

ESSEX COUNTY
TURTLE BACK



Zoological Society
of New Jersey, Inc.
AT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO

Turtle TALK

Winter 2021

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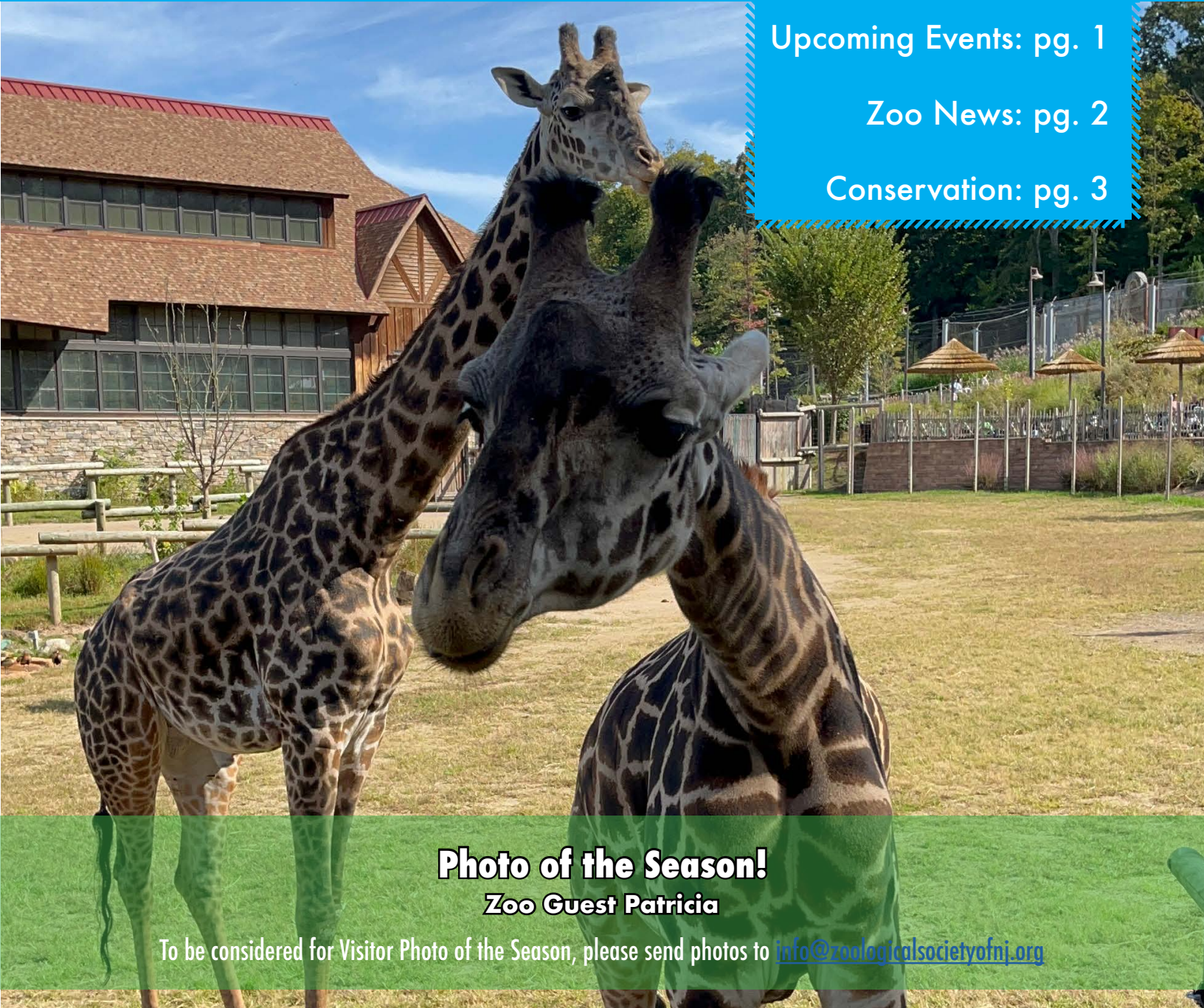


Photo of the Season!
Zoo Guest Patricia

To be considered for Visitor Photo of the Season, please send photos to info@zoologicalsocietyofnj.org

UPCOMING EVENTS



Early Childhood

Select Sundays and Mondays

In-person tots (3-4 w/ caregiver) and explorers (4-5 w/out caregiver) ! Your little learner will enjoy zoo tours, fun science lessons, arts-and-crafts, animal presentations, and more! Stay tuned: <http://bit.ly/2XDVPWB>.

Mini-camps

Dec. 28 - 30, Jan.17, 2022, Feb. 21, 2022

Join us for our winter mini camps, for ages 5-10: includes zoo tours, animal presentations, arts-and-crafts, and more. 12/28: Color Changes, 12/29: Creeps from the Deep, 12/30: Eggs or Mamma's Milk, 1/17: Miles and Miles of Reptiles, 2/21: Land of Ice and Fire: Animal Extremes. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2GvNm70>.



Holiday Lights

Multiple Dates

We're so glad Holiday lights are back for 2021! Weekends only starting 11/19 -12/5 and then everyday 12/10 - 12/31. Free admission 5-9pm each Holiday lights evening, add on Storytime with Mrs Claus, multiple times 11/17 - 23, stay tuned: <http://bit.ly/2XDVPWB>.

Fall Zoventure box

Zoventure boxes are specially themed animal, conservation, and science activity bundles. Each box will explore a different topic through hands-on activities, personalized zoo tour videos, arts and crafts, and other educational materials. Recommended for ages 5-8, learn more: <https://bit.ly/3pnmbDE>.

Family Nature Club

2nd & 4th Sundays with some exceptions

Join us for an outdoor hike: select Sundays throughout the year! FNC: Nature Adventurers is all about getting outdoors with the whole family and exploring local wildlife. Stay tuned: <http://bit.ly/2XDVPWB>.

Sophisticated Science

Multiple Dates, 2022 Dates & Themes Coming Soon

Recommended for ages 14+, but all are welcome! Discover the many jobs that keep a zoo running in Wild Careers on 11/20 and 12/11 @1-3pm. From plants to ancient animals, the history of evolution on Earth is preserved as fossils. Join us for one or more sessions of our Fossil series on 11/20, 11/27, and 12/4 @10am-noon. Learn more: <http://bit.ly/2XDVPWB>.

Bad Bugs II

Continuing on from environmentally harmful insects like the Spotted lanternfly (see it, squish it), the sequel to this program hones in on more bad bugs of our world, both harmful to us and the environment. Join us to discover how we can make an impact on the world through everyday actions, email Virginia to learn more: tbzvosnato@gmail.com.

Wonders of the Wild

Multiple Dates @1-3pm

Wonders of the Wild offers students an opportunity to participate in supplementary science and nature-themed programs and projects that facilitate scientific literacy and life-long environmental stewardship. Recommended for ages 6-12, learn more: <https://bit.ly/3G1Unuq>.

Distance Learning

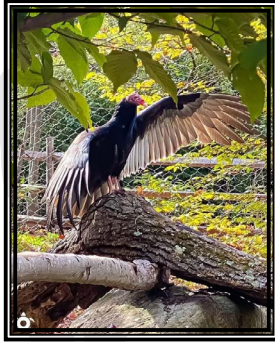
Birthday parties, outreaches, and in-person programs are now available! Turtle Back Zoo is hosting programs available for all ages with topics tailored to your group. Virtual options still available, email our education curator, Marguerite Hunt, at mhunt@parks.essexcountynj.org for more information.

ZOO NEWS



Porter the California sea lion arrives at TBZ

Porter the California sea lion is settling in at Sea Lion Sound after his 246 mile journey! Accompanied by his keepers from Utica Zoo, Porter is behind-the-scenes at Turtle Back Zoo as he gets used to his new surroundings and forms a relationship with our sea lion team and our residents JR and Zeus. We're so excited for you to meet him!

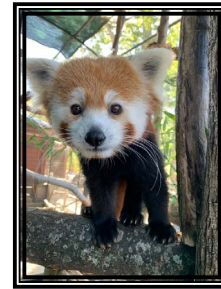


Turkey Vulture soars on in

Visit our Wild America exhibit to visit our Turkey vulture! Our newest resident lives across from our Bald Eagle exhibit, creating an enriching circle-of-life experience. As carrion eaters, vultures across the world participate in the decomposition process of animals across the world. However much like the Bald eagles in the early 1900's and today's African vulture species, these critical wildlife are at risk from pesticide exposure, lead, and other threats. Keeping lead, fishing line, and other unnatural materials out of the ecosystem are one way we can help keep wildlife healthy. Learn more about AZA's Vulture SAFE program: <https://bit.ly/3lWsQTg>.

Meet Jerry the Red panda

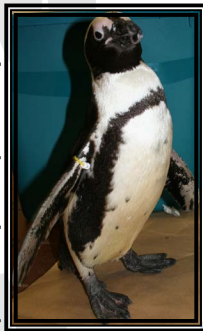
While our Amazing Asia exhibit is under construction, Jerry the red panda is living to the left of our Northern white-cheeked gibbons. With fewer than 2,500 individuals in the wild, Jerry is a part of the Red panda species survival plan, which maintains a backup population of Red pandas while raising awareness for their #1 threat in the wild: habitat loss. Learn more about our conservation partner, The Red Panda Network: <https://bit.ly/3DQQEOu>.



The Famous Ferret the...African penguin?

Ferret the African penguin and Clemantine the Pink-backed pelican are waddling about in our Shores of Africa exhibit. Ferret, who turned 30 on August 19th, is the oldest penguin in our colony, having lived at Turtle Back Zoo since February 1992. Ferret is a bit famous around here, being the father of our first chick (Mosi) at Turtle Back Zoo with his partner Marley. Clemantine (8 years old, hatched August 7th 2016), is our newest pelican to make the trip to TBZ: you can find her by looking for the pelican with the #42 leg band!

photo by Keeper Kelly



Speaking of birds...

Thank you everyone who took the trip for our Migratory Bird Table this October! Turtle Back Zoo recently joined the AZA SAFE North American Songbirds program, a coalition of organizations who monitor and protect songbirds across our region. You can take action by minimizing bird strikes, keeping bird predators like cats indoors, and planting NJ-native plants in your yard, patio, and windowsills. Learn how to make your windows bird friendly: <https://bit.ly/3CTGmws>.

Amazing Asia exhibit construction underway

Construction for our new Amazing Asia exhibit, featuring Red pandas, Clouded leopards, Asian hornbill and turtles broke ground officially on Wednesday, October 27th. The event included presentations from Jilian Fazio (Turtle Back Zoo director), Joseph DiVincenzo (Essex County executive), and other community leaders. The new exhibit will feature enhanced habitats tailored to meet each species unique welfare needs as well as quiet seating areas and educational program spaces for our guests.

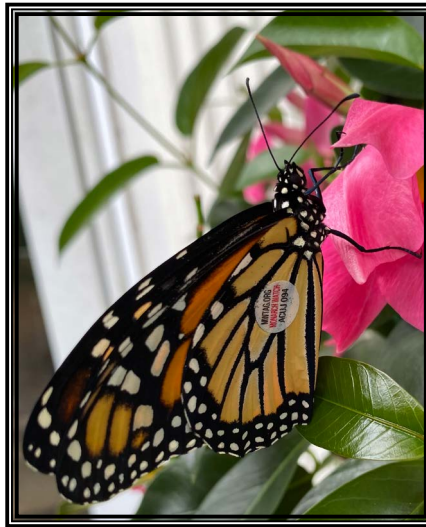
CONSERVATION EDUCATION

by Educator Katie Fenyar



2021 marked a fun start to a new conservation initiative for us at Turtle Back Zoo: monarch butterfly tagging! Our collective efforts (largely centered around our docent volunteers and our horticulture team) saw the raise and release of about 300 butterflies! This national program, organized by Monarch Watch, is a volunteer initiative to raise, tag, and release Monarch butterflies to better understand these amazing pollinators and what challenges they face in the wild.

The journey began with one horticulturist named Deb, a native plant garden, and a whole bunch of milkweed and Monarch eggs. From the moment they hatch from their small, green eggs into tiny caterpillars no longer than a fingernail, they are ready to start eating milkweed leaves. Milkweed, their host plant, is critical: monarch caterpillars rely exclusively on milkweed to grow from larvae to adult butterflies. To keep the caterpillars healthy, daily cleanups and leaf changes were needed. Using the painting end of a clean brush, we gently picked up and placed the caterpillars onto a little cup or paper towel while the old milkweed leaves and feces were cleaned out. Believe me when I tell you, there's only more (and bigger) poop and cleaning to come! During the 10-15 days of their caterpillar life, Monarchs grow through 5 instars (stages of molting), at which point they reach approximately 2 inches in length. Then an amazing sight happens: the caterpillars curl up into a J shape and begin attaching themselves to the top of the cup with tough silk and (within hours) enter the Pupal (chrysalis) stage.



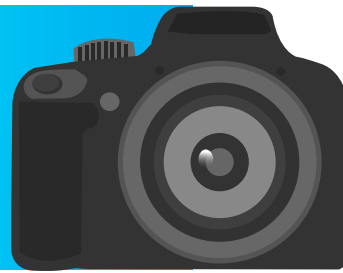
most were easy to solve. A couple of the chrysalises had fallen from the roof of their cup, a problem easily fixed with my good friend the hot glue gun. Each chrysalis has a tiny 'branch' that holds them to sticks or any other objects they normally would attach to in the wild. By gently gluing the 'branch' to the lid, they were off to continue their journey. After waiting for what (felt like) forever, the butterflies emerged and were ready for release! With monitoring tags on their wings, off the butterflies went (p.s., if you find those tags, report them to Monarch Watch here: <https://bit.ly/3pXintc>)!

So why all this fuss about Monarchs? Aside from being beautiful orange butterflies, they're pollinators: transferring pollen from plant to plant and helping the ecosystem flourish. The super generation of Monarchs undergoes an amazing feat during their 8~ month lifespan: they undergo a 3000+ mile migration to Mexico, where they overwinter for the season. Researchers have learned a lot through programs like Monarch Watch, however with the looming threat of climate change and habitat loss, future research is critical to understand how we can continue helping Monarchs as things change. According to the Monarch Watch program, Monarch butterflies are losing 2.2 million acres of habitat each year, or roughly 1/4 the size of New Jersey, as construction and agriculture continue across the country. We can help offset this loss by creating Monarch Waystation gardens with native species, including our local milkweed variety, and participating in projects like Monarch Watch. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3nQ21zE>.

So there we were: ready for what would ultimately be 12-13 days of waiting (though I didn't know that yet). Easy right? One final cleanup and then time to wait. Some problems did come up - and fortunately

NATURE IN FOCUS

by Educator Sam Leinberger



Nature photography is a fascinating way to catch a glimpse into the wild world of animals. With the rise of social media and modern cameras, sharing art through your own lens is becoming easier than ever! Check out our interview with Jess (@photosbyjess. Jpg on Instagram), a local photographer from the tri-state area, and her photography journey.

Tell us a little about yourself, where are you from?

My name is Jess (she/her/hers) and I am from Staten Island, New York.

How did you get into nature photography?

During my undergraduate studies, I focused primarily on portrait photography, and particularly, 35mm and medium format portraiture. I remember doing an assignment during my photography capstone where I really wanted to challenge myself and ended up producing a collection of medium format landscape photographs. I remember thinking about how difficult it was to achieve something with my own unique voice in a landscape that has been photographed so many times by so many other photographers. It wasn't until March of 2020 that I was forced to explore that side of my photographic work. I took to nature as a means of reflection and expression. Once I was getting out into nature more, I began to incorporate self-guided photo walks into my artistic practice and that's when I really began my exploration of nature photography. It has become a very cathartic process to incorporate the natural landscape into my work and create my own form of self-portraiture. As I reflect back on my negatives and digital scans, I am brought back to that location and can feel those emotions I was experiencing at the time of that particular photograph.



What advice do you have for those who want to try out nature photography?

I think one tip I have for those wanting to get into nature photography is to follow your intuition. I think I have been hesitant in the past to capture something but following my gut has led to my favorite photographs or series. I think another tip I have is to not be afraid to play with perspective and vantage point. One last tip I have is to not worry about the equipment you have! Some of my favorite photographs have been captured with a thrifted camera. Your artistic vision or intuition will come out using any equipment you have!

What is your favorite place you've photographed?

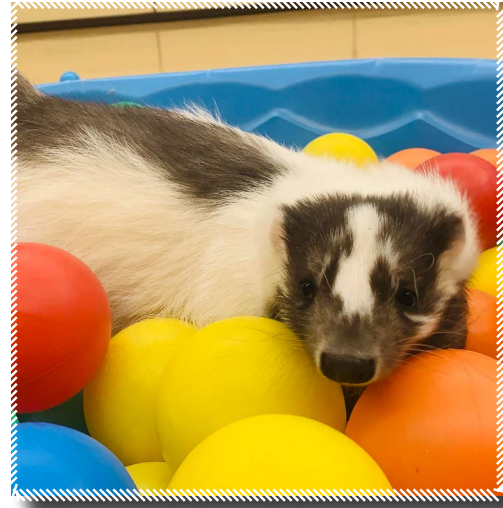
This is a really tricky one! I think a place I hold near and dear to my photographic heart within the tri-state is Lemon Creek Park in Staten Island. I remember driving on a random Saturday with no destination in mind. I followed my intuition and turned down a street I had never been and discovered Lemon Creek. When I first went there, it was a very foggy day and there was a sense of mysticism being somewhere new with all of this fog surrounding me. It was a very intimate introduction to a New York City park... something that doesn't happen often. Some of my favorite photographs that I have ever captured have been on that very day.

Thank you again to Jess for taking the time to our a few questions about her photography journey!



SUPPORT YOUR FAVORITE WILD ANIMALS AT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO

We appreciate your generosity in strengthening Essex County Turtle Back Zoo's commitment to conservation, education, & inspiration. All donations to the Zoological Society of New Jersey support the Zoo by providing necessary funds for new habitat design & construction, general zoo improvements, operating support, and conservation programming. There are many ways to donate: Adopt an Animal, Donor Wall, Living and Memorial Tributes, Corporate Matching, Amazon Wish List, Monetary Donation, or Becoming a Member of the Zoological Society of New Jersey and Essex County Turtle Back Zoo.



Visit www.zoologicalsocietyofnj.org/support to get started!

Zoological Society of NJ Board of Directors

The Zoological Society of New Jersey, Inc. is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) corporation, organized under the laws of the State of New Jersey. Its purpose is to promote the general welfare of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo, a facility of the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs; to stimulate the public's interest in the growth, improvement, and development of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo through education and research with an emphasis on natural conservation of all species of animals; to support and sponsor fund-raising events to help in the financing of new facilities, purchase of equipment, and acquisition of animals; to encourage membership in the Society by persons interested in the promotion of the physical and aesthetic qualities of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo; and to stimulate the public interest in the development and enjoyment of Essex County Turtle Back Zoo and of animals everywhere.

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