

SMALL ZOO

BIG IMPACT



GREENVILLE ZOO
FOUNDATION
NOVEMBER 2023

DEAR FRIEND,

This year we welcomed over 345,000 visitors to the Greenville Zoo, a record number for our Zoo! We are thrilled that so many guests had the opportunity to experience the wonder of the Zoo’s diverse, living collection. A day at the Zoo is more than a visit; it creates memories that last a lifetime.

As a supporter of the Zoo, not only are you an integral part of our conservation efforts, you help people create their own lasting memories. This year, you gave guests the thrill of standing face-to-face and feeding an 18 foot tall giraffe, creating a memory they will never forget.

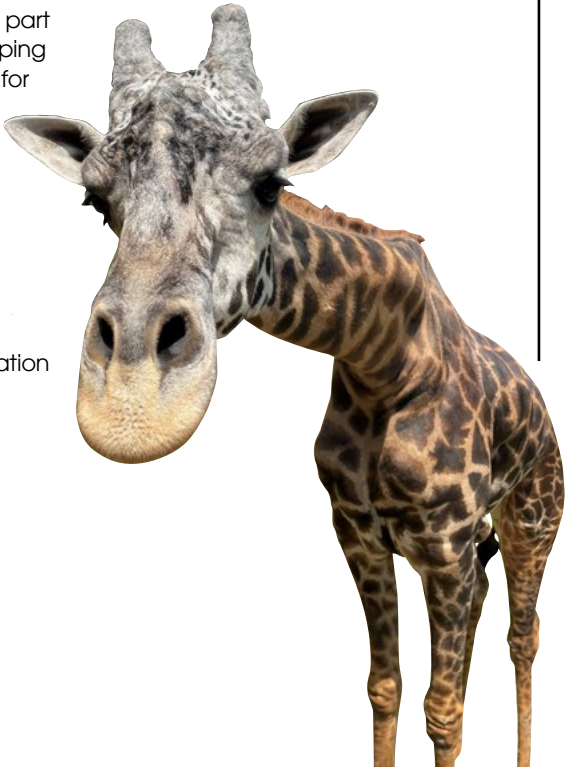
For more than fifty years, donors like you have played a vital role in the growth and success of the Greenville Zoo. Your support impacts every family who visits, every child who participates in an education program, and every species that continues to survive because of our Zoo. With your ongoing support, we can continue to develop new exhibits, enhance guest experience, and contribute to wildlife conservation.

Thank you for being a part of our mission and helping us make a difference for our animals at the Zoo and in the wild.

Sincerely,

Lydia Thomas

Lydia Thomas
Greenville Zoo Foundation
Executive Director



HOLIDAYS
at the
ZOO

presented by
Upstate Growers Market

**SEE THE ZOO IN A
WHOLE NEW LIGHT**

DECEMBER 8-10, 15-23, 26-30

Purchase tickets at
GREENVILLEZOO.COM/HOLIDAY

GREENVILLE ZOO EVENTS

- Zoom Through the Zoo**
November 18, 2023
zoomthroughthetree.com

Holidays at the Zoo
Dec. 8-10, 15-23, & 26-30, 2023
greenvillezoo.com

Green Tie Gala
April 12, 2024
thegreentiegala.com

Brew in the Zoo
May 17, 2024
greenvillezoo.com

Zoo Fest
June 1, 2024
greenvillezoo.org/fest
- Sippin’ Safari**
September 6, 2024
sippinsafari.com

Boo in the Zoo
October TBD, 2024
boointhetree.com

Zoom Through the Zoo
November 16, 2024
zoomthroughthetree.com

Holidays in the Zoo
December TBD, 2024
greenvillezoo.com

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James Traverse | General Curator
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Brian Eisele | Assistant General Curator
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Will Mesimer | Marketing & Event Coordinator

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Licensed Veterinary Technician I
Veterinary Hospital Coordinator
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Duncan Patterson | Guest Services Assistant Supervisor
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WHAT’S NEW?

The Greenville Zoo welcomed many new additions this year. Five animals were born at the Greenville Zoo, and twenty-one came from other Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoos. All animals born at the Zoo were a part of the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program, an important AZA program that manages the breeding of select species in Zoos. As an AZA Zoo, the Greenville Zoo always follows SSP direction.



In September, fifteen **CHILEAN FLAMINGOS** came to the Greenville Zoo from the North Carolina Zoo. The birds were an exciting addition to the eighteen flamingos already at the Zoo, as flamingos are social birds who live in large flocks in the wild. The Chilean flamingo is designated “near threatened” in the wild with their populations declining due to habitat loss and degradation.

Blossom, a female **MASAI GIRAFFE**, was born at the Greenville Zoo on March 19 to Autumn (mom) and Miles (dad). She weighed 135 lbs and was 5’11” tall at birth. Her birth was broadcast live via the Greenville Zoo Foundation’s Giraffe Cam. Giraffe calves usually double their birth height by their first birthday, so Blossom will be close to 12 ft. tall by next March! View the Giraffe Cam at greenvillezoo.org.

In April, two **BAT-EARED FOXES** were born to Lilith (mom) and Otis (dad). Lilith and Otis experienced some challenges rearing the kits, so after ten days, the kits were transferred to the Zoo’s veterinary

clinic where they were hand reared by animal care staff. Now that the kits are grown, they have been reintroduced to their exhibit and are awaiting transfer to another zoo as part of the SSP.

Two **RED PANDA CUBS** were born on June 23 at the Greenville Zoo to mother, Ahsa, who came to the Zoo from Zoo Knoxville in Tennessee. The cubs’ father, Neo, previously lived at the Erie Zoo in Pennsylvania. Ahsa and Neo are first-time parents and are doing a wonderful job taking care of the cubs.

Mac is a 33-year-old male **ALDABRA TORTOISE** (pictured on the front cover) who joined Bubba, the Zoo’s resident Aldabra tortoise, this summer. Both Mac and Bubba will have a new exhibit next spring in conjunction with the Africa Plaza. Aldabra tortoises are considered “vulnerable to extinction” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Two **LESSER MADAGASCAR HEDGEHOG TENRECS** joined the Zoo’s education Ambassador Animal collection. Baby (female) and Swayze (male) are

currently being trained to participate in education programs and will soon be fantastic ambassadors for their species! While currently a species of least concern, logging has decreased the population of lesser Madagascar tenrecs in some areas they are found in the wild.

Two male **RED-FOOTED TORTOISES** joined the zoo from Zoo Miami. They can be found on display in Ektopia with Scar, the Zoo’s rhinoceros iguana. The red-footed tortoise is found throughout South America and on the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Barbados and can live up to fifty years!

A male **CAIMAN LIZARD** (SSP species) was transferred to the Greenville Zoo from the National Zoo in Washington DC and will move into an exhibit in Ektopia soon. The caiman lizard is a semi-aquatic species named for its large, heavy scales. Complex issues affect local populations of this species, including pollution, deforestation and habitat loss in certain areas of its range.

BIG PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

RENOVATING & REVITALIZING THE GREENVILLE ZOO

This year, big things happened at the Greenville Zoo and bigger things are coming! Progress on each new project brings excitement and anticipation, as we work to enhance this important piece of the community. We are also reminded that progress is dependent on community support. Each new exhibit and attraction is funded primarily through donations, and we are so grateful for your support.

For ways you can be a part of these exciting happenings, visit greenvillezoofoundation.org or contact us at info@greenvillezoofoundation.org.

JIM AND JANICE CORDES GIRAFFE ENCOUNTERS

includes a new giraffe feeding platform that allows guests to stand face-to-face with and hand feed the Zoo's Masai giraffes. Jim and Janice Cordes Giraffe Encounters is currently open select times during weekends. The experience will open fully next Spring.

Thank you to Jim and Janice Cordes and our Long Neck Club members for investing in the Greenville Zoo and making these encounters possible.



THE AFRICA PLAZA

will include an engraved brick pathway leading to a new lion training wall and a mixed species exhibit that will house Cape porcupines and the Zoo's Aldabra tortoises. Guests will see up-close how zookeepers train lions to participate in their healthcare, and the new exhibit will allow viewing of the tortoises and porcupines all year long. Construction documents for the Africa Plaza are complete, and a construction firm has been contracted. Watch for more information as this exciting project begins!

AFRICA PLAZA

- Large plaza using bricks purchased during the Stepping into the Savannah campaign
- Lion training wall
- New Tortoise Habitat with viewing windows
- Addition of Cape porcupine



FARMYARD

- State of the art habitats for current animals
- New animal additions: Alpaca, Mini Zebu, Mini Donkey, Turkey, Flemish Rabbits
- Animal interactions to maximize guest experience and further the Zoo's mission of connecting people to wildlife
- Significant exhibit expansion



PHILLIPS FAMILY FARM:

GREENVILLE'S GATEWAY TO FARM ANIMALS AROUND THE WORLD.

A new farmyard exhibit has been designed for the Greenville Zoo and will be the next major project to be completed after the Africa Plaza. The newly designed exhibit features a significant expansion to the current farmyard, including multiple barns, pastures, and education program areas. The new farmyard will allow the Zoo to increase the species collection and provide animal contact for guests, creating a new and exciting immersive learning experience for Zoo visitors. Showcasing animals used on farms around the world, the exhibit will provide a unique look at the dependence between animals and humans.

There are many ways the community can be involved in this exciting new project, including naming and sponsorship opportunities which allow individual or company names to be represented in the Zoo.

HELP SUPPORT THE
PHILLIPS FAMILY FARM.
SCAN TO LEARN MORE
AND DONATE TODAY!





INSPIRING PASSION FOR CONSERVATION

Learning should be exciting, challenging, and fun. The Greenville Zoo's award-winning education team focuses on creating innovative programming that connects students, guests, and the community to wildlife and conservation. Bringing people up close with the Zoo's animal ambassadors and sharing their stories builds empathy for wildlife and inspires conservation action.

This year, the Zoo had 345 field trips. From preschool to high school programs, the Zoo's education staff works creatively to provide curriculum that excites kids and matches the standards teachers need to meet. For schools that can't make it to the Zoo but still seek the education and experience the Greenville Zoo offers, the Zoo Mobile and Distance Learning programs provide the answer.

When you support the Zoo through donations, memberships, and ticket purchases, you help provide a unique education resource to the Greenville community. Many of these resources are free with admission and many supplement schools' education programs.

For more information about our Education department, please visit [greenvillezoo.org/education](https://www.greenvillezoo.org/education).

SCAN TO LEARN
MORE ABOUT THE
ZOO'S EDUCATION
AND CONSERVATION
PROGRAMS.



IMPACTING THE WORLD AROUND US

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS THE GREENVILLE ZOO SUPPORTED LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY IN 2023

- **Andean Highlands Flamingo SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) Program** – ZCOG (\$15,000)
- **Chinchilla SAFE Program** – ZCOG (\$5,000)
- **Wildcats Conservation Alliance** (\$14,000)
- **Oklahoma City Zoo & Botanical Park/Brad Lock** – Conservation of a newly discovered population of *Heloderma charlesbogerti*: Creating the first Guatemalan dry forest network of protected areas (\$3,000)
- **Vulpro/Kerri Wolter** – Assessing the effects of thermal factors on the spatial ecology of a Critically Endangered African vulture (\$3,000)
- **Sumatran Ranger Project/Katherine Anest** – Forest-edge community conservation in the Leuser Ecosystem (\$1,000)
- **Tangled Bank Conservation/ Louisa Collins** – Phylogenetics and range re-delineations of four Gray-Cheeked Salamanders: *Plethodon amplus*, *Plethodon montanus*, *Plethodon meridianus*, and *Plethodon metcalfi* (\$3,000)
- **Nature Conservation and Study Centre/ Jeevan Rai** – Building eco-club network in eastern Nepal to promote Chinese Pangolin conservation (\$1,000)
- **Pan African Sanctuary Alliance/Kelly O'Meara** – Inspiring African Youth in Conservation through PASA's Kids for Compassionate Conservation Program (\$3,000)
- **Women for Conservation Nepal/Prativa Kaspal** – Saving the elusive Fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) through community-based conservation initiatives in the human dominated landscapes (\$2,970)
- **Clemson University/Emma Rogers** – Does Urban Development alter the Home Range and Habitat Selection of the Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) (\$1,000)
- **The Toucan Rescue Ranch/Stephanie Valle Cubero** – Environmental Education for all Program (\$1,000)
- **Nested Sustainability Consulting/John Quinn** – Application of machine learning tools for conservation in Upstate SC (\$3,000)
- **NatureKit Organization/Steven Makumba** – Conservation leadership for communities (\$1,000)



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

RESEARCH, CONSERVATION AND THE ROLE ZOOS PLAY

Zoos provide a unique opportunity for animal research, and the team at the Greenville Zoo is always willing to participate in new studies! Most studies are possible because zookeepers use operant conditioning to train the animals for medical behaviors. Animals can be trained to engage in a variety of behaviors that facilitate physical examination and treatment. This year, the Zoo participated in several research studies: a Red Panda Fecal Microbiome Study, an Orangutan Thyroid Study, and a Felid TAG Study.

The **Red Panda Fecal Microbiome Study** is AZA endorsed and led by a researcher at the Smithsonian's National Zoo. Zookeepers are collecting fecal samples twice weekly from the Zoo's adult red pandas, Ahsa and Neo, that will help determine normal fecal microbiomes. One of the questions researchers will look at is how the biomes are changed by the introduction of novel stressors, such as adding new enrichment into their exhibits.

The **Orangutan Thyroid Study** was endorsed by Orangutan SSP, and the principal investigator was from the Indianapolis Zoo. The study's goal was to develop baseline thyroid values in orangutans. Zookeepers were able to participate with Kumar, the Zoo's male orangutan, since he's trained for blood collection.

The **Felid TAG Study** was endorsed by Felid Taxon Advisory Group and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The lead investigator was from the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. Researchers monitored the efficacy of the covid vaccinations that were administered to large cats. This was a year long study that was just completed with Chuma and Saied, the Zoo's male lions that are trained for blood collection. There were multiple dates throughout the year where zookeepers collected and provided blood samples for this study.

These studies and many others provide a greater understanding of the animals, furthering conservation efforts in the wild and helping zoos provide the best possible care for the animals in the zoo environment.



MEET A ZOOKEEPER: MELODY TUCKER

Zookeepers are the primary caretakers for animals at zoos. Since animals need constant care, a zookeeper's schedule can include nights, weekends, and holidays in addition to early morning and daytime hours. Zookeepers work in all weather conditions, including rain, snow, the hottest days of summer, and the coldest days of winter. On major holidays when the Zoo is closed, zookeepers still come in to care for the animals. For some zookeepers, Christmas morning is spent with the animals! Zookeepers are vital to ensuring the animals at the Greenville Zoo are cared for at all times.

At the Greenville Zoo, most zookeepers are trained to work with multiple animals. Melody Tucker works in the Asia area of the Zoo with Sumatran orangutans, Amur leopards, siamang gibbons, red pandas, and the Eurasian eagle owl. Melody has been at the Greenville Zoo since 2017.



Q: What made you want to be a zookeeper?

A: I love this planet. It's so beautiful! Anyone who's traveled or seen a nature documentary can see how vast and amazing Earth is. The ecology and network of ecosystems are incredible and everything has an important part. I want to be someone who makes a difference and saves these ecosystems. A person who creates change! A good example of this is Amur leopards. There are more Amur leopards in zoos than in the wild. We have an important role to play in the survival of this species! How beautiful to be a part of that, even at the zoo level, and do our best to teach, create change, inspire conservation and protect for future generations.

Q: How do you start your day?

A: With animal checks and medication time. We have first class animal care at the Greenville Zoo and the first thing I do every morning is check on every animal in my care. I want to see that every animal is doing just fine, albeit some a bit sleepy when I come in. Next I make sure that any animal that is on medication gets their morning meds. Our vet staff ensures that our animals are given excellent treatments. Our adult female orangutan and siamang get their birth control every morning to make sure that we are following strict guidelines recommended by the orangutan and siamang Species Survival Plan.

Q: What do you spend most of your day doing?

A: My husbandry routine. My routine includes feeding, cleaning, disinfecting, setting up for a new day and the evening/nighttime. It takes about five hours from start to finish. It's a demanding part of the day but extremely important to set the animals in my care up for success!

Q: What do you love most about being a zookeeper?

A: Building the relationship with the animals in my care is definitely my favorite part. I love training with them, and seeing them learn and grow is an incredible thing. I appreciate being able to work with them one on one and create a trusting relationship. Second to that I love being able to teach conservation. It is what the zoo is here for, to save species from extinction, and as our mission states, to provide guests with a an enjoyable experience while we support and promote conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all living things. It's an important part of what we do.

Q: What is the hardest part of being a zookeeper?

A: Wanting more for our animals. In a perfect world we would have all the money, time and space available, but in the mean time we work with what we have and make the best of it! We as a zoo are ever evolving and I love being a part of that evolution.

Q: Do you have a favorite animal? And why?

A: That's not a fair question. Haha! How do you pick from all your children who is the favorite? I love each of them. All of them have different quirks and they have amazing personalities. Some are sassy and demanding while others are quiet and humble. Each are so special to me though. When I go on vacation I often text back-up keepers to send me pictures and daily updates. I do have a special place in my heart for our male orangutan Kumar. He made me learn patience and taught me a thing or two.

ANIMAL ENRICHMENT

Providing enrichment is an integral part of a zookeeper's job, and it is one of the many ways they keep the animals healthy and stimulated, both mentally and physically. Through enrichment, animals are exposed to a wide variety of stimuli to elicit natural behaviors. Enrichment also helps to enhance zoo visitor experiences by allowing them to observe the animals using their natural behaviors.

You can help provide enrichment for a variety of animals by purchasing from the Greenville Zoo Foundation's Amazon Wish List at greenvillezooofoundation.org. Pick out zookeeper approved items from the list and ship it directly to the Zoo!

SCAN TO PURCHASE
AN ITEM FROM
THE AMAZON
ENRICHMENT LIST.



GIVE THE PURRR-FECT PRESENT

Animal adoptions are the ideal Christmas gift, guaranteed to make any animal lover go wild while supporting your Zoo!

Choose from two package levels and seven animals. Furry, feathered, or scaly, you are sure to find your favorite! Purchase during the month of December and receive a special Greenville Zoo ornament with adoption animal packages of \$100.

All animal adoption packages are available to be purchased online and are shipped through USPS. Please allow sufficient time for shipping when purchasing.

PACKAGES AVAILABLE AT GREENVILLEZOOFOUNDATION.ORG

ADOPT YOUR FAVORITE SPECIES! SCAN TO SEE OUR ADOPTION PACKAGE OPTIONS.



DONORS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Thank you to the following individuals, corporations and foundations that have supported the Greenville Zoo. (Donors listed have made gifts \$100 and above between November 2022 and October 2023). For a full listing of donors please see greenvillezoofoundation.org.

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MORE THAN A MEMBERSHIP

Upgrading your annual membership to the Friends Giving Society level – Advocate, Steward, Conservationist, Benefactor, and Ambassador – is one way to support the animals that you visit and love at the Greenville Zoo while getting the most out of your membership. The Friends Giving Society is made up of the Zoo's most dedicated and passionate friends who truly understand the importance of maintaining a world-class zoo in Greenville.

When you join the Friends Giving Society, you help provide extraordinary care for the animal ambassadors who touch the lives of over 340,000 guests every year, and you help support programs that promote understanding and appreciation of animals and their habitats – the first step in saving species.

In addition to receiving standard membership perks, including free admission, Friends Giving Society memberships come with premium benefits – up to two guests per visit, keeper talks, behind-the-scene encounters, and invitations to exclusive donor-only events.

Start making a difference today! Join the Friends Giving Society at greenvillezoofoundation.org.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT THE GREENVILLE ZOO.



BECOME A PART OF THE ZOO YOU LOVE

Sponsoring a bench at the Greenville Zoo provides a unique opportunity to present a thoughtful gift, memorialize or honor a loved one, or share your business with Zoo visitors. In addition to being a meaningful memorial, the commemorative bench raises necessary funds to support the animals at the Greenville Zoo. You can sponsor a bench for a tax-deductible gift of \$5,000. Your personalized message will be prominently mounted on an etched bronze plaque on the front of the bench.

For more information on sponsoring a bench, please email us at info@greenvillezoofoundation.org.





150 Cleveland Park Dr
Greenville, SC 29601
greenvillezoofoundation.org



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Follow the Greenville Zoo Foundation and the Greenville Zoo on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn



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SAVE THE DATE
FOR THE GREENVILLE ZOO'S PREMIERE
FUNDRAISING EVENT!

GREEN TIE *G*ALA APRIL 12, 2024

The Green Tie Gala is the event where wildlife meets nightlife at Zen in downtown Greenville. The Gala features a silent and live auction, dinner and drinks, plus music and special animal hosts.

Tickets will be available to purchase
in January at thegreentiegala.com