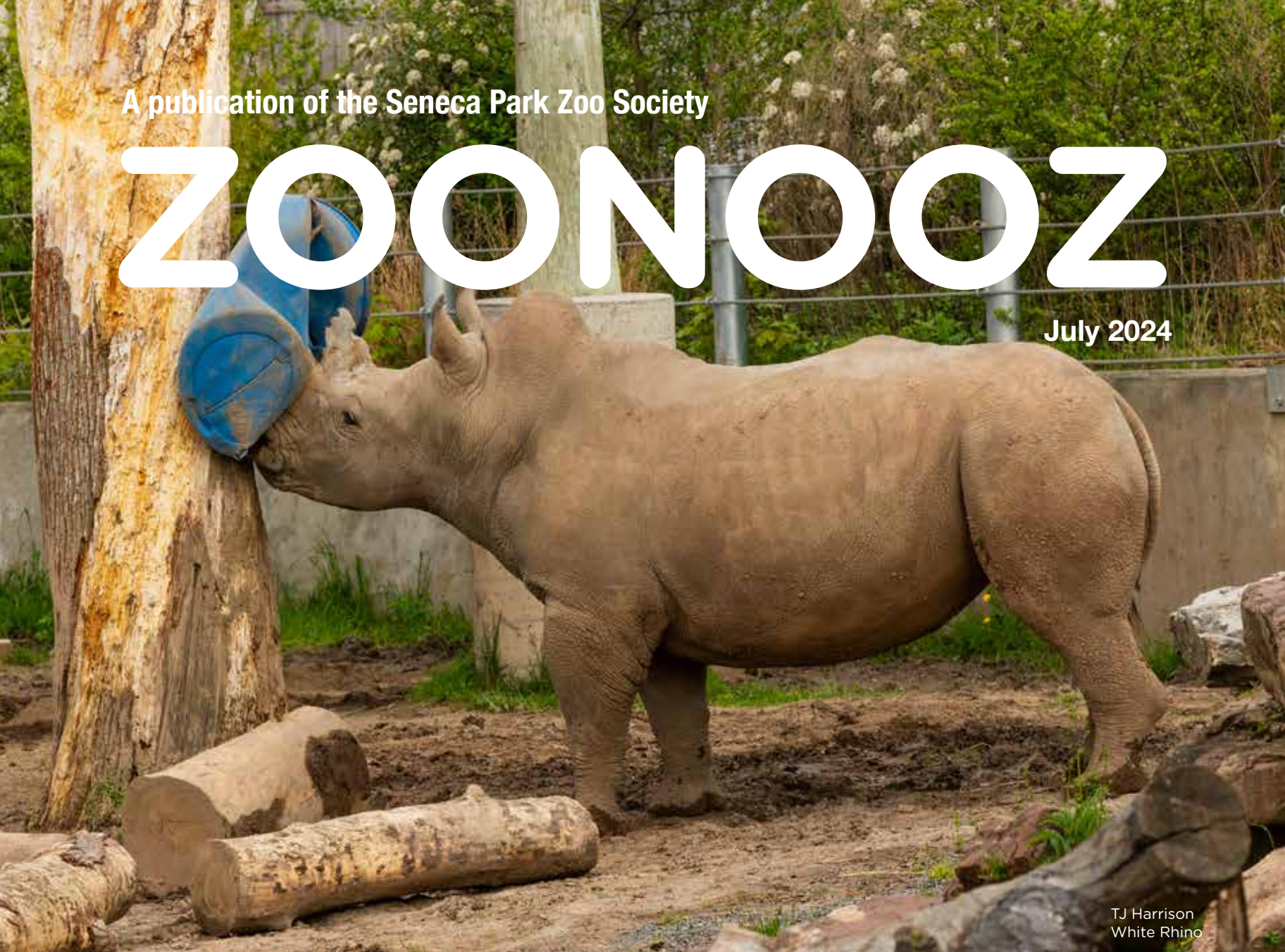
BONUS: Wear a Zoo member t-shirt to the August 16 ZooBrew for access to the VIP express entrance. No waiting in line!



A publication of the Seneca Park Zoo Society

zoonooz

July 2024



TJ Harrison
White Rhino

Follow us socially. Visit senecaparkzoo.org



senecaparkzoo.org | 585.336.7200 | The Zoo is open 362 days a year.

Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.

Contributing writers:
Pamela Reed Sanchez, President and CEO, Seneca Park Zoo Society
Beth LaPierre, Director of Marketing and Communications

Designer: Amanda Lindley

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