

VIRGINIA



REVIEW

summer 2009



*Meerkats  
Pat, Rosie and Slate*

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SUMMER 2009

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Greg Bockheim

Marie Butler

Lori Cummings

Gale Lumadue

Diane Paluzzi

Annie Vogt

**PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Greg Bockheim

Marie Butler

Lori Cummings

Diane Paluzzi

Craig Pelke

Mark Schwartz

David Totten

**EDITOR**

Lori Cummings

**Address:** 3500 Granby Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23504**Zoo Hours:** Open Daily 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Closed New Year's Day, Thanksgiving,

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

**Phone:** (757) 441-2374 • **Fax:** (757) 441-5408**Website:** www.virginiazoo.org

## WHO AM I?



This is a photo of Billy, one of the Zoo's three Masai giraffes, with Dennis one of his zookeepers. Check out page 5 for a feature on how we train the tallest animal on earth!

## From the Executive Director

School is almost out; it's time to spend more time with your families and less time in class and in the office. What a better place to do that than at the Zoo? Summertime at the Zoo is my favorite season because the staff and I get out and about more often, in hopes of meeting more of you!



*Greg Bockheim with the rooster*

You may have heard some of our happy news already...it was too exciting to keep to ourselves! We're proud to announce that Zola and Mramba, our African lion couple, are expecting again! It was great fun to watch our cubs grow up two years ago – are you ready to meet the newest members of the pride?

Check out page 7 to meet Oscar. He'll be the new exhibit mate of Yin, our red panda that many of you already know. You'll also find a new exhibit for our Eastern grey kangaroos – Mick, Irwin and Beans – in a few short weeks. Be sure to check back often...they should have some new friends arriving soon.

We'll continue to introduce you to future residents of the new Trail of the Tiger – Asia exhibit. This issue focuses on an animal that I expect to be one of your favorites, the orangutan. Check out page 6 for the scoop.

Cheers,

*Greg Bockheim*

## Going Green

Help us conserve valuable environmental resources by signing up to have Zoo news delivered directly to your inbox. By supplying us with your email address, we will add you to our email distribution list and send you breaking Zoo news and event notifications. Eventually, we hope to even send electronic versions of this newsletter!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email address(es) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to:

Going Green, Virginia Zoo, 3500 Granby Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23504  
or fax to (757) 441-5408 or info@virginiazoo.org

Do you have any questions or ideas for the next issue of the Virginia Zoo Review? Contact us. We love your feedback.

# ANIMAL AMBASSADOR

## Asian Forest Scorpion



This issue's animal ambassador is the Asian forest scorpion. He may not be as cute as other animals profiled in this space, but he is an interesting and necessary member of the web of life.

Different species of scorpions exist everywhere in the world, except the North Pole, where it is simply too cold for them. They are highly adaptive creatures and can survive in almost any kind of habitat. The Asian forest scorpion, as you may have guessed, lives in the rainforests of Asia from India to Indonesia.

These scorpions are nocturnal and terrestrial, burrowing under logs and other debris. When threatened, they rarely use their tail to defend themselves, but instead use their large pinchers, called pedipalps, located near their head. The stinger, located on the tip of the tail, is where venom is located. Species with stronger venom are more inclined to defend themselves by stinging, where those with weaker venoms, like the Asian forest scorpion, would rather pinch!

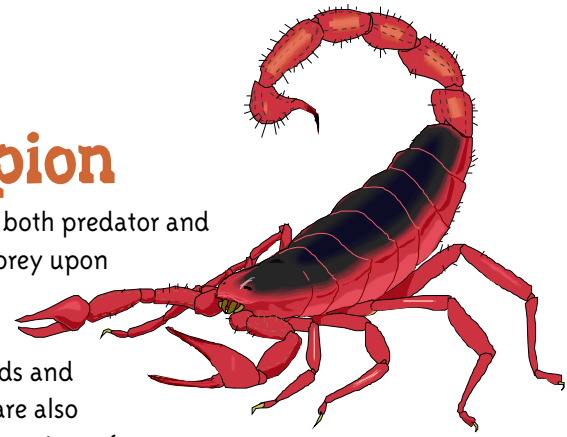


Scorpions are both predator and prey. While they prey upon a variety of small animals (small invertebrates, birds and mammals), they are also preyed upon by a variety of reptiles, birds and mammals. Despite the high toxicity of some scorpion venoms, many of their natural predators have built-in defenses to counteract some of its negative effects.

According to fossil records, the scorpion has been in existence for about 400 million years and has changed very little between the ancient and present-day scorpion.

To find out more about this scorpion and our other Animal Ambassadors or to book an education program, please contact our Education Department at (757) 441-2374, ext. 229.

Scorpions are known to fluoresce, or glow, when exposed to ultraviolet light. The exact purpose of this rather strange ability is still being debated by scientists.



## Horticultural Happenings

### It's easy being green...

...according to the plants at the Virginia Zoo because:

- Added compost refreshes the garden soil every year
- Tough, disease resistant, heat tolerant plants are the only ones chosen for planting
- Organic fertilizers feed them gradually and when they actually want more nutrients
- Organic mulches keep out pushy weeds while conserving moisture
- Rain water is supplemented by irrigation if less than 1" has fallen in a week, so roots grow deep
- In times of stress, treatments of health-promoting, liquid seaweed, insect fighting insecticidal soap or oil, and minor surgical pruning are available

Life is good and green in the gardens of the Virginia Zoo!





# Zoo News

## New Zoo website alert!

Our website, [virginiazoo.org](http://virginiazoo.org), was just recently overhauled. We'd love to know what you think! Please email us your comments at [info@virginiazoo.org](mailto:info@virginiazoo.org).

## New Perk for Zoo Members!

Members of the Virginia Zoo are now eligible for discounted tickets from the Seven Venues for shows like the Discovery Music Series at Attucks Theatre and more. And...it's easy! Just email us at [info@virginiazoo.org](mailto:info@virginiazoo.org) for the discount code and start saving!

## A new Meerkat Mob?



Slate, the Virginia Zoo's new 4-year old meerkat recently arrived from the North Carolina Zoo. He moved in with Pat and Rosie at their home in the Tsodilo Hills of the Zoo's Africa exhibit. The trio is getting along handsomely – they couldn't ask for better burrowmates!

## Lion Babies!



We are pleased to announce that Mramba and Zola, our African lions, welcomed four healthy cubs to their pride on May 2! This is Zola's second pregnancy – Granby and Neka were born in August 2007. These two oldest cubs will soon leave the Virginia Zoo to start their own families. Check our website to view the Cub Cam and for the latest updates!

## Eco-Garden ready for eco-tourism

Turn right at the Fountain Plaza and discover the Zoo's new Eco-Garden where... sun makes water splash...the wind makes music... the rain is saved for a sunny day... old leaves feed new ones... and bees, butterflies and bugs bloom. Come explore this earth friendly space and gather ideas for your own green place. The Eco-Garden was created from a generous grant awarded by The Norfolk Foundation.



Our dog Fred has a garden over his head. Zookeepers, Tammy and Jill, checked out the "green" roof on Fred's dog house in the new eco-garden.

## Zoo catering wins an award



The Virginia Zoo's African Village Restaurant & Catering, managed by Aramark, participated in The Taste of Hampton Roads (which benefits the Food Bank of Southeastern Virginia) on March 18. They took home 1<sup>st</sup> Prize for the Best Dish Presentation – congratulations!

# Giraffe Training 101

Our three Masai giraffe, Billy, Keana and Imara, were recently visited by Troy Mueller, a giraffe training expert from the Columbus Zoo in Ohio. Troy's visit helped us to perfect some of our training efforts and to help us "baby proof" our exhibit.

Like many of our other animals, target training is important for giraffe. Target training is the least stressful and most effective way to keep a giraffe still during examinations by zookeepers and veterinarians, and will be especially beneficial to determine if our female giraffe are pregnant. Keana and Imara are now sexually mature at 6 years old. As a result, baby giraffe are a real possibility that the Zoo staff need to prepare for.

The basics of target training are simple: the animal learns to touch a target (often something as simple as a tennis ball attached to a bamboo pole) in return for a treat. A clicking device is used to tell the giraffe it has performed the task requested by the zookeeper and a treat is coming up next! Once trained using this method, a giraffe can be kept stationary by one zookeeper while another performs one of many types of procedures, from hoof inspections or trims to an ultrasound or examination.



Zookeeper Dennis with Billy



Troy with a reticulated giraffe

# CREATURE FEATURE



Bornean (Pongo pygmaeus)

## Meet the orangutan neighbor to the siamang in our new Trail of the Tiger — Asia Exhibit.

The orangutan is the world's largest tree-dwelling mammal. As the largest primate in Asia, males can stand 5 feet tall and weigh in at almost 200 pounds! Orangutans are highly intelligent and rely on this intelligence, along with their well-adapted body, to survive in the rainforest.

Their armspan is enormous, reaching up to 7 feet (2 feet longer than their standing height!), and helps them easily travel through the forest.

Orangutans are more solitary than most apes. Males are loners and use their loud calls and noises to ensure they stay out of each other's way. Females, on the other hand, build strong bonds with their young. Babies will often stay with their mothers for 7 years while learning the skills to survive on their own. In fact, females only give birth once every eight years (the longest duration of any animal).



### FUN FACTS

Orangutans have opposable thumbs and big toes

They have 32 permanent teeth (the same amount as humans)

In the wild, they make simple tools for insect foraging, protection against insects, fishing, reaching branches or fruits that are out of reach

They also use leafy branches to shelter themselves from rain and sun, and sometimes even drape large leaves over themselves like a poncho

In Malay, orangutan means "man of the forest"

### EXHIBIT FEATURES

- ★ 46' foot visitor viewing window
- ★ Orangutan-operated shower
- ★ Flexible bamboo gym
- ★ Cold weather playroom

*Exhibit construction, April 2009*

Many years ago, orangutans were found throughout Southeast Asia - all the way into southern China. Today, however, the few orangutans left live in the tropical rainforests of Borneo and Sumatra. Because orangutans live in only a few places, and because they are so dependent upon trees, they are particularly susceptible to logging in these areas. Unfortunately, illegal logging, mining, farming, and palm oil plantations, have placed the orangutan in danger of extinction.

**But we can help!** Palm oil is now the second-most widely-produced edible oil and can be found in cookies and crackers, as well as other products we use every day such as shampoo, beauty products and pet food. Next time you're grocery shopping, check the ingredient labels for palm oil and support the companies who don't use palm oil in their products.

Be part of the Asian adventure and donate now to Trail of the Tiger. We've enclosed an envelope for your convenience. For more information, call our Development Office at (757) 441-2374, ext. 222.



# Meet our Train Engineers



Name: Bob  
Favorite Animal: Elephant



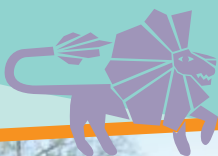
Name: Brandon  
Favorite Animal: Lion



Name: Steve  
Favorite Animal: Red Panda



Name: Ray  
Favorite Animal: Swan



## SAFETY FIRST Our #1 concern is your safety.

- 1 Listen closely to the train engineers and other Zoo staff.
- 2 Always enter and exit to the left side of the train — just remember, the right side is the wrong side!
- 3 Please stay off the train tracks at all times.
- 4 Obey all crossing signals.
- 5 Listen for the bells and whistles. It's a warning that we're headed your way.



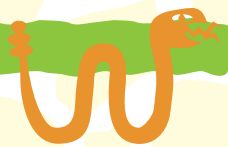
**Shorter lines!** A 4th passenger coach is on the way.  
We want to thank **The Kiwanis Club of Suburban Norfolk** whose generosity made this possible.



# Summer Safari Camp 2009

Join the fun this summer at camp!

Ages 4-5



## Alphabet Zoop-

From antelope and boas to yaks and zebras, there is an animal for every letter! Let the alphabet be your guide as we explore the amazing world of animals.

**June 22-26 and July 27-31 • Half Day**

**That Makes Sense-** Can you see a mouse from a mile away, or smell a flower with your knees? Eyes, ears, noses, and mouths - bring your senses to the Virginia Zoo and learn how animals use extraordinary senses adapted for their survival!

**July 6-10 and August 3-7 • Half Day**

**Animal Tales-** Take part in thrilling adventures by meeting new animals and hearing marvelous tales! Crafts, games, songs, and activities will feature our animal friends and make storybooks come alive!

**July 13-17 and August 10-14 • Half Day**

**What Are They Wearing?-** There are many ways to identify an animal by its cover - hairy, feathery, scaly, or hard-shelled. Find out more about how members of well-known animal families are alike, and different at the same time.

**July 20-24 and August 17-21 • Half Day**



Ages 6-7



## Adaptations: It's Kool to Fit In-

Do you like to swim when it's very hot? Bundle up when it's really cold? Come find out how each animal is uniquely designed to be comfy and cozy in its native environment.

**June 22-26 and August 3-7 • Full Day**

**Relationships: Friend or Foe-** Can a termite be a friend to a lion? This will be the week to learn about many unexpected relationships in the animal kingdom. Discover unlikely friendships, such as giraffe, zebra, and wildebeest being the best of pals.

**July 6-10 and July 27-31 • Full Day**

**Slimy & Messy: Yuckology-** How does a giraffe clean its nose? What is an owl pellet? Just because it seems nasty to us doesn't mean it's not interesting. Explore the yucky side of animal life - from a safe distance if necessary!

**July 13-17 and August 17-21 • Full Day**

## Creatures with Bad Reps:

**I'm Not That Bad-** Although slithery and slimy animals might not seem cute and cuddly, they do have a very important role in life and are very helpful to other animals. Yes, even to humans! Come join us as we meet some slithering reptiles, slimy worms, and squirmy insects up close and personal. You'll learn that in the end, they're not that bad after all!

**July 20-24 and August 10-14 • Full Day**



For more information or to register, call (757) 441-2374, ext. 229 or visit our website at [virginiazoo.org](http://virginiazoo.org)

## Ages 8-9

**Animal Variety: Diggin' Diversity-** What makes a mammal a mammal or a reptile a reptile? And what do they have in common? Review the wide variety of animal life with many living examples, large and small.  
July 6-10 • Full Day

**Clever Prey: Run, Run-** You may already be interested in animal hunters and the creatures they hunt. Discover lots more about the clever and amazing ways prey animals avoid their predators and survive.  
July 27-31 • Full Day

**Nature's Niches-** Crawl through the web of life exploring the purpose and place of each living thing. See why everyone is so important to each other for survival.  
August 17-21 • Full Day

### LOCATION

3500 Granby Street, Norfolk VA 23504

### TIMES

Half day — 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Full day — 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

### COST

Half day — \$120 members/\$145 non-members

Full day — \$220 members/\$270 non-members

## Ages 10-11

**Wide World of Wildlife-** Would you find a bison in your back yard or a lion on your lawn? No, but you might find an opossum on your porch! Come and meet animals you might find close to home, along with many you might only see on the other side of the world.  
July 13-17 • Full Day

**Living Fossils: They're Still Here-** Creatures similar to ones that lived long before the first people (some before the dinosaurs) are alive and well here at the zoo. Meet them up close and see how they are similar to their relatives from long ago.  
July 20-24 • Full Day

## Ages 12-14

**Habitat Explorations-** What makes your home just right for you? Well, what if you lived in a tree, or better yet under a rock? That might not sound appealing to us, but to animals these make the best kinds of homes! Join us as we explore the happening habitats of animals and why they call these places home.  
August 3-7 • Full Day

**Web of Life: It's All Connected-** Did you know that we could not live without bugs? Plants, animals and people are all connected. Find out how your survival depends on all the living things around you.  
August 10-14 • Full Day



# Interview

with Oscar, Red Panda

## Welcome to Virginia, Oscar! Where did you come from?

Thank you. Hello to my adoring fans! I came to Virginia from the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in Ohio, where I was born last June. As you probably know because of my exhibit mate, Yin, red pandas are originally from the mountain forests of Southwest China.

## So, you and Yin... Are you boyfriend/girlfriend?

That's my plan. The Zoo is a member of AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) and participates in a Species Survival Plan Program. The scientists that manage this program put together the best genetic pairings for pandas — so Yin is my perfect genetic match. It's kind of like a dating service with zookeepers as chaperones!

## Babies?!? Aren't you a little young to have babies?

Red pandas mature a lot faster than humans — we become sexually mature (able to make babies) when we're a year and a half old (18 months). Females are pregnant for almost 5 months, and births usually occur in early spring and summer. So...if my calculations are correct, I could possibly be a dad next spring or summer.

## How can we tell you apart from Yin?

Well, other than the obvious... The fur under my eyes is darker than Yin's — hers is white. Fur color can change too as we age, so feel free to ask a Zoo staff member to point me out!

Oscar is excited to meet you. Be sure to visit him (and Yin) on your next visit to the Zoo!



## Going "Green" with the Virginia Zoo

**L**iving "green" means finding ways to reduce your own negative impact on the environment and increase your positive impact. It means helping to conserve resources and preserve our world for future generations. Everything you do affects the plants and animals in your neighborhood and around the world — so, be a good neighbor!

**It's not always easy being green, but it is possible.** Join us at the Virginia Zoo in our important mission to protect our world's most valuable resources — animals and the habitats where they live.

### How can you be more "green"?

- Use energy efficient light bulbs
- Organize a local clean up
- Garden without pesticides
- Use eco-friendly cleaning products
- Carry your groceries in reusable tote bag

For more information about going "green" and what the Virginia Zoo is doing to help, check out our website, [virginiazoo.org](http://virginiazoo.org). Together, we can all make a difference.

**36%** of Zoo members request replacement cards each year. That's more than 3,000 sheets of paper! Over 3 billion trees are cut down every year across the globe for paper and lumber production. Together we can make a difference! In order to conserve paper, we will be charging a replacement fee of \$5. If you need replacement cards, please visit the Membership Office or call us at (757) 441-2374, ext. 257 or 252.



## Why the frog?



Frogs and other amphibians such as toads, salamanders and newts, are among the most threatened group of animals on earth.

Nearly one-third of amphibian species are threatened with extinction. This decline is due to habitat loss and the spread of the chytrid fungus due to climate change and pollution. Because amphibians are being affected at an alarming rate, captive breeding programs at zoos across the world are part of our best hope for conservation. You can help too. Small lifestyle changes can make a big impact on the environment.

# Thank you for supporting the Virginia Zoo

*Gifts made between January and March 2009  
Includes general donations and memberships \$250 and above*

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## New Trail of the Tiger — Asia Donors

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## NEW ZOO PARENTS

Did you know that animals at the Zoo consume 12,045 carrots, 125,000 crickets and 80 tons of hay in one year? Every animal at the Virginia Zoo is available for adoption at several donation levels, starting at \$20. Call us at (757) 441-2374, ext. 244 for more information!

### PARENT

Jessica Taylor  
The Taylor/Stone Family  
Mimi & Fred Nicholson  
Isabella Casey  
Jackson Betz  
Rachel Betz  
Andrea Betz  
Caroline Estes  
Jake Beneck  
Andra Raitch  
The Parr Family  
Abby Moody  
Hannah Moody  
Levi Lawhon  
Caylee Hirschfeld  
Evelynn & Kathleen Rimbey

### ANIMAL

Red Panda  
Red Panda  
Elephant  
Lion  
Lion  
Red Panda  
Meerkat  
Giraffe  
Squirrel Monkey  
Copperhead  
Tiger  
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Coupon can be redeemed in the Zoo gift shop only. Cannot be used in combination with any other coupon, promotion or discount. Expires 6/30/09. Code: Sum09NEWS

*We sincerely apologize if we have inadvertently omitted your name from our donor list. Please contact us at (757) 441-2374, ext. 242 if you have any questions.*



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# Upcoming Events



## Member Night

**Thursday, June 18, 2009, 5:30 p.m. — 8:00 p.m.**

You won't want to miss this exclusive members-only event! The Virginia Zoo will close its gates to the public, and you'll get to enjoy the Zoo after-hours and even take advantage of a special discounted food menu!

This event is for members only. Be sure to bring your membership card for admission.

This event will also feature an art sale from Amy Fox Morrison of Harbor Gallery and Wendy W. Maness Photography.



## Breakfast with the Animals

**Saturday, August 15, 2009, 8:00 a.m. — 10:00 a.m.**

Breakfast with the Animals, our annual member appreciation event, is your chance to feast with the beasts! You'll be treated to a picnic-style breakfast while you watch the Zoo animals enjoy their own breakfast snacks.

**Tickets are on sale July 1 • Adults \$7, Children \$2  
Members only, please.**

To purchase tickets or for more information, please visit our website, [www.virginiazoo.org](http://www.virginiazoo.org) or call 757-441-2374, ext. 252.

## LOOKING AHEAD...

Put us on your calendar so you don't miss these events in 2009:

- ZooBoo — October 31 & November 1
- Pancakes, Paws & Santa Claws — December 12 & 13



See inside cover for answer.