



**ACE for Wildlife Network 2025  
Empathy Photo Contest**

**Animal Portraits**

## Skipper the Raccoon Says Hello



**Animal Story-** Skipper is a rescued raccoon who has been training as an animal ambassador at the San Diego Zoo. He shares the struggles faced by native wildlife and helps teach people how to coexist with nature.

Jaimee Lafleur,  
San Diego Zoo and Wildlife Alliance

## Mexican Wolf, Hodari Shows off his Signature Feature, his Tongue!



**Animal Story-** Hodari is an endangered Mexican wolf who has a unique family trait, he always has his tongue sticking out! He is a favorite among visitors to Wolf Haven and on this day he couldn't be bothered to get up from his spot in the grass but he is quite the ham and indulged me in having his photo taken.

Jessica Pellington,  
Wolf Haven International

*Finalist*



## 11 Year Old Gray Wolf, Sierra

**Animal Story-** Sierra, a stunning female gray wolf, once roamed the Hollywood hills after escaping from her previous home. After being captured from the bustling suburbs nine years ago, she came to Wolf Haven to live in a large natural enclosure to enjoy the rest of her life with her wolf companion in sanctuary. She can be seen watching her surroundings from behind the trees or upon her tall hill.

Gelane Clements,  
Wolf Haven International

## This is Pumpkin, a Sand Cat

**Animal Story-** I took this picture of Pumpkin while he was looking at Dan, who is Pumpkin's favorite Zookeeper!

Heidi Beal,  
Lake Superior Zoo



# Bonobos: The Empathy Great Apes



Jody Allen,  
Zoological Society of Milwaukee

**Animal Story-** We have 19 bonobos at our zoo. Our empathy interpretation includes: a. Bonobos will console distressed peers with physical contact (often of a sexual nature crossing gender) such as hugging, grooming, and touching, which reduces the recipient's stress levels. b. Consolation is more likely to occur between individuals with strong friendships and kinship bonds which is a result of their strong female dominant social structure, sharing their unique range of empathic behaviors including altruism toward each other especially those within the troop who are young, elderly and those with special needs. c. Like humans, they share emotional sensitivity because bonobos have spindle neurons which are associated with complex social emotions like empathy. d. We share 98.7 DNA with bonobos, closest of all primates. The Stories we like to tell about our bonobos: Qasai (born 5/23/2016 to Claudine our current Matriarch) in 2021 was experiencing some health issues. After a brain CT SCAN, it revealed he had two brain abscesses. Not having such medical specialists on staff our Vet Staff reached out to our local (human) trauma center for help. Two neurosurgeons (for humans) performed brain surgery at our Animal Health Center not once but twice and Qasai is now a healthy rambunctious 9 year old. When asked about the uniqueness of the surgery, one surgeon remarked it was just like a human brain so they had no problem performing the surgery on a non-human primate. We also talk about one of our former bonobos, who has since passed away, was probably down syndrome and how the rest of the troop would automatically care for her when she didn't understand what the keepers wanted her to do, showing exceptional support. And unlike humans and other primates, as adults they continue to play with each other and those younger in the troop which helps with their emotional and social structure.



## Tilek, a Cloned Marco Polo Argali Sheep

**Animal Story-** Tilek, a cloned Marco Polo argali sheep with majestic, spiraling horns, stands in his lush new habitat at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse, NY for the first time. Once a victim of an elaborate wildlife trafficking scheme, he now resides in a spacious natural habitat and receives specialized care. After running the length of the exhibit with his new markhor bachelor herd, he pauses for a moment and makes eye contact with the camera. He is the only Marco Polo argali sheep in North America.

Camille Murphy,  
Rosamond Gifford Zoo



## Autumn Foxes in the Winter Snow

**Animal Story-** There's something so majestic about red foxes in the snow and after a day full of snowstorms, I had to go check out their habitat. Autumn and Maple, as always, did not disappoint. There they sat, posed on top of their hide, watching the snow melt off the trees.

Erika Berry,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo

*Finalist*



## Jaguar Frankie Perched up on his Post

**Animal Story-** Jaguar Frankie can be found peering through his habitat's tree while perched high up on his platform. Frankie recently got a breeding recommendation with our new female Jaguar Filly who came to us from Belize Zoo.

Joel Miller,  
Milwaukee County Zoo

# Papita, the Vision-Impaired Harbor Seal

**Animal Story-** Papita's journey started last summer when she was found as a young pup in rough condition with lacerations and eye injuries. Our Wildlife Response Team provided critical care, helping her heal and adapt to her unique vision needs. The vet team had an animal ophthalmologist specialist come to ASLC to examine Papita's eyes. During the exam, the specialist detected abnormal eye movement (nystagmus) typically seen in animals that are either born blind or lose vision at an early stage of life. Based on this finding, the ophthalmologist concluded that the young seal's blindness was congenital (present from birth) and that she was unlikely to regain her vision, even if her wounds healed. She was confirmed to have a complete cataract resulting in blindness in her right eye, and limited vision, if any, in her left eye. With confirmation that her vision loss was permanent, NOAA deemed Papita non-releasable. She found her long term home here at the ASLC with a care team who can tend to her individual needs.

Kaiti Grant,  
Alaska SeaLife Center



## Snow Cat

**Animal Story-** We don't often get good snowfall in OKC but we did this past January. I love to see the animals interact with the snow. One of our mountain lion boys, Toho, looked perfect stalking me through his snowy habitat. The black and white image really highlights the power and grace of this amazing big cat.

Jennifer D'Agostino,  
Oklahoma City Zoo





## **Baby Basil Basking in the Sunlight**

**Animal Story-** This is our baby colobus monkey named Basil. He has grown so much in the last few months. These peaceful moments with Basil are sometimes a rarity as he is a very energetic monkey usually jumping around, or playing with his brother.

Haley Munson,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo



## Two Gorillas Look Onwards During the Late Afternoon Downtime

**Animal Story-** Two gorillas seated looking at the younger gorillas play in the foreground.

Katie Gibian,  
Woodland Park Zoo



## Female Wood Duck, Pegasus

**Animal Story-** Pegasus (we affectionately call her Peggy) the wood duck was donated to our zoo in January of 2025. The next day, I captured this photo of her settling into her new habitat.

Elliott Fackler,  
Hattiesburg Zoo

## A Tufted Puffin Dabbling in the Cool Waters



**Animal Story-** Living in the wonderful aviary of the Alaska Sealife Center, this tufted puffin is enjoying a lovely, but chilly, Sunday afternoon.

Karen Astorga-Rollins,  
Alaska SeaLife Center

# Rockstar



**Animal Story-** The parrot's name is rockstar, one of the ambassador's of a parrot rescue centre in Belgium.

Nikki Barre,  
Nally's Parrot Sanctuary



## Flamingos Heart Shaped Pose

**Animal Story-** Our Caribbean Flamingo strikes a beautiful pose while inadvertently making a heart shape in this photo with her fellow Flamingo. This Flamingo was grooming her feathers on a fall day while keeping a watchful eye on the cameraman.

Joel Miller,  
Milwaukee County Zoo

*Finalist*



## Red-Legged Kittiwake

**Animal Story-** What makes these rare birds so special? Red-legged kittiwakes breed at only five to six locations in the world, all in the Bering Sea. Over 80% of the total population can be found on two different Alaskan island groups. This range is surprisingly limited compared to their close relative, the black-legged kittiwake, who are found abundantly in northern waters of the world.

Kaiti Grant,  
Alaska SeaLife Center

*Finalist*





## Just a pigeon and his branch

**Animal Story-** Nico is one of our free flighted birds in the rainforest section of our small animal building. He is one of the more shy birds, so it is always a treat when he comes out and says hi.

Haley Munson,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo



## Inquisitive Bird

**Animal Story-** An inquisitive bird basking in the sun during the afternoon light.

Katie Gibian,  
Woodland Park Zoo

## Mandarin Gaze

**Animal Story-** Despite being only about two inches long, the Mandarin Dragonet is one of the most dazzling creatures I've ever encountered. With its vibrant, robe-like patterns, it feels almost otherworldly yet it always draws me in. Whenever I photograph at the aquarium, I make it a point to stop by and check on this little fish. On this day, I spent nearly half an hour sitting on the floor, waiting patiently until it finally turned to face me. Meeting its gaze eye to eye was a reminder that even the smallest creatures can spark awe, curiosity, and connection and that these quiet moments of empathy are what inspire us to care for the ocean and all who call it home.

Jordann Tomasek,  
Birch Aquarium at Scripps



## A Look into Oceana's World

**Animal Story-** Oceana, the giant Pacific octopus, showing off her suckers, eye, and vibrant colors. Typically, you would find Oceana curled up in the corner for a nap, so when she came out to play or feed, guests gathered around to watch in awe at her impressive size and graceful movements. In rare moments, she would settle in center view, and guests could watch her siphon move with each breath.

Kristen Watkins,  
Alaska SeaLife Center

*Finalist*



## Mr. Snoopity the Fire Eel

**Animal Story-** Though Fire Eels are usually cryptic, our resident fire eel, Mr. Snoopity, is curious and loves showing off for visitors and aquarists alike. He greets anyone entering the back-up space with his snout breaking the surface, always greeting us. He is probably just looking for a snack, but we like to think he is saying hi.

Eric Carlson,  
Georgia Aquarium

*Finalist*





## The Northern Leopard Dorid

**Animal Story-** This northern leopard dorid is a species of nudibranch, or sea slug. It has no shell and instead relies on chemical defenses, storing compounds from its sponge prey to deter predators. Adding to its strange appearance are two antenna-like structures on its head, rhinophores, or sensory organs that detect chemical cues in the water to help it find food and mates.

Kaiti Grant,  
Alaska SeaLife Center

## Leucistic White Alligator, Victor, on his Dock



**Animal Story-** Victor is estimated to be 15 years old and he lives in an indoor enclosure due to his leucism. He lives next door to another resident leucistic alligator and an alligator snapping turtle. The enclosure is made to mimic a dock of a house in the swamp with an homage to witches and supernatural folklore that is interwoven in Louisiana culture. Legends about white alligators are often linked to witches and the supernatural, and they are also associated with luck. He is not often found facing the glass, especially on busy days, but this was taken one morning when he was a little more active than usual

Abigayle Lista,  
Audubon Nature Institute

## Just Hanging Around

**Animal Story-** Kaa is a really fun snake to see in the small animal building. Always hanging on his branches and just existing. I always enjoy seeing where he is hanging when I am in the building.

Haley Munson,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo



## The Quiet Glow of Obsidian Scales

**Animal Story-** A black tree monitor relaxing on a tree branch showing of its dark scales under the warm glow of a heat lamp

Katie Gibian,  
Woodland Park Zoo

*Finalist*





## Tiger Swallowtail Enjoying the Gardens

**Animal Story-** A tiger swallowtail is perched on a purple coneflower on the grounds of Lincoln Park Zoo, with the Pepper Family Wildlife Center in the background. The photo reminds us that we can connect with nature no matter which side of the habitat glass the animals are on.

Allison Price,  
Lincoln Park Zoo

*Finalist*

# Monarch Caterpillar Munching on Milkweed



**Animal Story-** This monarch caterpillar was found on milkweed outside of the Zoo's office. During the summer we like to check the milkweed for eggs, caterpillars, chrysalis', etc. It never gets old to find a monarch caterpillar enjoying milkweed and it is exciting that is something that happens so close to where we walk everyday! It's a good reminder to stop and observe the natural world around you, even near a sidewalk!

Christine Eckles,  
Blank Park Zoo



# Western Monarch

**Animal Story-** Over the last couple years, Hogle Zoo has worked with monarch conservation projects to help Utah's monarchs and their habitats. We have a makerspace, where guests can take home milkweed to plant, and help us process seeds. Our teen volunteers are able to help monitor caterpillars and milkweed plants in gardens across the zoo. This is one of the individuals that hatched on grounds this year. It has allowed so many departments to come together to help this species and inspire others to do the same!

Erika Berry,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo

*Finalist*





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**Animal Behavior and Personality**

# Mother and Daughter Reticulated Giraffe Bond in Outdoor Yard



**Animal Story-** In the outdoor giraffe yard at the Milwaukee County Zoo, the two female giraffes interact with one another against the beautiful summer foliage. Female giraffe bonds are strong, especially between family!

Carolyn Lewis,  
Zoological Society of Milwaukee



## Sleepy Afternoon

**Animal Story-** Gray wolf, Grayling, is a creature of habit and known for being dirty and sleepy. He can usually be found snoozing the afternoon away in a hole he dug as a daybed. On this day I caught him just before he started his nap.

Jessica Pellington,  
Wolf Haven International

# Our Newborn Plains Zebra, Karma, Jumps Over her Mom

**Animal Story-** Our youngest plains zebra, Karma, was born in the early morning hours of August 19th, 2025. Around 1:00 pm the same day, I captured this photo of her playfully jumping over her mother, Safara. In the month since her birth, our keepers and visitors have delighted in watching as she continues to display her independent and spunky personality.

Elliott Fackler,  
Hattiesburg Zoo



## Sleepy Bear

**Animal Story-** Tundra the brown bear is just waking up in the spring and is still quite sleepy!

Heidi Beal,  
Lake Superior Zoo





## "Sibling Rivalry"

**Animal Story-** In the spring of 2022 our three mature female macaques gave birth to three babies, all females. Within a few weeks they were learning to navigate their habitat and became known as the three musketeers learning and getting into trouble with their older siblings just like we humans do in our families. That play and learning included a lot of wrestling, biting and often dominance play between the three under the watchful eyes of their moms and older siblings. As part of our interpretation at this habitat we talk a lot about how siblings don't always get along, how play helped them to figure out where they fit in the social community just like we do in our own families and the importance of learning from their older siblings. All of our macaques have Japanese names in honor of their cultural habitat. So when we work with young families, school groups and Zoo campers we talk about how we humans get our names honoring special people in our families and our culture too.

Jody Allen,  
Zoological Society of Milwaukee

*Finalist*

# Our Resident Malayan Tiger, Liem, Enjoying the Pool in his Exhibit on a Particularly Hot Summer Morning in June.



**Animal Story-** Liem is an 11 year old Malayan tiger. He often paces around the water in his exhibit while vocalizing, and on occasion he will get in the pool. The water tends to be covered in duckweed during this time of year, and some guests do not realize there is a pool. He tends to sit in the pool for several minutes while closing his eyes and looks like he is relaxing.

Abigayle Lista,  
Audubon Nature Institute

*Finalist*

# Fitz the Jaguar Enjoying his Floaty Barrel in Habitat



Cam Preston,  
Woodland Park Zoo



## African Elephant Belle's Bath

**Animal Story-** Our elephant keepers recently got Belle into our large habitat pool while using the water cannon as an extra enrichment item on a hot summer's day. While in the pool, Belle received apples as positive reinforcement. Belle can be seen with her full trunk up drinking some water as she decides which enrichment item she likes the best.

Joel Miller,  
Milwaukee County Zoo

## Pilot the Male Steller Sea Lion Catches a Fish During a Training Session

**Animal Story-** Pilot the male Steller sea lion catches a fish during a training session at the Alaska SeaLife Center.

Kaiti Grant,  
Alaska SeaLife Center



## Shadow Picking- I Mean Licking his Nose

**Animal Story-** I was watching the foxes get ready for their snack of their day when Shadow decided to show just how excited he was for his snacks.

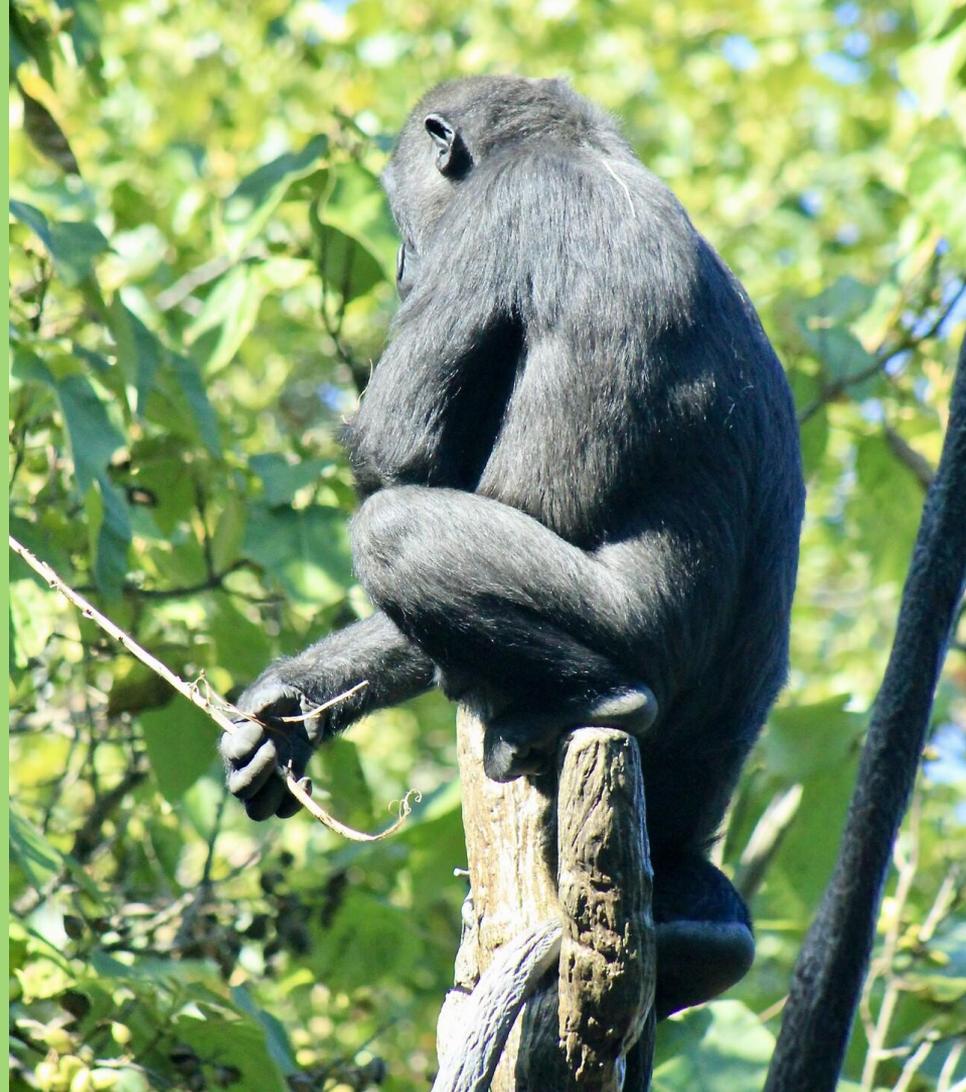
Haley Munson,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo



## Young Male Gorilla Perched at the Top of the Tallest Point in his Habitat

**Animal Story-** Young male gorilla perched at the top of the tallest point in his habitat, holding a stick that he carried up there and picked at it.

Katie Gibian,  
Woodland Park Zoo



## Preening with Beauty Queen Waffles

**Animal Story-** Waffles is quite the beauty queen, always preening and posing. Here, she was standing in the spray of one of the aviary's water features and practicing her self-care. Our avian team says that she is a major character, and I see her as a sassy little lady.

Kristen Watkins,  
Alaska SeaLife Center

*Finalist*





## Spoonbill Preening in the Rainforest Shadows

**Animal Story-** Often mistaken for flamingos, the spoonbills of our small animal building are one of the highlights of the zoo. Spirit in particular, one our newer birds, has captured the hearts of many. In a darker region of our rainforest, I photographed him preening up high, as the skylight shined down on his pink feathers.

Erika Berry,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo

*Finalist*



## Help from a Friend

**Animal Story-** These two green-naped lorikeets were in the early morning sun warming up and preening each other. It was a sweet moment to see them helping each other out!

Jennifer D'Agostino,  
Oklahoma City Zoo



## Two Stellar Sea Eagles Exploring

**Animal Story-** Two stellar sea eagles decided to explore the ground in their habitat and hopped out while scratching their beaks on downed trees

Katie Gibian,  
Woodland Park Zoo



## Sea Star Does a Relax

**Animal Story-** I took this image of a true sea star hanging out on the acrylic in our 'Harbor Bottom' habitat, shortly after starting work full-time at the Alaska SeaLife Center. It struck me as a very 'relaxed' pose (hello anthropomorphism!), and I just had to snap a pic! I also have learned quite a bit about how special and unique they are, and now they're one of my favorite animals to teach about here at the aquarium!

Katelyn Cadoret,  
Alaska SeaLife Center





## Elephant Nose Greets Tank Mate

**Animal Story-** The elephant nose investigates with its specialized electric organ's flexible, jaw-mounted schnauzenorgan toward its ever-patient tank mate, the African Bushfish, carefully probing for any nearby morsels of food.

Eric Carlson,  
Georgia Aquarium





## Gaboon Viper Early Morning Yawns

**Animal Story-** Did you know that snakes can yawn? Our Gaboon Viper was recently photographed giving us a large morning yawn. You can see his retracted fangs with a wide open mouth.

Joel Miller,  
Milwaukee County Zoo





## Obsidian in Motion

**Animal Story-** A Black tree monitor climbs up a trunk to reach a higher vantage point. Tree monitors like to perch up high where they can see their whole environment.

Katie Gibian,  
Woodland Park Zoo



# **ACE for Wildlife Network 2025 Empathy Photo Contest**

## **Storytelling**

# North American River Otter Enjoys a Young Guest's Stick as he Moves it Around



**Animal Story-** Young Milwaukee County Zoo guests interact with the river otter through the glass at Otter Passage outdoor habitat. The child had been following the otter around with a small stick and the otter was engaging with him playfully. The child smiles and mentions he wants to be an otter zookeeper when he grows up to train them.

Carolyn Lewis,  
Zoological Society of Milwaukee

## Connection at any Age!

**Animal Story-** Our harbor seals love to interact with guests in our Underwater Viewing area, and guests love it too! Papita has very limited eyesight due to injuries sustained before being brought to the center by our Wildlife Response team, so she is especially fond of bright objects she can see. With Tuq, who has a neurological condition, the ASLC veterinary team and mammals team ask that guests only engage in calm interactions with Tuq, as overstimulation may trigger his tremors. These interactions are an amazing opportunity for guests to build connections with and empathy for our harbor seals, while also learning about the importance of our Wildlife Response program.

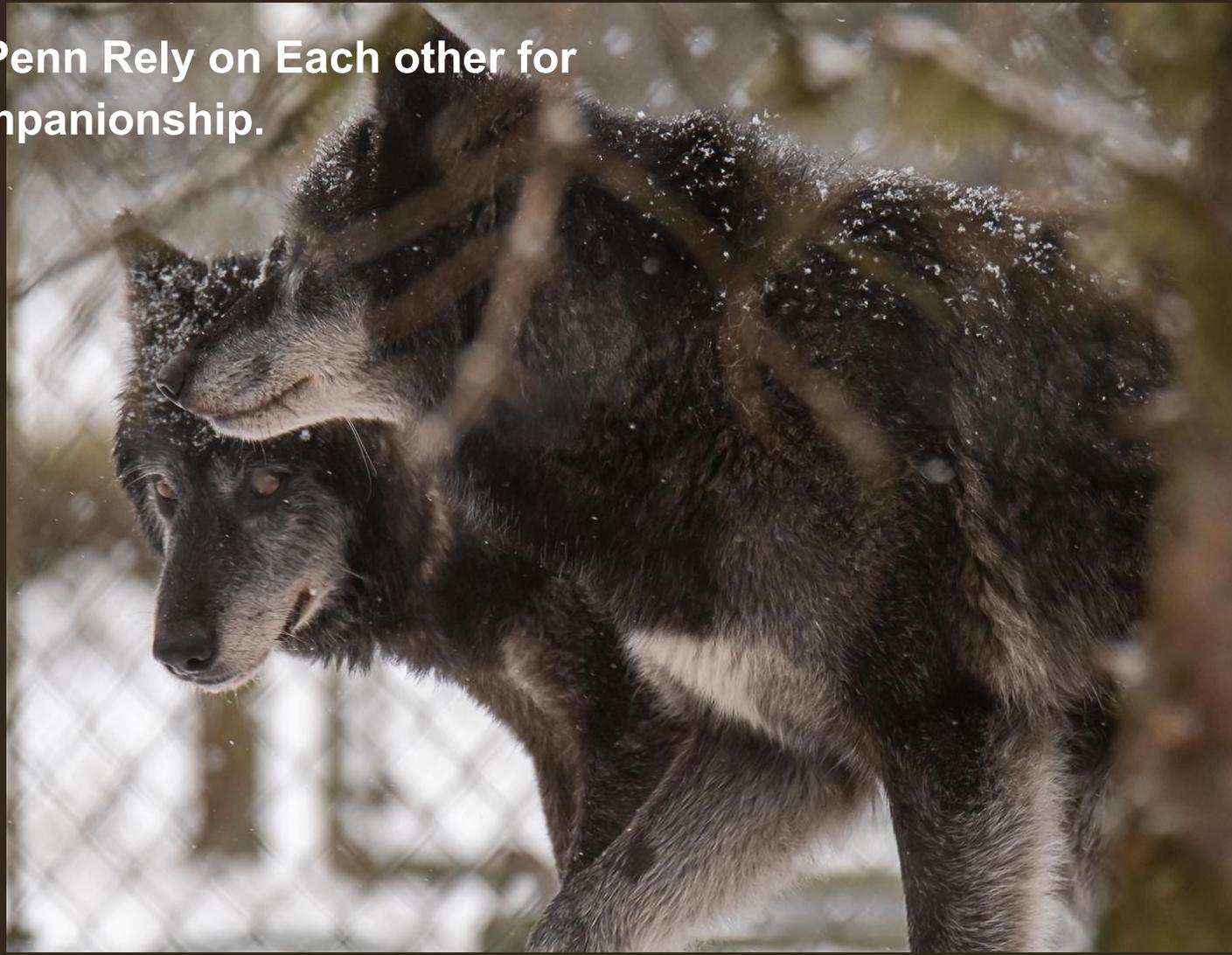
Kristen Watkins,  
Alaska SeaLife Center



# Wolfdogs Ellie and Penn Rely on Each other for Confidence and Companionship.

**Animal Story-** Penn (back) is a wolfdog who spent all ten years of his life on a three foot chain. When he came to Wolf Haven he was stressed and scared, barking warnings at anyone who came near his enclosure. He was introduced to his companion, Ellie, a wolfdog five years his junior, in his first week and they have been inseparable ever since. Over the past year, she has helped him become much more confident and secure in his surroundings and with himself. He even comes to the fence to greet visitors!

Jessica Pellington,  
Wolf Haven International





## Keeper Kelli with Paulo

**Animal Story-** Every year we take Zookeeper portraits for National Zookeeper week. The keepers take portraits with their favorite critters. This is Kelli and Paulo sharing a moment.

Heidi Beal,  
Lake Superior Zoo

Finalist

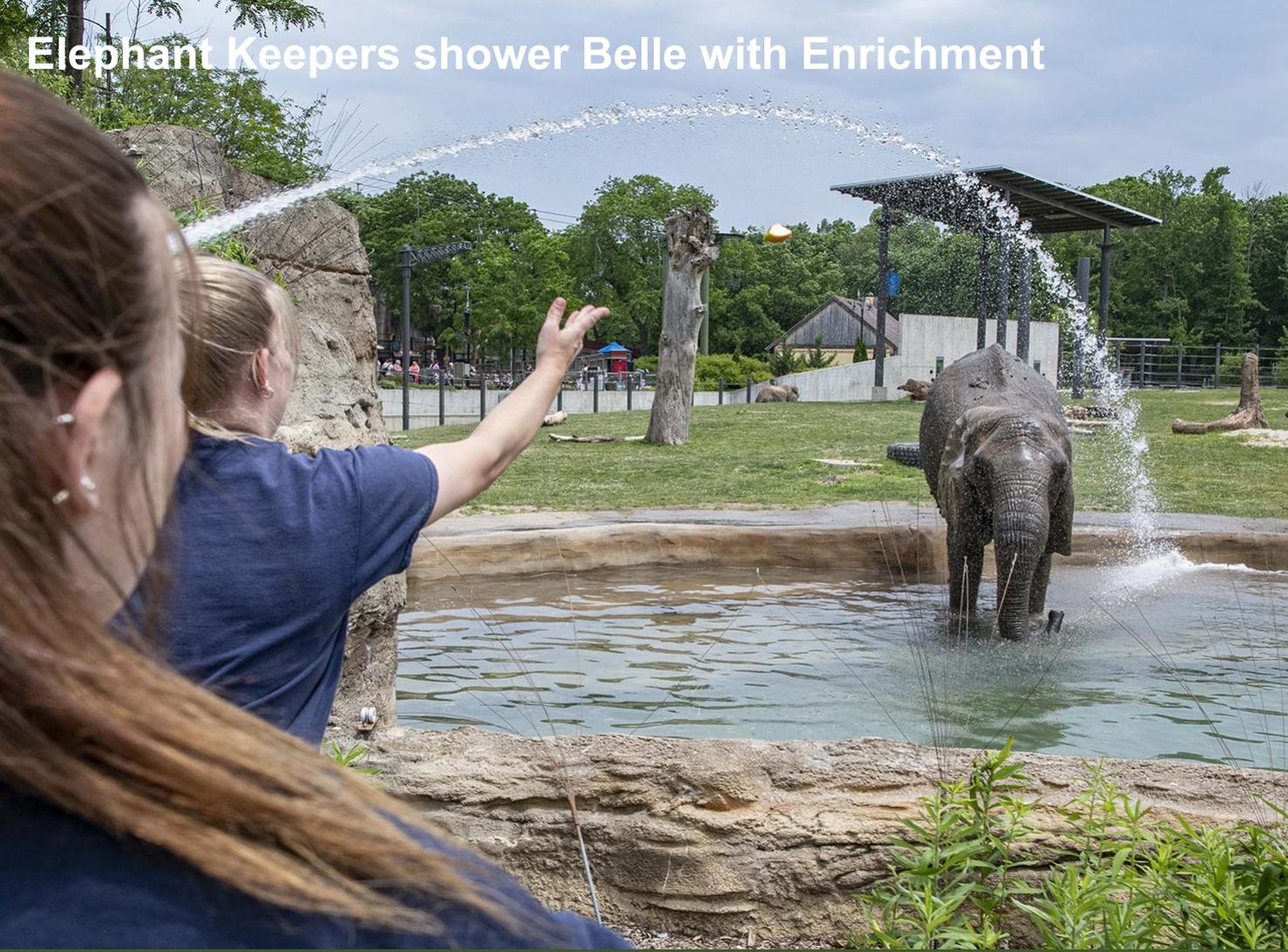


## "Happy, Can I Share a Secret?"

**Animal Story-** One of the best 'up close and personal' habitats at our zoo is our Hippo Haven (an outside habitat for Hippos) where Happy (male) and Patti (female who has since passed away at 56) interact with our guests especially children. Patti was the one who consistently interacted with the children, mimicking the children's actions. I took this photo because Happy rarely faces the public side of the pool let alone interacts with the kids, so catching him face first with a child interacting with him was special. It was Halloween so all our wee guests were in costume, and being the 'dairy state' (Wisconsin) this wee visitor in a cow costume was so fitting. This little girl had all kinds of questions about why Happy slept underwater. Happy slept thru the whole encounter, only coming up for air.

Jody Allen,  
Zoological Society of Milwaukee

# Elephant Keepers shower Belle with Enrichment



**Animal Story-** Our Elephant Keepers recently showered African Elephant Belle with apple treats and water canon enrichment as she soaked in her habitats pool on a hot summer's day. Belle enjoyed drinking from the water canon and especially enjoyed the apples her keepers provided.

Joel Miller,  
Milwaukee County Zoo



## Mammals Curator Shelby Works with Ringed Seal Taku

**Animal Story-** Mammals Curator Shelby works with ringed seal Taku, who voluntarily participates in research through cooperative training. Together, they help scientists better understand how a warming Arctic is affecting ice seals and the fragile habitats they rely on. These animals are not just a privilege to work with and observe, they are key to understanding how climate change impacts their habitats and behaviors. Their voluntary participation in research offers insights that support long-term conservation and science-based management of Arctic ecosystems. Taku, pictured here, is a ringed seal in our science squad, contributing to the collaborative PHOCAS project. This work integrates data collected from trained individual seals with information from free-ranging seals. The PHOCAS team; a partnership between the Alaska SeaLife Center, Pinniped Lab, Long Marine Lab, UCSC, and other institutions, aims to better understand how ice-dependent seals may respond to projected environmental changes in the coming century. Through voluntary teamwork between seal, trainer, and scientist, this research is helping map energy budgets for wild seals and uncover previously unknown information about ringed seal health and physiology (permitted by NMFS 23554).

Kaiti Grant,  
Alaska SeaLife Center



## Giving Mom a Hug

**Animal Story-** This meerkat was a super mom, raising three pups on her own. We had some aggression in the mob toward her and she needed to be separated so that she could successfully rear her pups. She did not have the support of a mob but did an amazing job raising the three pups. She now leads a mob of her own with her three kids and her daughter's two pups.

Jennifer D'Agostino,  
Oklahoma City Zoo



## Cuddle Puddle

**Animal Story-** Snow leopard mom, Babs, and her son Bhutan were enjoying each other's company. Although our baby snow leopards are getting older, Bhutan seems to be quite the mama's boy.

Haley Munson,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo



## Brothers for Life

**Animal Story-** Our mountain lions came to the zoo as orphans from the wild and have allowed us to showcase the importance of Utah natives. Rafael was found in Utah by himself, while Liam and his sister Mara were found in Nebraska with frostbite, hence the shorter ears and tails. Though they came from different circumstances, these normally solitary cats proved that they could not only live together but thrive together. These boys truly are best friends.

Erika Berry,  
Utah's Hogle Zoo



## Inca Terns go Wild for Fish Treats

**Animal Story-** During a recent Wild Connections tour in our Aviary building, Zookeeper Joe can be seen showing off his Statue of Liberty pose as a Inca Tern swoops down to get his fish treat.

Joel Miller,  
Milwaukee County Zoo



# ASLC Veterinarian Dr. Emm Examines a Puffling During a Fledgling Exam



**Animal Story-** ASLC Veterinarian Dr. Emm examines a puffling during a fledgling exam. We strive to provide the animals in our care the best husbandry and veterinary care possible, including regular veterinary exams starting from a young age.

Kaiti Grant,  
Alaska SeaLife Center



# Young Visitor Greeting Tank the Green Sea Turtle

**Animal Story-** Tank, the Atlantic green sea turtle at Georgia Aquarium, has become a guest favorite, particularly among children who wait as long as it takes to spot him. Gliding gracefully through his habitat, Tank captivates visitors with his impressive size and gentle movements. When a young guest stretches a hand toward the glass, reaching for him, it creates a moment that inspires awe, empathy, and wonder. This interaction exemplifies the magic of interspecies connection, cementing Tank's place as a beloved ambassador of the ocean.

Eric Carlson,  
Georgia Aquarium





## A Germination Guardian Grabs a Gnat

**Animal Story-** Germination Guardians: Empathy at every level. Como Park Zoo and Conservatory is home to many animals and plants and managing the needs of both can be a challenge at times. The horticulture team uses an Integrated Pest Management system to reduce and eliminate the use of pesticides that could negatively impact zoo animals and local pollinators. The “Germination Guardians” and their captured invertebrates are actually part of the carnivorous plant collection at Como. Some of our butterwort and sundew plants spend time serving as sentinels in the seedling germination chamber. There, these plants, capture and eliminate harmful invertebrates, like this fungus gnat, without the use of any pesticides. The carnivorous plants receive the nutrients they need and simultaneously enable us to better support the needs of the other animals on site. The petite form and heroic task these small but mighty plants take on endears them to staff and behind the scenes visitors alike. The story of their role here helps extend empathy beyond humans and animals to include all the living creatures at our institution.

Ray Watson,  
Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

# A Display of Gentle Connection with a Species that is Not Frequently Afforded Such Kindness



**Animal Story**- A juvenile Caribbean cave cockroach reaches out a claw to climb onto the hand of one of their handlers. As an ambassador species for the zoo, these cockroaches help to bridge the empathy gap for arthropods as we have the opportunity to show them in a new light to guests, highlighting how incredible and misunderstood they really are. I think this photo gives the opportunity to admire the beauty of these creatures that's normally overlooked.

Allison Menelli,  
Oakland Zoo

