

The WildTimes

Issue 72

THE WILDTIMES



Spotlight on: Fire-Bellied Toad

The fire-bellied toad (*Bombina orientalis*) is a small to medium-sized toad that is commonly known for the spectacular coloration found on its underbelly, which is precisely where their name is derived from. When threatened, they rise up on their front legs and display their underbelly's vibrant coloration consisting of a bright red or yellow color with black spots. This unique adaptation acts as a warning signal, alerting predators of the toad's foul and frequently toxic taste. While the colors on their belly are more vibrant and flashy, their backside coloration is less conspicuous. The dull green color with black spots serves as a type of camouflage and allows them to easily blend in with their environments. Fire-bellied toads also have a warty and bumpy back with a smooth underbelly.

There are eight different species of fire-bellied toads, all of which are aquatic and may be found in a variety of different habitats such as woodlands, forests, temperate rainforests, swamps and marshes throughout

Asia and Europe. These toads are primarily carnivorous animals with a diet consisting mainly of invertebrates like spiders, worms, or any other insects they may come in contact with. In order to successfully catch its prey, the toad sits and waits for the optimal moment for it to shoot out its long, sticky tongue, which grabs the insect and pulls it back into its mouth.

Since this species of toad is relatively small in size, it is prone to high levels of predation. Birds, snakes, and foxes are among its top predators, but it is also susceptible to aquatic predators like large fish as well.

Fire-bellied toads hibernate from fall to late spring in groups of six to eight individuals. Their breeding period ranges from May to the middle of August. During that time, a female may lay multiple sets of eggs—each set deposited ranges from 38-257 eggs that take only three to ten days to hatch. Once hatched, the tadpoles are given no parental care or protection and must fend for themselves. As a tadpole, fire-bellied toads

feed primarily on detritus, or dead matter, until it reaches maturity and can start widening its diet.

In captivity, fire-bellied toads may reach up to thirty years of age but in the wild, the estimated lifespan is approximately twenty years of age. Here at the NEW Zoo we have three fire-bellied toads: Bounce, Hop and Mr. Toad. They have been here since last summer, and we often incorporate them into educational classes and Zoomobiles. Although they live behind-the-scenes, you can often see them out during "Animal Encounters" and Amphitheater Shows during the summer season, so keep your eyes peeled for them next time you visit!



This article was contributed by NEW Zoo Intern Ashley VanDeGuchte. Sources include animal-diversity.ummz.umich.edu and nationalzoo.si.edu

Inside this issue:

Spotlight: Fire-Bellied Toad	1
Conservation Connection: Large Carnivores	2
Animal Collection Report: February 2014	2-3
From the Director	4
N.E.W. Zoological Society News	5
Mark your Calendar	6

The March 2014 Paws & Claws Gift Shop Special Is:

10% off all Snake items



Conservation Connection: Large Carnivores Under Siege

A recent study published in *Science* magazine indicates that the populations of large carnivores are under threat. Lead researcher for this project, William Ripple of Oregon State University, says more than three quarters of Earth's large carnivores are currently in decline. The study tracked the conservation status and ecological roles of the planet's 31 largest predators, including lions, gray wolves, dingos, and bears. Ripple says, "Their ranges are collapsing. Many of these animals are at risk of extinction, either locally or globally."

Habitat loss, hunting, and prey depletion are key forces among those conspiring against many of the imperiled carnivore species. Seventeen of the thirty-one species considered in the new research are now restricted to territories that are less than half their historic range. The effects of the decline of such large, apex predators can ripple through the ecosystems and food webs these animals find themselves atop. For example, fewer wolves and cougars in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem has meant less

predation on herbivorous mammals, such as elk and deer, whose expanded populations have degraded vegetation. This disrupts the habitat and food sources of birds and small mammals. Similar patterns of disruption play out around the world, from the Amazon to Africa, and even places like South East Asia and North America.

Not only does the future of these carnivore species depend on the action or inaction of humans but also on our attitude towards them as well. Here at the NEW Zoo, we currently participate in SSP (Species Survival Plan) breeding programs for large carnivores such as African Lions, Snow Leopards and Red Wolves. We have produced lion cubs in the past, which are now living at other AZA facilities helping to continue their genetically diverse bloodlines. Through a process of trial and error, we were able to successfully match our female Snow Leopard with a male she found suitable. Buster and Tammy have been showing signs of mating behavior and we are hopeful the two will produce

their first litter of offspring. We recently acquired a new female Red Wolf, and we are hopeful she and her new mate will produce offspring for this highly endangered species sometime in the near future.



Our resident male Red Wolf, Tamaska, (pictured above) was joined by a new female, and we are hopeful the two will soon produce offspring.

Animal Collection Report: February 2014 by Carmen Murach

Our older female cougar suffered a frost bite injury to her tail in late January. BB came to the NEW Zoo with arthritis and pain issues (she had been declawed and we believe this to be the basis of her problems). Although she receives medication to control her discomfort, cold weather seems to exacerbate her condition causing her to groom the hair off of her paws and the tip of her tail. On January 16th, she removed some of the hair from her tail. A few days later, she removed more, and Zookeepers noticed that the tail tip looked raw and wet and had likely suffered frost bite damage. The Veterinarian examined the tail and determined that the best course of action was to remove the damaged portion. BB has been kept

inside the animal hospital while her stitches heal. Fortunately, she is a calm cat who appreciates human attention (from a distance, of course) and doesn't seem to mind spending time indoors. Although cougars are well adapted to cold temperatures, an electric heater has been added to their building to prevent further problems for BB.

Two elderly domestic goats died during the past month. Although both had good appetites and were socially engaged, they had each been having trouble maintaining weight due to their advanced age. Auburn was euthanized after becoming very weak. Piglet died of natural causes. Several other members of the goat herd are

elderly and nearing the end of their lifespan.

Four newborn domestic goats were added to the collection on Valentine's Day. The goats were privately donated and are of mixed dairy breeds. They exhibit a wide range of breed characteristics: one has the floppy ears of a Nubian goat, one has the distinct dorsal stripe of a French Alpine goat and one has the very small external ears of the LaMancha breed. All are incredibly adorable and can be viewed in the middle portion of the Aldabra Tortoise building. The young male goats will join the herd in the Children's Zoo when they have completed quarantine and have grown big enough to eat the Petting Zoo Treats that...

Continued on page 3

Animal Collection Report, continued....

zoo guests love to feed them.

A new exhibit has been added to the Education and Conservation Center. Zookeeper Jessica Hujtens delivered a fundraising presentation and was awarded a donation from *100 Women Who Care – Green Bay* for the Zoo to purchase a habitat for the Blue-tongued skink. The skink, who is an educational program animal, had previously been kept in a behind the scenes area. He is an interesting and popular lizard and visitors often asked where he could be seen. The large exhibit allows plenty of room for the skink to roam.

One of our entry level Zookeepers

is leaving for a full time position at the Central Florida Zoo. Erika Murphy started here as a volunteer intern and was hired as LTE Husbandry Assistant in July of 2013. The experience she gained here should give her a good basis for her developing career.

It may not be obvious, but Spring is in the air! The Red Wolves have been very vocal after dark during the past month, and the Canada Lynx have been screeching during the day (both indicators of breeding season). Many of the birds are talking about nesting too.



Meet Kilimanjaro, Everest, Rainier and McKinley

Don't Forget to Register Your Children for Summer Zoo Camp!

An advertisement for Summer Zoo Camp. It features a large image of a rhinoceros's head on the left. To the right, the text "SUMMER ZOO CAMP" is written in large, bold, red letters, followed by "IS A WILD TIME!" in a stylized black font. Below the text are three circular images: one of two children playing with cartoon masks, another of a lizard's face, and a third of a rhinoceros's head. The logo for "NEW ZOO of Brown County" is in the bottom left corner.

- ◆ The 2014 Summer Zoo Camp program will begin at 8:45am and end at 2:00pm daily.
- ◆ The cost per day is \$20 for Zoo Pass members or \$25 for non-Zoo Pass members.
- ◆ For more information including a list of available programs, please visit newzoo.org today!
- ◆ Pre-registration is required and a limited number of spaces are available for each day's session. To register, or for more information, contact the NEW Zoo Education Department by calling 920-662-2402 or by emailing info@newzoo.org.

From the Director: Cabin Fever by Neil Anderson

It certainly has been a winter to remember with record breaking cold temperatures. Like us the Zoo's animal collection has endured the record breaking cold weather and like us they do get "Cabin Fever". Some of our animals that are native to regions of the globe that experience cold weather on a seasonal basis have adapted quite well to the recent winter conditions with year round access to their outdoor exhibits. However, those that are housed indoors in our winter quarters areas in the Zoo climate controlled buildings are getting restless at this time of year. Animals like our giraffes, alligator and tropical birds are looking forward to spring to be able to experience their outdoor exhibit. Our zookeepers do a wonderful job all year but especially during the transition from winter to spring in keeping the indoor animals active. The zookeepers are quite ingenious and innovative coming up with random and daily environmental enrichment items to change and stimulate the daily routines of the animal collection.

Hopefully spring weather is just around the corner and if you are experiencing "Cabin Fever" there is nothing like taking a trip to the Zoo. A trip to the Zoo will not only get you out of the so-called cabin but will also provide additional enrichment for our animal collection as they are waiting for our Zoo visitors to return. So take advantage of the next favorable weather day and plan a trip out to get re-connected with your favorite animal(s). A few things coming this spring include the opening of a new "Adventure Park" in May as well as a major renovation to the Children's Zoo.

N.E.W. Zoological Society News

2nd Annual
SKUNKS ARE BEAUTIFUL
Cribbage
Tournament

Hosted By:
The N.E.W. ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Thursday, April 3rd, 2014

FOR INFORMATION
newzoosociety@gmail.com

Thank You to Our Wonderful Sponsors:

2nd Annual "Skunks are Beautiful" Cribbage Tournament-

Contact Steve at newzoosociety@gmail.com to get your registration form. This popular event fills up fast and only 70 teams can participate. All proceeds raised help offset Society operating costs. There will be payouts, food, beverages, silent auctions, 3-50/50 raffles, camaraderie, and a whole lot of fun!

Education & Conservation Center Update-

The Society is pleased to announce; after the remaining pledges are fulfilled, the debt on this building will be Paid in Full!! This is a huge accomplishment and we thank all that supported our fund-raising efforts!!

Animal Hospital Update-

The New Animal Hospital design is finished and a Ground Breaking Ceremony took place in December. We have 2 pledges contingent on construction beginning spring or summer, and obtaining more financial support. This building will go up in phases as the donations come in. Naming rights are available for the building and the individual rooms. Contact the Society for more information at 920-434-681

March Specials

Purchase a raised arm river rock bench or a 100% recycled plastic, cedar-style bench and we will throw in 2 TICKETS to our 15TH annual "FEAST WITH THE BEASTS" event for FREE! That is a \$60.00 value! Have your family name, message, or any special saying engraved on the bench and we can have it placed in time for our popular Feast event on Monday, August 4th, 2014. This bench will be placed at the zoo, in an area of your choice, with the approval of the Zoo Director, for all to enjoy.

~OR~

Buy an 8x8 laser engraved brick for \$175.00 and we will throw the clipart in for FREE! That is a \$75.00 value! Your brick will be placed in a stainless steel frame, above the ground, in front of the Red Panda exhibit. Please contact the Society at (920) 434-6814 for more information or to receive a bench or brick order form. Please write "Lucky Deals" on the order form to receive the special offer.



NEW ZOO

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YOUR NEW Zoo.***

Your NEW Zoo is an always new, natural adventure that promotes recreation, education, and conservation through encounters with live animals.

Want to know more about the WildTimes? Have a suggestion for an article you would like to see? Or would you like to submit an article? Contact the Editor, Angela, at 920-662-2405 or through email, at education@newzoo.org!

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We are your only AZA Accredited Zoo in Northeastern Wisconsin.



Upcoming Events & Things to Remember

**Saturday, April 5th: Birthday Party for the Animals.
Event runs 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free with admission.**

**Saturday, April 19th: Easter EggStravaganZoo.
Event runs 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**Sunday, April 20th: Easter.
We are open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**