

COSLEY TAILS



Winter 2016/2017

Inside This Issue

On Your Mark, Get Set, Head Start! 1-2

It's Only Natural to Play 2

Working in a Winter Wonderland 3

Staff Spotlight: Jackie Karnstedt 3

Programs & Events 4-5

Holiday Wish Tree 6

Member Matters 7

Animal Spotlight: Red-tailed Hawk 7

Festival of Lights and Tree Sale 8



On Your Mark, Get Set, Head Start!

BY BRETT PETO, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

The room is long and full of tubs, curtains, tools, running water—and Blanding's Turtles.

Endangered in Illinois since 2009, this native Midwest species is the focus of the Blanding's Turtle Head Start Program, a partnership between Cosley Zoo, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (FPDDC), Brookfield Zoo, the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, and the St. Charles Park District.

Zookeeper Katy Briggs is one of the staff responsible for our portion of the program: accepting young turtles, called hatchlings, from FPDDC and raising them at an accelerated pace so they have a better chance of surviving in the wild.

The turtle room, located on the first floor of the Vern Kiebler Learning Center, received 68 hatchlings in September.

They're roughly the size of a quarter when they hatch.

"Once the hatchlings come to the zoo, they're placed in tubs of water, relative to their size," Briggs said. "We feed them on a daily basis. They're getting worms, fish, and shrimp. We make sure they have space for basking so they have

natural movement. They learn how to swim. We weigh and measure them monthly to ensure they're not growing too slow or too fast."

They grow fast with the help of a habitat designed to limit human contact and prevent imprinting, the process whereby a young animal attaches itself psychologically to a caregiver.

That's when Briggs cues the curtains, feeding the turtles from above so they don't associate people with food. Unfortunately, that doesn't solve every issue with human activity.

"Because they travel over land for nesting sites, they're prone to road mortality," said Briggs. "The wetlands are drying up and becoming more and more developed for human use. They don't mature until they're 15 years old, so it takes a long time for the babies to get big enough to then reproduce. They lay a relatively small number of eggs, too."

This makes the Blanding's Turtle a crucial focus of conservation efforts, said FPDDC Wildlife Ecologist Dan Thompson. If one species goes, more often follow.

- continued on page 2

Cosley Tails

Cosley Tails is the official quarterly newsletter of Cosley Zoo, a facility of the Wheaton Park District supported by The Cosley Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit. To learn more about the zoo or to get in touch with questions or comments, visit cosleyzoo.org or call 630.665.5534.

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It's Only Natural to Play

BY TAMI ROMEJKO, EDUCATION & GUEST EXPERIENCES MANAGER

Cosley Zoo is pleased to be a recipient of one of 37 Nature Play Begins at Your Zoo & Aquarium grants from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

Supported through a special gift from the Disney Conservation Fund, these competitive grants, selected through rigorous review by a panel of industry experts, are presented to AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums to encourage family nature play and conservation education.

The grants provide accredited zoos and aquariums with financial, logistic, and creative support to increase or enhance family-centered nature experiences in their communities. This program is a partnership with the Children & Nature Network, building on its successful Family Nature Club initiative.

Research has shown that free play immersed in an outdoor setting is fundamental to connecting children with the natural world. The value of these experiences is reinforced when shared as a family.

Cosley Zoo will use the grant for its new Nature Play for All project, helping families and individuals on the Autism spectrum achieve the benefits of nature play. While those on the spectrum can benefit from nature play as much as anyone else, this audience does need some special considerations.

The outdoors are full of sensory experiences, which can be challenging and even daunting, especially if parents or caregivers aren't comfortable in the natural world themselves.

We'll solve this by offering a workshop for parents and caregivers of children with special needs on the benefits of nature play, taking into account their special considerations; incorporating sensory-appropriate elements into our existing nature play area and throughout the zoo; and developing a Family Nature Club to offer specially tailored programs and resources.

Nature is for everyone, so nature play should be, too. We're excited to create opportunity for all in 2017.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Head Start!

- continued from page 1

"Okay, okay, we've got one species in peril. The others seem to be fine. Why bother?" he said. "To me, as an ecologist, this is the tip of the iceberg. If you don't start to address the problems when they arise, you're going to get what's known as atrophic cascade."

Atrophic cascade is when "you start to lose one species, then another one, then another, and eventually that picks up pace, and you lose many more and soon you get to this collapse."

Changes to the habitat can impact Blanding's Turtles.

"Some of the historic nesting sites are gone, so now what we're finding is they're moving to linear corridors, like trails in the preserves and roadways, but of course those are also travel corridors for the predators," Thompson said. "It makes it that much easier for predators to go right down the line, finding nest after nest. We know our nest loss is at 90 percent or higher."

This is where the program has stepped in.

"We've bypassed nearly all of that predation loss and now we're releasing juveniles who have a much better chance of survival," said Thompson.

Once Briggs and other zookeepers have raised the hatchlings for about 12 months, FPDDC staff releases them into local wetlands. Thompson tracks them through embedded microchips that do no harm to the turtle and provide information about life patterns and population locations.

So far, the program has released more than 2,000 Blanding's Turtles, but that doesn't mean the species is out of danger, from predators or people.

"When people talk about threatened or endangered species, they're thinking about something on another continent, half a world away," Thompson said. "The reality is we have species at risk in your own backyard right here in DuPage County. That actually shocks a lot of people."

To learn how you can support the Blanding's Turtle Head Start Program, visit cosleyzoo.org/conservation or call 630.665.5534.

Working in a Winter Wonderland

BY BRETT PETO, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Bears, bats, and bees hibernate during the winter, but Cosley Zoo doesn't.

With the Festival of Lights and Tree Sale (**November 25-December 30**), Santa's Craft Corner (**November 26 and December 3 and 10**), Junior Zookeepers programs, and more, staff are too busy to stay in with a blanket and a mug of hot chocolate.

Thousands of guests don't stay in, either, causing the zoo to hire several seasonal employees for the holidays.

"The Festival of Lights and Tree Sale is at the forefront of everyone's mind in December," said Education Supervisor Natasha Fischer. "We hire seasonal tree sales staff, but our year-round staff also take turns working late to help sell the trees and operate the zoo when we're open until **9P**."

More than 20,000 lights twinkle on at **3P** daily, and themed displays of birds, insects, reindeer, and rabbits lead you through the winter wonderland. Families from near and far have made it a tradition to purchase the tree for their home from us.

Our five acres of cheer also host the big man himself: Santa Claus.

At Santa's Craft Corner, **November 26 and December 3 and 10, 10A-2P**, families can take a photo with Santa, make a craft, and enjoy refreshments. We ask for a \$5 donation per family and \$3 for a printed photo. No registration is required.

"We see an average of almost 1,000 people per year over the three weekends this event runs," Fischer said.

The zoo wouldn't open, of course, without the work of our zookeepers, who break ice, remove snow, and make snowmen as enrichment for the animals, some of whom become more active in the cold, said Lead Zookeeper Jenny Theuman.

"As most of our animals are native to Illinois, it's common to see them active and enjoying the cooler weather," Theuman said. "One may be lucky enough to see the deer frolicking or our bobcat, Val, tackling plants covered in fresh snow while his brother Sal watches from his perch on the heated rock."

As we preserve native wildlife for posterity, Educator & Teen Specialist Jackie Karnstedt is training the next generation of zookeepers.

She manages our Junior Zookeepers (JZ) program, a yearlong commitment for teens ages 12 through 18 to experience all aspects of a working zoo and build lifelong skills.

"Jackie is doing a lot of work with the Junior Zookeepers (JZ) in January and February," Fischer said. "JZs who have contributed a minimum of 70 volunteer hours qualify for training to handle some of the zoo's education animals. They have to learn basic safety rules, species-specific information, and proper handling techniques."

Jackie also trains the JZs to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count (**February 17-20**), a citizen science project sponsored by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society.

"This year, we will also be offering a public program for families, training them how to identify birds they see in their backyard and submit their data," said Fischer.

Before then, Theuman takes time to appreciate the zoo in winter.

"The zoo grounds are just as beautiful blanketed in fresh snow as they are on a summer day, and it's a great chance to see the animals experiencing the wonders of snow," she said.

To learn more about our programs and events, see pages 4-5.



Staff Spotlight

BY BRETT PETO, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Jackie Karnstedt knew she'd made progress when Pouco, Cosley Zoo's Hahn's macaw, climbed onto her finger without nibbling her.

"It made me feel really good," said Karnstedt, who serves as Educator & Teen Specialist, managing the popular Junior Zookeepers (JZ) and summer teen volunteer programs, education programs, animal training, and more since 2013. "It took about seven months for him to trust me enough."

JZs serve longer than that; their commitment follows the school year.

"They're in grades 7 through 12, and they help us with special events, casual interpretation, Critter Carts, and duck and chicken feedings, and in return, they get hands-on opportunities within the zoo," Karnstedt said. "It gives them a broad idea of what it's like to work at a zoo. They get the special event side of it, the education side of it."

You can tell an education program is successful not by how quiet the audience is, but how abuzz they are.

"When you walk into a classroom and hear the kids interacting with what you're talking about, that's not a bad thing in my mind," she said. "I always do a quiz session at the end of my classes. I ask them to raise their hand if they learned something new, and then I'll have them share it out loud or share it with a partner."

Inspiring the next generation is a daily goal.

"You never know if that connection you're having that day is going to inspire them for the rest of their lives," she said.

For those whom the inspiration is career-oriented, Karnstedt has advice.

"You've got to be willing to work hard," she said. "You don't get into this field easily. It's competitive, so get as much experience as you can as early as possible. When you've got the degree and are ready to work, don't let a job that turns you down let you down."



PROGRAMS



Register at wheatonparkdistrict.com for Reptiles of Cosley Zoo, Bookworms, and Barnyard Bedtime Stories.

Barnyard Bedtime Stories

Put on your pajamas, grab your teddy bear, and come to Cosley Zoo for an after-hours storytime complete with animal-themed books, an activity, and a bedtime snack. All ages are welcome, but participants ages 18 months-12 years must register. (NF)

Location: Cosley Zoo

Limit: 25

Age	Dates	Day	Time	R/NR Fee	Class #
18 mos-12	1/27	F	6:30-7:30P	\$12/\$16	106401-01
18 mos-12	3/3	F	6:30-7:30P	\$12/\$16	106401-02

Festival of Lights and Tree Sale

November 25-December 30

Every November, the zoo is transformed into a winter wonderland with spectacular displays of 20,000 twinkling lights, an amazing selection of Christmas trees for purchase, hot chocolate, and holiday gifts. The zoo is open 9A-9P daily and lights come on at 3P. All proceeds support the zoo and its animals, programs, and exhibit development.

- Admission is free for everyone during the Festival of Lights and Tree Sale. Donations are greatly appreciated.
- Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.
- Open 9A-12P Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Presented by



Reptiles of Cosley Zoo NEW!

Learn the stories of the reptiles living at Cosley Zoo! We'll learn about the Blanding's Turtle Head Start Program and meet some of the zoo's animal ambassadors. (NF)

Location: Cosley Zoo

Limit: 15

Age	Dates	Day	Time	R/NR Fee	Class #
18 & over	3/20	M	8:30-9:30A	\$5/\$7.50	106103-01

Bookworms

It's storytime at the zoo - come join us as we read a story, meet an animal, and make a craft! Series 1 and Series 2 are different. (NF)

Location: Cosley Zoo

Limit: 12

Age	Dates	Day	Time	R/NR Fee	Class #
Series 1					
18 mos-4	1/11-2/8	W	9:30-10A	\$32.50/\$45	106502-01
Series 2					
18 mos-4	2/22-3/22	W	9:30-10A	\$32.50/\$45	106505-01

& EVENTS

(December-February)



Santa's Craft Corner

Saturday, November 26 and December 3 and 10, 10A-2P

Can't make it to the North Pole? Do the next best thing and come to Cosley Zoo, where you can see Santa AND the animals! While visiting Santa, make a craft or two and enjoy refreshments.

- \$5 per family donation.
- \$3 for printed photo with Santa.

Sponsored by



Great Backyard Bird Count Training Session

Saturday, February 11, 2-4P

Participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count is easy to do, fun for all, and helps wild birds! This training session teaches you how to identify common backyard birds and submit data so you'll be ready to survey your feathered friends February 17-20 and make observations throughout the year. Best for families with children 8 years and older but all ages are welcome.

- \$7 per person or \$20 per household or group.
- Contact nfischer@wheatonparks.org to register or for more information.

Daily Activities



Eco-Exploration Backpack Tours

You're already packed for your next zoo adventure. Filled with activities and discovery items, each Eco-Exploration Backpack focuses on a different theme, acting as a tour guide as you explore the zoo and highlighting exhibits and conservation messages.

- \$3 per pack.
- Complete your adventure and receive an official Eco-Explorer button. There are eight themes and eight buttons to collect!
- Check out packs from the Wild Side Gift Shop.

Bobcats Backstage

Join our zookeepers for an exclusive behind-the-scenes visit with the bobcats. Learn about this amazing feline as you get a close-up view of a training session where the bobcats learn how to participate in their own care.

- Available daily 11-11:30A.
- Sign up by 10:45A in the Wild Side Gift Shop during your zoo visit. First-come, first-served. Maximum of six participants each day. Reservations can also be made by calling the zoo at 630.665.5534.
- \$12 per person; 10% discount for Wild Bunch Plus and Keepers Club Members.



Zookeeper for a Day

Spend part of the day working side-by-side with one of Cosley Zoo's Animal Care staff as you assist with routine cleaning and care, provide enrichment to the animals, and take part in a training demonstration. Participants receive a certificate, souvenir, and photo. Call 630.665.5534 to register.

- Ages 14 and up.
- Runs 10A-1P.
- Available year-round.
- \$95 per person; 10% discount for Wild Bunch Plus and Keepers Club Members.

Holiday Wish Tree



Make an animal's wish come true!

Help our animals have an extra special holiday season by purchasing an ornament from our Holiday Wish Tree!

Visit the Wild Side Gift Shop during your next zoo adventure **November 25-December 30**, pick the ornament that lists a great gift for your favorite animal, and we'll do the shopping!

The items on the tree provide enrichment for our animals. Enrichment involves creating a challenging environment to address an animal's social, psychological, and physical needs. Your donation contributes to the purchase of enrichment items throughout the year.

If you'd like to shop for the animals yourself year-round, visit our Amazon Wish List at amzn.to/2aUD9zm.



Thank you to our Festival of Lights and Tree Sale sponsors!



The Dempsey Family



Art Pape
Cosley Foundation
President

Member Matters

BY BRETT PETO, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

Whether you soar like an Eagle, join the Wild Bunch, or enter the Keepers Club, your Cosley Zoo membership comes with some pretty sweet benefits, like free adult admission, a 10% discount at the Wild Side Gift Shop, invitations to signature events, a subscription to this newsletter, and free or discounted admission at more than 160 North American zoos and aquariums.

Certain levels also include two passes to Bobcats Backstage, discounts on select programs, camps, events, and rentals, free membership gift, and passes for Duck Feeding, Eco-Exploration Backpack Tours, and adult guests.

We'll announce extra members-only perks for 2017 soon. Until then, thank you for your support!

Conservation for Christmas

This Christmas, don't give cookies or crafts. **Give conservation, education, and connection.**

Your Cosley Zoo membership doesn't only provide the benefits you see above. It also provides thousands of people the foundation for a lifetime of inspiration.



Animal Spotlight: Red-tailed Hawk

BY ALISON LABARGE, ZOOKEEPER

You don't have to search the sky for a red-tailed hawk; just visit our Birds of Prey exhibit!

Anna, our female hawk, came to us from a local wildlife rehabilitation facility in 2002. She's thought to be 15 years old. We acquired Erie, our three-year-old male hawk, from a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Washington in 2014.

Like many birds of prey, female red-tailed hawks are about a quarter larger than males, making Anna easy to distinguish from Erie.

As with most of our animals, Anna and Erie are here because wildlife rehabbers have determined they likely wouldn't survive in the wild. Both have permanent wing injuries that badly affect their flying.

This would also make hunting difficult in the wild, but they don't have to worry about that here! Our zookeepers have arranged branches in their exhibit strategically to act as ramps, which help them more easily use their space.

Anna and Erie are also part of a training program teaching them how to participate in their own care. You may see zookeepers in their exhibit, feeding them their favorite foods—rats, mice, chicken, and quail—as rewards.

While red-tailed hawks are among the most common of their kind in North America, it can be hard to appreciate them from a distance. Anna and Erie are great ambassadors for their species, and Cosley Zoo is where you can see these beautiful native birds up close. Though they're often visible in the lower branches, check up in the rafters if you don't see them at first!

Did you know?

The loud, piercing cry we associate with the bald eagle is actually that of the red-tailed hawk! Despite their size and majesty, bald eagles' cries are surprisingly weak, causing Hollywood to often swap in the red-tailed hawk's signature scream.



Join the herd at cosleyzoo.org/get-involved or call 630.665.5534.

NOVEMBER 25-DECEMBER 30 | 9A-9P

LIGHTS ON DAILY AT 3P



Welcome to the Festival of Lights and Tree Sale.



Lights. Trees. Hot chocolate. Holiday gifts. Five acres of cheer.
Free admission for everyone! Donations greatly appreciated.

Text COSLEY to 50555 to make a donation!

Presented by



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