IT’S A BOY!
A timeline of Baby Lovejoy’s Firsts
PAGE 4

NEW YEAR, NEW SYSTEM
PAGE 6

CREATURE FEATURE
PAGE 12

ALSO INSIDE
2023 Events Lineup

Sanibel, the Zoos’ newest animal ambassador
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Spring has sprung and this season’s visit to the Virginia Zoo includes enhanced guest and animal experiences. For starters, the entire boardwalk path through Asia - Trail of the Tiger is being replaced with a sustainable composite material and handrail that adds “polish” to the area and enhances viewing into animal habitats. Looking further into 2023, the new cinereous vulture aviary will give you an up-close experience with these large and curious birds. They are one of the world’s heaviest flying birds with the biggest beak in its family. The new Turtle Oasis is our nationally recognized conservation project that features. For starters, the entire boardwalk path through Asia - Trail of the Tiger is being replaced with a sustainable composite material and handrail that adds “polish” to the area and enhances viewing into animal habitats. Looking further into 2023, the new cinereous vulture aviary will give you an up-close experience with these large and curious birds. They are one of the world’s heaviest flying birds with the biggest beak in its family. The new Turtle Oasis is our nationally recognized conservation project that

Along with the new animal habitats are a few new animal residents. We were delighted by the birth of the newborn baby siamang Lovejoy, affectionately known as Lojo by his Keepers. He will be venturing outside for the first time this spring with his parents. And, you will soon see our newest education animal ambassador, Sanibel, the bald eagle. She’s still “wearing” her juvenile feathering, so we will all get to watch as she grows into her regal adult plumage which takes several years.

Thank you to all of you for being Zoo fans and sharing your Zoo experience photos with us. You inspire the entire Zoo team when we see you enjoying your visit at the Zoo learning about our animal residents, taking in the sprouting gardens, and sharing time with family and friends. We look forward to bringing you more “Zoo” this summer.

See you soon,

Gary Batekin
Executive Director, Virginia Zoo

Tiger oscars are growing up in the caiman lizard tank and can be seen moving as a group. They can grow up to 18 inches long.

Two yellow-footed tortoises hatched recently and can be viewed in the nursery in World of Reptiles.

Some of our Nigerian dwarf goats were impregnated using artificial insemination (AI). AI was chosen over natural breeding due the increased husbandry needs and limited goat yard space for a male goat. Goats usually have 1-2 kids per mom.

Mosi, the juvenile Southern white rhino, is back out with the whole herd and doing well after a recent injury to his horn in early January. Horn injuries like this are not uncommon, especially in juveniles, as their horns are still developing.
IT’S A BOY!
A TIMELINE OF BABY LOVEJOY’S FIRSTS

SiAMAnG -SYMPHALANGUS SUNDACTYLUUS

June 26, 2022
A bundle of (Love)joy! Born to mother, Malana, and father, Bali, baby was observed nursing, alert, and clinging to Malana’s belly. Siamang gestation was approximately seven and a half months.

July-August 2022
Baby’s first teeth! Lovejoy’s incisors begin coming in on the top and bottom. He is observed trying to reach for food items, discovering his hands and fingers, and trying to sit up on his own.

September 2022
On the move! Lovejoy begins grabbing onto the climbing ropes and meshing to stand up or move around.

October 2022
Manu’s boy! Lovejoy is observed climbing on top of Malana and sitting away from her, as well. Siamang pairs stick together and raise their offspring as a family unit. Infants like Lovejoy often cling to their mother’s belly for the first several months before gradually becoming more independent.

November-December 2022
While still nursing, Lovejoy is observed eating some solid foods. He also tests boundaries by climbing up the mesh on his own but generally prefers to stay close to Malana. Unlike most other primate species, adult male siamangs will assist with raising offspring. Typically, the adult male takes on a larger role when the infant is a year or older.

January-February 2022
Gaining some independence! He is climbing more independently and observed moving further away from Malana. Keepers have also noticed his vocal sac trying to inflate while yawning. Siamangs communicate through vocalizations, including “barks” and “booms.” They have inflatable throat sacs that aid in amplifying their calls.

More to Come:
In Lovejoy’s future, he will begin to become more active, independently climbing away from mom and dad. He will interact with enrichment and his environment and begin play behavior with Bali. With the late spring re-opening of Asia: Trail of the Tiger, Lovejoy, Malana, and Bali will be back out on Siamang Island.

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NEW YEAR, NEW SYSTEM

Top 10 perks of the Zoo’s new ticketing & membership system

01 MEMBER LOGIN
Member’s logging into the new system is easier! Members no longer need to remember their email and password. All you’ll need to access your account is the primary member’s last name and your member number. If you ever need help accessing your account, please reach out to the Membership Office at 757-441-2374 x257 to see what’s on file.

02 MEMBERSHIP CARDS
Members will now immediately receive their membership card virtually to the email address used to purchase the membership. Show that QR code and your matching photo ID at the gate for entry. Members will have the opportunity to save their membership card in their Google or Apple wallet. Physical membership cards are still available for an additional cost.

03 LESS WASTE
The Virginia Zoo is committed to engaging our community in taking action to save the world’s wildlife and their ecosystems. Eliminating physical cards for our members will eliminate over 25,000 pieces of waste each year. Most receipts can also be emailed, adding to the amount of waste we’re eliminating from our environment.

04 TICKETS
Similarly, anyone purchasing general admission tickets, event tickets, or tickets for another Zoo program will continue to be emailed with a ticket instantly at the time of purchase and be able to add that ticket to their digital wallet. Purchasing tickets online is always recommended! This will give you a speedier entry and a guaranteed spot because you’ll know your ticket is secured before we sell out.

05 EASIER TO RESCHEDULE
It is easier than ever to reschedule your visit. In your email confirmation, click “Reschedule” to pick a new date or time to arrive. Please note that some activities and events are not able to be rescheduled due to capacity restrictions. Contact Zoo staff if you have any questions.

06 SPRING BREAK RESERVATIONS
During high volume times, like Spring Break or during special events, advanced purchases and member reservations may be required. This helps us prepare with appropriate staffing maintain a manageable parking capacity to ensure the best possible guest experience for you. Spring Break 2023 will require advanced purchases from April 1 - April 16.

07 EARLY ACCESS
Members will have early access to the Zoo’s most popular events and activities, including Summer Camp! As new events and activities first go on sale, members will receive exclusive, early access. To prepare for your reservation, make sure your membership is current on the day of the program.

08 IT’S THE FINAL COUNTDOWN!
As you’re making a purchase your cart will be held for you. You will see a countdown when you’re in your cart, this guarantees that while you’re finishing your purchase your tickets will be held for you. It’s also easier to finish a purchase because there is less information required.

09 MOBILE-FIRST DESIGN
Timed-Ticketing reservations, event tickets, and membership renewals are easier than ever with our new mobile-friendly, intuitive design. If the weather forecast changes and the rain clouds disappear, we can pull other Guest Services staff members to the entry gates to help with any lines that may form.

10 NEW SYSTEM, SAME STAFF
The entire Virginia Zoo team is excited about the new system and its capabilities. We’re also excited to share the system with you. We understand that it takes time to learn a new system. If you ever need assistance, please call the Zoo at 757-441-2374 x257 to get help making your purchase.

SPRING BREAK TICKETS
April 1-16 2023
Reservation Required
Reserve Your Tickets Today!

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS TODAY!

BEHIND THE SCENES
Learn about animal care, behavior and conservation on an up-close and personal behind the scenes tour! Be introduced to a Zoo Keeper who can share information about the animals they care for as only they know them.

Masai Giraffe Meet & Greet

STORY BY BRITTANY COOLBAUGH // PHOTO BY STEPHANY CLARK
The Virginia Zoo mission beats strong at the core of our volunteer programs: engaging our community in taking action to save the world’s wildlife and their ecosystems. Conservation science, habitat protection and restoration, and sustainable solutions for everyday actions depend on whole communities of individuals coming together, and we are excited to facilitate this through volunteer opportunities. This year, our Zoo Crew, Conservation Youth Team (CYT), and Episodic volunteers can look forward to getting involved in a number of community science initiatives at the Zoo and beyond – and we’re welcoming everybody to get on board!

This spring, Virginia Zoo volunteers will be assisting with the set-up and kick-off of our participation in two familiar community science projects: Frog Watch USA (a long-standing national survey of amphibians now organized by Akron Zoo) and Caterpillars Count! (a national project using arthropod surveys to study phenology led by researchers at University of North Carolina). Over the summer, volunteers of all ages will have the opportunity to join our staff for evening frog surveys at a variety of locations around Hampton Roads, and Zoo Crew and CYTs will be leading our on-site data collection of caterpillars and other insects. As fall approaches, butterfly fans can be on the lookout for Monarch Watch tagging opportunities on site, and new and experienced birders alike will be valuable assets as we work to add a few winter opportunities to our lineup.

Each community science project we participate in provides real, tangible ways for our volunteers to contribute to conservation science. If you’re interested in getting involved, Zoo Crew applicants can look forward to intake in April and June to get involved this spring and summer, and Episodic volunteers can keep a lookout in your email for Frog Watch opportunities starting in March! Together, we have the power to save wildlife and their habitats. We hope you’ll join us!

In mid-November of 2022, the Virginia Zoo closed the Trail of the Tiger for demolition and reconstruction of the elevated walkway. The trail opened in April of 2011, had become deteriorated and needed a refresh. The $2MM project is managed under the watchful eye of City of Norfolk Project & Construction Management Division and working closely with project General Contractors E.T. Gresham. The renovation consists of full demo of boardwalk planks, railings, and joists. An inspection of support pilings was completed, and 36 pilings are being replaced followed by complete replacement of wood preservative treated lumber joists and composite decking. The project will install AZEK TimberTek decking planks which have a lifespan of 20 years and are moisture resistant. They also resist heat better than wood materials. The new decking is environmentally sustainable made from approximately 90% recycled material.

A second project happening simultaneously during this time frame is replacing roofing at the entrance to the Trail of the Tiger at the Orangutan outside observation area and on the suspended Trail near the Orangutan indoor exhibit.

Throughout the project, the welfare of the animal residents in the 5.5 acres of the Trail of the Tiger, has been our top priority. Prior to the start of construction, contractors were trained on welfare and safety expectations working around the exhibits. The Zoo also moved the red pandas, rhinoceros hornbill, sarus crane and birds housed in the Asia aviaries to temporary holding areas off the trail. The Asia Keeper team has been closely monitoring all animals on the trail for any signs of stress related to the construction and continue to update Zoo leadership and project leadership of any concerns so that adjustments can be made if necessary.

The Zoo kept some of our Asia animal residents on-exhibit during construction. These animals include tigers, orangutans, cassowary, moon bear, otters, and gibbons. However, many of these animals are tropical or sub-tropical species and typically have access to indoor, off-exhibit parts of their habitats during the colder winter months every year, so they may have chosen to be inside some. The project is expected to be completed by summer and the Virginia Zoo is looking forward to a grand opening celebration.
Zebras need nail care, too! Zebra hooves are similar to a domestic horse’s in that the hoof walls grow continuously, just like our human nails.

Ruuxa, our six-year-old Hartmann’s mountain zebra, went in for a routine preventative health examination in December. The Zoo Vet Team called for assistance from Kim Burnop, a local farrier who has expertise in the trimming of horse hooves. Proper care of the hooves helps avoid hoof overgrowth, which can cause hoofstock to develop lameness or hoof infections. Since zebra are wild animals, this exam required Ruuxa to undergo general anesthesia so that our Vet Team could perform the procedure safely.

Since her last exam in May last year, Ruuxa’s hooves showed great improvement. She also received routine wellness and preventative care such as a physical exam, blood work, dental care, and vaccines. Our Zoo Vet Team is dedicated to quality animal care and continue monitoring the health of our animals.

An up-close look at our extraordinary Zoo Vet team and Ruuxa, our Hartmann’s mountain zebra

STORY BY TALIA ROSCHE // PHOTOS BY JALESSA MANLEY

ZEBRA
Equus quagga

FUN FACT:
Zebra strips are for camouflage, bug repellent and to keep them cool in the sun.
Bald Eagles are found throughout North America. The Virginia Zoo is home to two of these magnificent birds, Abe (male) and Sanibel (female).

Juvenile bald eagles differ from adults in that they lack the distinctive snowy white head, neck, and tail. Instead, young bald eagles, like Sanibel, are a bottle brown with white blotches. Sanibel will be one year old in April but won’t develop her adult coloration until around five years old. Abe is a mature adult believed to have hatched in 1990, making him approximately 33 years old.

Bald eagles have an average lifespan of 20-30 years in the wild but can live 50 years or more in human care.

Female bald eagles are typically larger than males, but individuals in the North tend to be larger than those from the South. Sanibel, named for the Florida island where she was rescued, weighs approximately 3.5 kilograms (7.7 lbs). She will likely remain around this size as she reaches adulthood.

Both Abe and Sanibel came to the Virginia Zoo as rescued bald eagles who were deemed non-releasable. Abe has been at the zoo since 1992! Bald eagles are a federally protected species, but they are a great example of conservation success as their populations continue to rebound – almost quadrupling in the last decade alone!

The Virginia Zoo is pleased to provide a permanent home for both birds. Abe can be found along the North America trail. Sanibel currently lives behind-the-scenes with our other education ambassador animals. We hope she’ll make her appearance during Education programs and Zoo-wide events later this spring!

The national bird of the United States, bald eagles are found throughout North America. The Virginia Zoo is home to two of these magnificent birds, Abe (male) and Sanibel (female).

Sanibel is acclimating to her new home quickly. Her trainers say that she is smart and catches on to training with ease.

NEW AT THE ZOO
Learn about our new ambassador Bald Eagle, Sanibel.

STORY BY MICHELLE LEWIS // PHOTOS BY ZOO STAFF AND KEEPERS

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DID YOU KNOW?
- Like other raptors, bald eagles have sharp claws designed for piercing and holding onto prey.
- Both Abe and Sanibel came to the Virginia Zoo as rescued bald eagles who were deemed non-releasable. Abe has been at the zoo since 1992! Bald eagles are a federally protected species, but they are a great example of conservation success as their populations continue to rebound – almost quadrupling in the last decade alone!
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Zoo Fund
By supporting the Zoo fund you help educate the next generations of scientists, researchers, and conservationists through mission-based programming here at the Virginia Zoo.
What’s Growing On?

*STORY + PHOTOS BY ALI KELSO*

Our horticultural technicians are hard at work cold stratifying and scouring seeds for our annual plant sale which will occur in conjunction with our *Party for the Planet* event, happening May 20th from 10am-2pm.

In addition to crowd favorites like the Senna alata, or Candle bush, whose bright yellow inflorescences will fill our tropical beds come spring, this year the Horticulture department will also have a variety of Virginia natives and pollinator friendly plants available to take home and add to your garden ecosystem. Planting natives in your own garden helps us in our mission to build sustainable ecosystems in order to protect native wildlife. Come check out our sale and take the opportunity to talk to our team who will be available to give you care instructions and planting tips for your new plant additions!

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Species to be featured in our plant sale:

- **Grasses** are often the overlooked hero of a garden ecosystem. Grasses provide shelter, and nesting material to many living things. *Sporobolus heterolepis*, a species of grass native to West Central Virginia, is often chosen for its neat ornamental characteristic. Also known as Prairie Dropseed, this grass is an important shelter species to overwintering native bees and a larval host for the three subspecies of Leonard’s skipper moths.

- **Hibiscus laevis**, our native species of Hibiscus, also known as Rose mallow. Each flower bud opens and lasts for a single day and in that time attract a number of bees, including the solitary ground dwelling Rose Mallow bee. As a bonus, Rose mallow, and many other hibiscus species, are a great snack for our sloths!

- We will have numerous other species available for all of the pollinators in your life, zinnias, celosias, cosmos, and so much more, we’ll see you there!

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**NEW DOC ON THE BLOCK**

**Zoo Vet Reaches Milestones**

*STORY BY MICHELLE LEWIS // PHOTOS BY ZOO STAFF AND KEEPERS*

On September 5, 2022, Dr. Lauren Novak joined the Virginia Zoo as our very first veterinary intern. Interns in the Zoo veterinary field have a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree and are provided a unique opportunity for clinical and professional growth within a supportive environment that focuses on high quality medical care, guest education, and herd health and wellness. This one-year training position focuses on improving clinical competency with zoological species and to prepare for a position in a zoological institution. There is no one path to becoming a zoo veterinarian, but an internship provides individuals with one route for entering the field and provides early career zoo veterinarians the opportunity to expand their clinical and taxonomic experience under the guidance of an experienced zoo veterinarian. Having Dr. Lauren on staff has allowed us to expand our preventive care practice as well as increase the number of procedures the vet team has been able to schedule in front of the public.

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**BY THE NUMBERS**

1 year internship at the Virginia Zoo.

**Over 700** animals who call the Virginia Zoo home and require daily care.

2 grams that Dr. Lauren was in school (4 years of undergraduate with a BA in Biology; 4 years of veterinary school for the DVM)

8 years where Dr. Lauren worked in other veterinary practices prior to coming to the Virginia Zoo

5 years that Dr. Lauren came to the Zoo

1,400 kilograms Dr. Lauren’s largest patient (an adult giraffe)

25 procedures that have been performed in front of the guests since Dr. Lauren came to the Zoo

1,461 guest interactions at veterinary procedures since Dr. Lauren came to the Zoo in September.
EVENTS

Event-Full Year Ahead

We’re excited to welcome everyone to the Zoo with a happen-
ing lineup that attracts new audiences and spreads the Zoo’s mission. Check out the full lineup at virginiazoo.org/events.

FOR MEMBERS ONLY

JUNE 22
AUGUST 3
5PM-8PM

A special after-hours event, just for our Members! You’ll have two FREE opportunities this summer to unwind after work or school by visiting your favorite animals and exhibits at dusk. Additional perks and activities coming soon.

ADULTS-ONLY

ADULT NIGHT
April 15 • 5 – 8 pm
Unleash your inner wild child during our adults-only evening at the Zoo! Trails and exhibits will be open late and there will be drinks, a DJ, and a Food Truck Round Up alongside yard games to play in our Event Field. Event is Ages 21+.

ADULT NIGHT!
ZOOBOO EDITION
Oct 20 • 6 – 9 pm
Get a grown-up preview of our annual ZOOBoo event with a bonus Adult Night during our special spooky season! The evening will be full of fa-BOO-lous fun, including pumpkin enrichment for select animals, costume contests, and exhibits will be open late, grab a bite from our Restaurant, and shake your plumage to an eclectic set of tunes spun by a local DJ.

PARTY FOR THE PLANET
May 20 • 10 am – 2 pm
Join us for an afternoon of activities including Keeper Chats and our second Annual Plant Sale, while our Educators and community partners show you new ways to support conservation and be good stewards of our home - the Earth! This event is free with your regular Zoo admission.

BIKE NIGHT
May 25 • 5 – 8 pm
Join us for our Bike Night and we’ll be bike-centric vendors, food trucks, a decoration station and more. Last year’s event sold out quickly, so be sure to get your tickets early for this family-friendly event.

EDU-TAINMENT
JUNE 22, & AUGUST 3 • 5 – 8 pm
Learn new facts about your favorite Animal Ambassadors, tour select exhibits which will be open late, grab a bite from our Restaurant, and shake your plumage to an eclectic set of tunes spun by a local DJ.

THRILL-SEEKER

ZOOBOO
JUNE 22 • 5 – 8 pm
Don’t miss your chance to tour the Zoo on two wheels. There will be bike-centric vendors, food trucks, a decoration station and more. Last year’s event sold out quickly, so be sure to get your tickets early for this family-friendly event.

MUSIC & MOVIES

ZOOGROOVES
June 2 & September 22, 5:30 – 9 pm
Join us for an afternoon of activities including Keeper Chats and our second Annual Plant Sale, while our Educators and community partners show you new ways to support conservation and be good stewards of our home - the Earth! This event is free with your regular Zoo admission.

ZOOVIES
September 29 & October 6, 6:30 – 9 pm
Join us for an afternoon of activities including Keeper Chats and our second Annual Plant Sale, while our Educators and community partners show you new ways to support conservation and be good stewards of our home - the Earth! This event is free with your regular Zoo admission.

FAMILY-FUN

PRIDE NIGHT
June 10 • 5 – 8 pm
We’ll be adding hearts and rainbows to our stripes and spots and celebrating diversity in our community as well as the Animal Kingdom during our second annual Pride Night. Learn new facts about your favorite Animal Ambassadors, tour select exhibits which will be open late, grab a bite from our Restaurant, and shake your plumage to an eclectic set of tunes spun by a local DJ.

TEDDY BEAR CLINIC
August 12 • 10 – 2 pm
Make an appointment to cure your little one of their back-to-school blues by bringing their favorite cuddly critter to the Zoo for a check-up! Our educators, volunteers and partners will help demystify the doctor’s office and show the importance of regular medical care for people and animals. This event is free with your regular Zoo Admission.

MEMBER NIGHTS
June 22, & August 3 • 5 – 8 pm
A special after-hours event, just for our Members! You’ll have two FREE opportunities this summer to unwind after work or school by visiting your favorite animals and exhibits at dusk.

ROAR & POUR
September 2 • 5 – 9 pm
This year, the Virginia Zoo and the Coastal Virginia Brewers Alliance are partnering to host an annual gathering of local brewers for an all-new event - Roar & Pour! Join us for beer tastings from the finest brews that Virginia has to offer, alongside extended exhibit hours, a Food Truck Rodeo, music, games, an expanded VIP section, and much more.

BEER-LOVERS

HOLI-DAZE
December 31 • 10 – 2 pm
Come and mark another spin around the sun by counting down to a new year with us! We’ll be celebrating in style, but just a little early, with drinks, food trucks, a DJ, and the Coastal Virginia Brewers Alliance expanded VIP section, and much more.

JUNGLE BELL ROCK WITH DJ SANTA
December 16 • 10 am – 2 pm
Who knew that Santa Claus could spin records? We did, and so we’ve invited him back again this year to help us celebrate the holidays at the Zoo! Our Event Pavilion will be decked out in festive finery for this dance party, along with vendors, games, and gifts for purchase. The first hour will be a sensory-friendly story time with Santa, and attendance for this event is free with your regular Zoo admission.

NOON YEAR’S EVE
December 31 • 10 – 2 pm
Come and mark another spin around the sun by counting down to a new year with us! We’ll be celebrating in style, but just a little early, with drinks, food trucks, a DJ, and the Coastal Virginia Brewers Alliance expanded VIP section, and much more.

HOST YOUR OWN ZOO EVENT!

Celebrate in open spaces near your favorite animal or garden views. From weddings to small parties and corporate functions, the Zoo has the social event space you need. Scan for more details!
Every animal at the Virginia Zoo is available for adoption, starting at $25. Proceeds benefit various Zoo programs, including the Act For Wildlife program. For more information, visit virginiazoo.org/become-corporate-partner.
Have you made your ZOO Year’s Resolution yet?

It’s not too late! Join us in taking action to help save the world’s wildlife and their ecosystems.

**Step 1:** Choose Your Goal(s): Want to ditch single use plastics, pick up trash in your neighborhood, or cut your carbon footprint? We’ve got some ideas, but you can start as big or as small as you want!

**Step 2:** Register with us. Check out our website for more information and to register: [https://virginiazoo.org/zyr](https://virginiazoo.org/zyr)

**Step 3:** Report your progress at Zoo events throughout the year to earn points.

**Step 4:** Discover the Difference: Top point earners throughout the year will have the opportunity to win prizes. Everyone can see what a difference a year can make for wildlife and the environment!