



Spotlight on: the Ruffed Grouse

The ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*) is a widely distributed, non-migratory bird found in 38 of the 49 continental United States and in all providences of Canada. Ruffed grouse are one of ten grouse species native to North America. While males are typically slightly larger than females, ruffed grouse are fairly small in general when compared to most other species of grouse, averaging only from 17 to 25 ounces in weight. Their short legs and smaller size help distinguish them from other grouse species because instead of appearing to be plump, their physique is actually quite slim in comparison. They may also be differentiated by their two basic color phases, which often depend on the climates in which they live. In colder, northern climates, ruffed grouse exhibit a grey color phase, whereas in warmer southern climates, they display a brown color phase.

The “ruffed” part of the bird’s name is derived directly from their unique mating behavior, where males “ruff out” their neck feathers, effectively exposing their rich black coloration, and fan out their tail feathers to attempt to attract females. Unlike

most grouse, ruffed grouse have a courtship display that is not vocal. They actually make a drumming noise by flapping their wings, first slowly, and then gradually moving to a more rapid beat. The sound is more frequently heard during the grouse’s breeding season in the spring and, interestingly, is quite similar to the initial sound that a lawn mower makes when its engine is firing up. These grouse are usually solitary animals and are not monogamous, so males may attempt to impress and attract several females throughout the course of its life. Males are also very territorial and may aggressively defend between five and twenty acres of forested land.

The lifespan of ruffed grouse is very low, as mortality rates are extreme. The odds of a chick surviving from the time it hatches in June and reaching full development around mid-August are less than 50%. Their average life expectancy is about one year, and if a grouse is fortunate to survive its first year, it’s likely to reach 2-3 years of age. After reaching these ages, the grouse might face threats such as predation, disease, hunting, severe weather, and even habitat destruction.

While many bird species of similar size may live to be 10 years old, a wild ruffed grouse has barely even a chance of surviving to reach age eight.

The NEW Zoo currently has one male ruffed grouse living on-site. “Thor” lives in one of the Gamebird Exhibit huts, located on the far north end of the zoo, in between the bobcat and cougar exhibits. Be sure to look for him next time you visit – but don’t be discouraged if you don’t see him at first! His exhibit gives him plenty of places to hide when he’s feeling a little shy.

Article provided by NEW Zoo Intern Ashley VandeGuchte.

Sources include: <http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org>; <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/45436.html>; <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>



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The April 2014 Paws & Claws Gift Shop Special is:

10% off all SNAKAE items



Conservation Connection: Celebrating Earth Day, 2014

The month of April usually signifies that spring has finally arrived in Northeastern Wisconsin. With it comes warmer weather and the chance for many to get out of the house and enjoy the outdoors. April is also the month in which we celebrate our planet's holiday: Earth Day. Earth day was started in the year 1970 and to many, it is considered the birth of the modern environmental movement. Across the globe, there are many festivals and activities that people partake in to celebrate their love of the Earth and conserving its resources. There are a multitude of things YOU can do to help continue the tradition of this holiday – and most can be done from your own home.

One of the most obvious things a person can do is plant a tree. As Earth Day roughly coincides with U.S. Arbor Day (usually the dates are within one to two weeks of each other), over time, Earth Day has taken on the role of tree-planting. Planting trees helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, cleans pollution, secures soil in place to prevent erosion, and provides homes for a lot of biodiversity – that of both animals and plants alike.

If you don't have space to plant a tree in your yard, you can always make nature-related crafts at school or home. Get together with your family and build a birdhouse or make a bird feeder to encourage the local bird population, which plays an important role in every ecosystem. If you don't feel very crafty or artistic, you could host a garage sale or donate or reuse household items. Many of us have lots of things in our homes taking up space that we don't really need, want, or use.

For those of you that like to get your hands dirty, you can make a difference by organizing or participating in a weed or invasive "plant pull." Invasive plants take a toll on the health of the environment, and they cost states money, especially as more and more invasive species spread. The expenses associated with ecological damage cause by invasive species currently total roughly \$137 billion per year in the United States alone!

Of course, there is no reason we can't all celebrate Earth Day every day. There are several things we can do to help continue the conservation of our planet and its in-

habitants all 365 days of the year. Such things include riding your bike or taking public transportation, reducing, reusing and recycling, buying earth friendly products, or even cleaning up litter. If everyone were to make a small change in our lives, it would certainly add up to a big change for our planet. As stewards to our home, it is our responsibility to make the best decisions for the continuing survival of all Earth's inhabitants. So, as you celebrate Earth Day on the 22nd of April, 2014, remember that your actions can be repeated the rest of the year for the benefit of all.

Article contributed by NEW Zoo Educator Dustin Herrmann.



Zesty's Frozen Custard Fundraiser

We are excited to announce that we are once again partnering with Zesty's Frozen Custard & Grill this month to help raise money for our Education Department!

When you eat at Zesty's on Wednesday, April 9th and/or on Wednesday, April 23rd, a portion of all proceeds from sales will be donated to the NEW Zoo.

This will help provide much-needed funds for our programming efforts, allowing us to provide quality educational experiences for NEW Zoo guests and for community members of Northeastern Wisconsin. So mark your calendars and visit either Zesty's location this month. It's a tasty way to make a difference!



So remember:

Wednesdays: APRIL 9th and APRIL 23rd

Eat at Zesty's and a portion of all proceeds will be donated to the NEW Zoo's Education Department!



Animal Collection Report: March 2014 by Carmen Murach

Breeding season is underway for many species at the Northeastern Wisconsin Zoo.

The Laughing Kookaburras have laid their first egg of the season. Our pair has successfully raised three chicks in the past. The three young females are scheduled to join mates of their own at three different zoos in the near future.

The female Red Wolf who arrived last year is currently in estrus and appears to have formed a strong pair bond with the resident male. Red Wolves are one of the most endangered canids in the world. They are native to the eastern and south-central United States, but by the 1970's, loss of habitat and extermination programs had almost wiped the species out entirely. The US Fish and Wildlife Service began the Red Wolf Recovery Program to save the species from extinction. Seventeen of the last remaining wolves were captured and the captive breeding program was established. The AZA Species Survival Program manages the breeding program to ensure a healthy population for release into the wild. Wolves born in zoos are released into the wild and so far, a small wild population of more than 100 Red Wolves has been re-established. The AZA Species Survival Plan for Red Wolves has recommended



The icicles gathered on zookeeper Jessica's coat and eyelashes are proof-positive that our keepers endure extreme conditions for our animals!

that the NEW Zoo pair produce pups this year to help sustain this critically endangered species.

The Snow Leopards, who also have a breeding recommendation from the AZA SSP for their species, have been showing signs of breeding behavior as well. It is not certain if the 13 year old female is fertile, but any cubs she might produce would be

welcome additions to the population.

The Black Bears are spending much more time awake in recent weeks. Although the bears at the zoo do not hibernate, they do become quite lazy during cold weather. Instead of waking up to eat and then heading back to bed an hour later, they are now interested in spending time roaming their outdoor enclosure. The raccoons seem to feel the same way.

The Brown County Star Employees Recognition Committee rewarded the Zookeepers for their perseverance through the long, cold winter with \$20 Fleet Farm gift cards. This winter was the 2nd coldest on record and presented many challenges for the Keepers, who spend the majority of their days outdoors. Extreme temps mean Keepers, maintenance staff, and even volunteers need to spend more time outdoors to check on the animals more frequently and to deal with frustrating equipment challenges - locks freeze, doors and gates freeze shut, plastic tools shatter.... Zoo staff and volunteers continue to do a commendable job of working together as a team to do whatever it takes to ensure that the Zoo animals are happy & comfortable.



Top to bottom and left to right: Zookeepers Trisha, Katie, Jessica, Shannon, Drew, and Elizabeth were very happy to be presented with Fleet Farm Gift Cards!

From the Director: Exciting things are coming! By Neil Anderson

Spring is finally here (I think), so get ready to Spring into Adventure very soon. On May 7th, a major grand opening ceremony is being planned to celebrate and open the new "Adventure Park." Crews arrived this week to put the final pieces of equipment together for the dueling zip lines, aerial adventure course, kid's aerial course, climbing tower, and the ground school. Staff began their "Adventure Park" guide training this week, and another staff training is planned for mid-April. The staff training is an exciting step in preparing the Adventure Park for our visitors in May.

The Adventure Park will be open daily from May through October, weather permitting. The Adventure Park will open daily at 10:00 a.m. and close at the same time as the Zoo closes. Zoo Pass members will receive a discount on the Adventure Park admission.

The Adventure Park will provide an interactive, challenging, exciting, exhilarating, and extreme adventure experience for all participants. The experiences will vary between all components but will give visitors an opportunity to challenge themselves as they experience reaching new

heights.

The "dueling" racing zip lines are side-by-side, over 1000-foot-long half-inch cables that launch from the top of the existing 50 foot tall historic fire tower and land on a 12 foot landing deck near the entrance of the zoo. Speeds can reach up to 35-40 miles an hour. The zip lines plummet downhill over terrain that includes a pond and the existing creek.

This is just one of the new and exciting pieces of the new "Adventure Park," waiting for your arrival in May. We'll look forward to seeing you here!



Left to right and top to bottom: View of the Ropes Challenge Course; View of the Climbing Tower; The historic First Tower, from which the Zip Lines will launch; The View that Zip Line participants will see (minus the snow!!) before they leap off into adventure!!

N.E.W. Zoological Society News

The start of 2014 comes with many changes for the Society. The changes are bitter-sweet. Four long-term Society officers are stepping down from their positions, while four newer board members are stepping up to fill their shoes. These are big shoes to fill but, we are confident that these individuals will do just that, and create new and exciting footsteps for the Society.

Judy Krawczyk , president from 1999 to 2014, will continue on as board member emeritus. Arnie Rentmeester, secretary from 1985 to 2013, will continue on as a member of the board. Rick Colberg, vice president from 1989 to 2014, will continue on as a member of the board. And, Rita Dufour, treasurer from 1992 to 2014, will join our technical advisory committee. These generous individuals have given a combined total of 90 years of volunteer service, to the Society, in support of our NEW Zoo. This does not include the many years of volunteerism each of them has given to other organizations. We thank them for their generosity and we applaud them for truly making our community a better place to live!

Steve Bieda, board member since 2009, became our new Society president March 17, 2014. Lizz Gibson, board member since 2013, is our new vice president. Dave Czarnecki, board member since 2007, became the secretary for the society in 2013. Last but not least, Mary Rehberg, society member since 2013, is now the new treasurer. We welcome these four with open arms and we thank them for taking on their new roles and responsibilities.

A strong board of directors is needed, for the leadership to be effective. The current board of directors include: Rick Colberg, Frank Czarnecki, Dr. Tracey Gilbert, Paul Kosmoski, Arnie Rentmeester, Ben Schenkelberg, and Hank Wallace. These members have given many years of service to the Society and the NEW Zoo. The Society is fortunate to have a technical advisory committee that works alongside the board members offering expertise in various areas.

We are blessed to continue the Society mission of supporting our beautiful zoo. This wouldn't be possible without the dedication from all past and present board members, committees, volunteers, foundations, businesses, and community-minded individuals.

Please contact the N.E.W. Zoological Society, Inc., P.O. Box 12647, Green Bay, WI 54307-2647, or by phone at 920-434-6814, to learn more about becoming a member of our organization.

We hope you support us and follow along as we enter this new and exciting chapter.



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***There's always something new at
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

April 5th

- Birthday Party for the Animals: 9am to 2pm. Free with zoo admission.

April 19th

- Easter EggStravaganZoo: 8am to 2pm. All-you-can-eat Breakfast and an Egg Hunt for children 12 and under. Special Event prices to apply. Visit www.newzoo.org for info!

April 20th

- Easter. We are open 9am to 6pm!

Remember Spring Hours Begin April 1st! We are open DAILY from 9am to 6pm