



The Wild Times

Birds of Prey & the Joy of Volunteering

Summer 2007

There is nothing more calming than to watch a bird soar high above, more exhilarating than watching them swoop and dive, nor more satisfying than seeing them free. My favorite thing to do at the zoo is to help with the birds of prey. Whether it is manning the birds to get them comfortable around people, cleaning the Mews, or getting things ready for the presentation, every day is a new learning experience.

It is amazing the amount of work that goes into training a bird of prey – especially when you watch Gary or Joanne work with the birds. They make it all look so easy! They spend hours getting the birds used to them first then to other people by working around them, talking to them and manning them. Before long it is time to attach the creance (a string attached to their jesse and the other end to a handle) and releasing them into the wind to get them to fly from the fist....and return! Birds of Prey only fly for food. They don't just decide to get up in the morning and go for a fly, although watching them ride the thermals you would think they are enjoying the flight, the soaring, the sun and the wind when in reality they are searching for food. The falconer builds up their energy and strength by getting them

to fly longer and farther, then feeding them a little more each time.

Gary Worley, Master Falconer, owns all the birds here. Gary has worked with Birds of Prey for over 35



Skye the Golden Eagle, Gary's newest addition

years on three continents, not only training and educating but flying raptors and thrilling audiences with his performances. One never knows what will happen in a presentation as the birds fly free and could leave any time they want or go roost in a tree for eight hours at a time!

So, here's what happens on a typical day as a volunteer. I don a glove and then, before starting anything else with the birds, you have to learn the Falconer's knot. This is a particular knot that is used whenever moving or carrying the raptors, and it is one that the birds cannot usually untie. It's not that difficult to learn if you practice, and practice, and practice! After one hundred times and if you can do it with your eyes closed and in your sleep, you're ready to try it on a real bird!

At the front of the amphitheatre is the "Mews". The mews houses the birds and they sit comfortably on their perches just like they would in a tree in the wild until it is their turn to fly. Each day the mews is disinfected, sprayed out with water, and raked giving the birds a fresh clean environment. No loud noises and no sudden movements as it may startle the birds, who may injure themselves or their feathers.

In the hut at the back of the amphitheatre, everything runs in precision order. The floors are swept and scrubbed every day, the hoods are polished and hung on labeled spots, the gloves are cleaned and the music is queued. Since all the birds come from different parts of the world and are not

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Greater
Vancouver
ZOO
Since 1970

5048 - 264th Street,
Aldergrove, B.C. V4W 1N7
604.856.6825

www.gvzoo.com

During the summer season, April 1 - Sept. 30, we are open:

9:00am - 7:00pm daily

Through the summer season, our Lion and Tiger Feeding will be at 1:00 p.m. daily *except Wednesdays when we offer a special Baboon Feeding instead

The **Radical Raptors** Presentation is on throughout the summer 3 times daily, weather permitting.

Meet a Reptile is also on at 11:00 daily at the Vivarium and there is a special Caiman Feeding on Wednesdays.

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Now you can adopt an animal at the Greater Vancouver Zoo!

This new "Adopt an Animal program" makes a fantastic and very unique gift for any animal lover. Proceeds will go towards helping us continue taking good care of our animals, protecting endangered species and assist our conservation efforts. To adopt or learn more please contact Jody Henderson at: jhenderson@gvzoo.com or 604-856-6825 ext. 33

\$40 Adopt An Animal Package includes:

- Certificate of Adoption
- Information Fact Sheet of your adopted animal
- Color picture of your adopted animal
- Name recognition on our donor board

\$60 Adopt An Animal Package

includes the above benefits plus a stuffed animal or t-shirt of your animal of choice (Plus postage and handling)

\$100 Adopt An Animal Package

includes the above benefits plus a Family day pass

Adopt an Animal Sponsors

\$100 Level

Tris Andrews
Scott Dawson
Dwayne & Jana Deschaine
Helen Duggan
Tony Kruger

\$50 Level

Teresa LaBossiere

\$60 Level

Megan Bernardin
Annabelle Clarke
Jessica Kuan
Jennifer Locquido
Jacob Lui

David Oliver (twice)
Keven Renso
Jodie Willets

\$40 Level

Elsie Webb (twice)

Zoo Continues To Do Good Community Work

Press Release from June 29, 2007

It has been a month to feel proud at the Greater Vancouver Zoo for all employees - a month of giving and getting involved with some wonderful causes and people.

On June 10th the Zoo welcomed back the folks at JDRF with their annual "Walk to Cure Diabetes" - a very worthy cause that we all believe very strongly in. For the last 5 years we have been involved as the host and were thrilled to invite all walkers to come out for a day of fun to the Zoo "free of charge". According to Rita Thodos, Acting Regional Manager for JDRF, "all participants tremendously enjoyed their day at the Greater Vancouver Zoo and helped raise over \$200,000 for diabetes research to date". More than

1,700 people took part in this fun-filled day which families, individuals and corporations came out in support.

June 26th was the Zoo's **Annual Access Day** - where groups of 5 people or more with disabilities were invited to visit the Zoo for a greatly reduced rate. Close to 1000 people visited the Zoo on this day, along with OMNI.10 TV's Summer Road Trip on location where they were displaying the Mitsubishi Outlander that they are giving away and some fun prizes. Suzanne Smith, Director of Promotions & Creative Service for OMNI TV, said "she was pleased that the Zoo included them on such a special day..."

We spoke to Tracey Sabberton, Langley Association for Community

Living Bridge Centre, "we look forward to it every year and have been coming for the last 3-4 years. It is well organized and the guys have lots of fun, we definitely look forward to coming back next year". She added, "the Zoo staff is always very friendly and willing to answer any questions from our program participants". And Donna Dickson, Riverview Hospital Hillside, said the message from her clients was "seen the animals and was really wild!"

Jody Henderson,
Marketing & Promotions Manager
Phone: 604.856.6825 x 33
jhenderson@gvzoo.com

To learn more about the good things we do at the Zoo visit us at: www.gvzoo.com or better yet come visit us in person!

Zoo Babies



Scimitar-Horned Oryx



Aoudad



Nene



Black Swan



Access Day on June 26th



Walk to Cure Diabetes on June 10th

Photo courtesy of Jeffrey Gin

The Greater Vancouver Zoo's Lemur Island

Voted off the island? Not this one. The Greater Vancouver Zoo is home to a family of Ring-tailed Lemurs who command their very own island paradise. Found only on the Island of Madagascar in the wild, lemurs are extremely social animals and love spending time with the other members of their "troop".



Lemurs (*Lemur catta*) are typically grey, with a white or light underbelly, white ear tufts and black patches at the eyes. Their signature – the long, bushy, black-ringed tail measures longer than their entire body length.

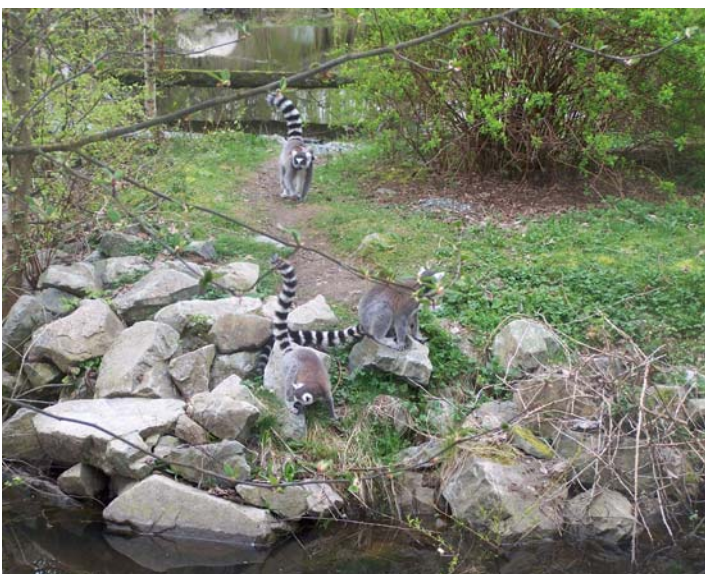
The lemurs' natural diet consists of mainly fruit, but can also be supplemented with everything from flowers, leaves and sap to succulent plants – from which they can glean water - and insects such as caterpillars and grasshoppers.

Almost equally at home on the ground as in the trees, these critters can often be seen sitting upright in the sun with arms outspread soaking up the warmth and basking in the morning rays. Lemurs enjoy a primary habitat

ranging from spiny deserts to forests and river-banks, and though versatile, these habitats are quickly disappearing, putting ring-tailed lemurs on the threatened species list.

A natural fear of water makes our Lemur Island a perfect paradise for the lemur family – safe and secure without need of fences or barriers. When not sunbathing, or exploring their arboreal challenges, the family troop is quite content to snuggle up with each other for warmth and companionship and can often be seen in close proximity. It doesn't appear anyone's getting voted off this island, any time soon.

Jill Coffey,
Volunteer



Upcoming Events



August 24th - Family Night in the Wild



August 15th and 29th - Junior Zoologist Summer Day Camps



Starting Aug 18th - Kool-Aid's Jungle House for three weekends in a row (the exact dates will be posted on the website)



August 20th - Greater Vancouver Zoo 37th Anniversary



September 15th - Community Appreciation Day



September 19th - Senior Safari Day



We also host a **Mother's Walking Club** every **Tuesday at 10:30**



Check our website, www.gvzoo.com, for more details!



ENRICHMENT WISH LIST

We are always looking for ways to enhance the lives of our animals here at the Greater Vancouver Zoo and by donating any of the following items, you will definitely help treat our treasured members of our family:

- blankets (good condition)
- large appliance boxes
- large cardboard tubes (i.e. carpet tubes)
- large cardboard boxes (i.e. appliance boxes)
- perfume
- parrot toys, including small mirrors
- sheets
- push brooms
- towels (hand & bath size)
- ice maker machine
- burlap material or bags
- spices & extracts for scent enrichment
- heavy chains
- wood blocks for making toys
- Bamboo, live or cut trees

Contact Jody Henderson, jhenderson@gvzoo.com, if you would like more information!


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familiar with each other or are food to one another, no bird comes out until the other is safely away.

Food is prepared, day old chicks, for all of the birds as they eat every day. That is a whole process that I won't go into details here but if you are interested, come with me to the barn some morning and you can help me detach the parts. Although the pens all have water, most birds of prey get the liquid they need from the food they eat and seldom use the water for anything but baths.

It's almost time for the presentation. The birds must be weighed, put in their boxes, and hooded if necessary. They are then outfitted with the telemetry so they don't get lost, food tied on lures (wouldn't want that piece of chicken to fly off and hit someone in the crowd!), brushed again and cleaned. Food is put in a pouch as a reward for the birds and just as one presentation finishes it leaves just enough time to check all the birds and prepare for the next – three times a day.

Owls, hawks, falcons and eagles belong to a category of birds known as "raptors" or "Birds of Prey". They all have a strong, hooked beak, long curved talons and three toes that point forward and one that points back. They kill their prey with either their talons or with their beak. I quickly learned that each of the birds has their own personalities and here is a description of just a few of them:


 The first bird in the Mews is **Duchess – a Ferruginous hawk**. Duchess is 3 years old and quite shy as she has just started flying free to the perches and the glove. Ferruginous hawks are native to Alberta and the prairies, and are on the endangered species

list. However, their numbers are increasing. In Alberta, it is illegal to kill ferruginous hawks or disturb their nests any time of the year. The Ferruginous hawk is the largest hawk in North America, and because of its size and the way that its feathers come down to its feet some scientists believe it was incorrectly identified and is really part of the eagle family. The name ferruginous comes from the Latin word "ferrugo" which means rust because




Angela with Guinevere the Lanner Falcon


their shoulders, back and legs have a rusty brown coloring. In the wild, their diet would normally consist of gophers and mice.


 Next is **Rodney the Red Tail Hawk**. Rodney is beautiful to watch. When he leaves his perch he flies slow and easy and glides to the fist almost putting his wings in reverse to float to the glove. Rodney's eyesight is at least 8 times as powerful as ours is and although he will seldom come to MY glove, he certainly can see the food. Red Tail Hawks are the most common bird we see around here usually soaring, circling high in the air, or perched in dead trees or on telephone poles along the road. This is because they wait for the heavy trucks to thunder by, shaking the ground and all the little


rodents run out – a perfect way to wait for dinner!

 The **Harris Hawks** are usually perched behind the hut at the back of the amphitheatre – that would be **Evelyn and Morgan**. These two girls were working girls, used at landfills and airports for bird control, so they tend to be a little grumpy because their catch was normally taken from them. They do a fantastic presentation together, the

planet! Peregrine falcons can reach speeds of up to 240 miles per hour – faster than a cheetah at a mere 75 miles an hour. Evey as she is known, is six years old and really does what she wants so one ever knows what may happen when she flies at noon each day. She is very vocal if someone she doesn't know picks her up, and she usually sits in her favorite tree for a few minutes...or five during each show, and enjoys the sun before dive-bombing from the top of the tree to the lure whistling past the heads in the crowd. She is thrilling to watch as she weaves, bobs, and tries to out-think the lure. She has a very streamlined body with long pointed wings and a long tail and flies with a series of rapid wing beats which enables her to overtake birds in the air.

One of my favorites is  **Guinevere - a Lanner Falcon** native to Africa and the Mediterranean she is one of the slowest of the falcons and still manages to go at least 100 miles an hour. Guinevere has an interesting story. She was confiscated at the Vancouver airport and given to the zoo but spent the last three years at the vet with foot problems. With a lot of work and persistence from her trainer, she is now healthy and flying each day in the 4:00 show. She has a wonderful disposition, is much smaller than the peregrine and definitely quieter!

The day would not be complete without a visit from  **Hagrid, the Great Horned Owl**. He was hand-raised by Gary and Joanne from eggs that were found, then incubated, and hatched. Because of this, Hagrid thinks he is a human and doesn't really know he is an owl. Hagrid will usually fly whenever the crowd hoots but at 14 months old he is like

 **Even Star is a Peregrine Falcon** and the fastest living thing on the

most children – he seldom listens! Hagrid's eyes are fixed in his head and because he can't move his eyes, he has extra bones in his neck that enable him to move his head almost 280 degrees. He has three eyelids – one on top, one on the bottom and one on the side to protect his eyes which, if ours were the same size as his, would be the size of oranges in our heads! The feathers on the top of his head are part of his threat display, when angry or upset he puffs himself up and puts up his "horns" to scare his enemy. Hagrid is made up of hollow bones and feathers and although he looks the size of a large housecat, he weighs only two pounds.

There are a few more birds in the Mews but really, to experience the birds you must watch the Radical Raptor Bird of Prey presentation or at the very least, have your picture taken with Hagrid or Guinevere. Better still, come out and volunteer! It's a great way to meet people and try new things! It cannot, however, be stressed enough that birds of prey do not make good pets. They need consistency, dedication and all of your time. If you are interested in volunteering to help with the birds, the one day falconing course is a must, as well as time, time and more time, and you must have watched the presentations enough that you know it by heart.

However, it is oh so satisfying, every day as I walk away I always hear "Thanks Ang" and I always think, "No, Thank YOU for letting me experience these wonderful creatures first hand!"

Angela Wonitowy,
Volunteer

**If you are interested in
Volunteering please contact
Gary, gworley@gvzoo.com**

The Radical Raptors demonstration will run daily 3 times a day* during our summer season and features Gary Worley, our Conservation (& Volunteer) Manager, who is one of the world's leading falconers/ raptor trainers.

*weather dependent



Gary also offers courses in Falconry under the guidance of the Western Canadian Academy of Falconry. During the course you can experience the thrill of handling and flying trained birds of prey, including Hagrid a gorgeous Great Horned Owl.

**August 20-24
2007 Falconry and
Bird of Prey
Management Summer
Camps**

Five full days of hands-on training for beginners.

For more information contact Gary, gworley@gvzoo.com.



Here's What's Happening in the Vivarium...

It's been a busy month in the Vivarium. We have welcomed a few new animals, have begun construction on a new exhibit, and have also said goodbye to some dear friends.

NEW! Poison Dart Frog enclosure is a visual delight! Situated across from the marmosets it is a tropical haven for two adult Green/Black Dart Frogs (*Dendrobates auratus*) soon to be joined by a pair of Blue/Black Dart Frogs.



COMING SOON! A new amphibian exhibit! Soon to be home to the "Amazing Amazonia" an adult female Smooth-sided Toad. You won't believe your eyes...a definite must see. Keep checking the Vivarium for progress as construction has just begun.



MOVED! The extremely talkative Amazon Parrots have moved to their new home in the Zebra striped barn near the front entrance. On sunny days you can see them cuddling across from the Big Horn sheep exhibit. Stop by and say *hello!*

EDUCATION! We are pleased to announce a new addition to our educational animal family, Bowser, an adult male Savannah Monitor! Join us daily at 11 am *sharp* as he is one of several reptiles you may get a chance to meet at *Meet a Reptile*.

NEW ON DISPLAY! Two female Red-footed Tortoises! Come find *Tork* and *Kuba* as they motor around their new home in the Sugar Glider exhibit.

And lastly it is with great sorrow that on Sunday July 22, 2007, we said goodbye to a very dear friend. **Bungee, the Green**

Iguana was laid to rest. Bungee has been a long time Vivarium resident here at the Greater Vancouver Zoo. She has delighted our hearts and memories with her beautiful smiling face and very calm and patient temperament. We will miss her dearly and will always hold a very special place in our hearts for this "smiling" beauty.

Menita Prasad,
Vivarium Keeper

The Greater Vancouver Zoo's 2007 Partners

SUPER 8 LANGLEY

Come have some super family-friendly fun while staying at the new **SUPER 8 LANGLEY** located in Langley, BC - just 5 minutes down the road from the Greater Vancouver Zoo! **Super 8 Langley** and the Greater Vancouver Zoo have partnered together to offer you and your family, a deeply discounted super package deal that you don't want to miss out on!

TOTAL "SUPER GREATER VANCOUVER" package includes:

- milk & cookies for the kids upon check-in
- family day pass for 4 people at the Greater Vancouver Zoo
- 1 nights accommodation in a family suite at the **Super 8 Langley** (includes 1 Queen bed along with a set of bunk beds or 2 queen beds in a standard room)
- **Super Start Plus Breakfast** in the morning
- Kids get to dip into the treasure chest for a surprise as well

Family Suite **\$149.00**

2 Queen (Smoking or non) **\$129.00**

To enquire about this special Zoo and Motel package rate go to: <http://www.super8langley.com>



ECO-CELL ENDANGERED ANIMALS

You would never assume that your cell phone could be connected to gorillas in the Congo, but a shocking new report says cell phones could be partly to blame for the deaths of hundreds of gorillas. If you love animals, and can't get enough of the animals at the zoo, this is information you need to know. Our cell phone boom is turning into a gorilla bust.

An ore called Coltan (columbite-tantalite) is a source of the element tantalum which is an essential coating for components of cell phones. This ore is often found in the Congo in the middle of endangered **gorilla** and **elephant** habitats. These animals are being killed by rebel bands of natives mining this ore. The U.N. has reported that in the past five years, the eastern lowland gorilla population in the Congo has declined 90%. **Reducing the demand for Coltan will help save these animals and their habitat.**

Bring in your old used cell phone and accessories, including batteries and you will receive a two for one admission to the Zoo.

RENEWED ZOO MEMBERSHIP PARTNERS

For 2007 we have **renewed the following membership partners** and you will receive the following benefits if you are a member of the Greater Vancouver Zoo from these great partners:

Seattle Woodland Park Zoo - free admission
www.zoo.org

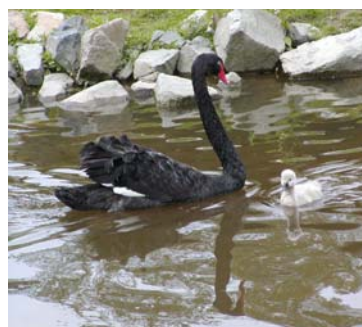
BC Wildlife Park in Kamloops - free admission*
(*must present proof of residency outside of the lower mainland)
www.bczoo.org

Edmonton Valley Zoo - free admission
www.buildingthevalley.com

Science World - 10% off daily admission
www.scienceworld.ca

In addition to the *above benefits for being a member* of the Zoo you also receive:

- free daily admission to the Zoo, 365 days a year (special events excluded)
- free parking passes
- free Safari Express Miniature Train Tours (special events excluded)
- 10% off of all Greater Vancouver Zoo Gift Shop regular priced merchandise



The **Wild Times** newsletter is a publication produced by the Greater Vancouver Zoo
Editor: Jennifer Skowronek

If you would like to place an ad in the **Wild Times** please contact Jody Henderson for rates: 604.856.6825 x 33 or jhenderson@gvzoo.com

Daily admission rates:

- \$18.00 per Adult (16—64 years old)
- \$14.00 per Child (4—15 years old)
- \$14.00 per Senior (65 + years old)
- \$60.00 per family (2 adults, 2 children)

Note: Free admission for Children 3 years old or younger.

Parking = \$3.00 per vehicle

Safari Express Miniature Train reservations = \$5.00 per person

A Zoo favourite! Take a 12-15 minute narrated train tour around the zoo.

Note: Children 3 years old or younger are free of charge, but must sit on an adult's lap for safety reasons.

The North American Wilds Bus Tour is FREE and runs throughout the summer season

Season Passes

- \$60.00 per adult (16 - 64 years old)
- \$40.00 per child (4 - 15 years old)
- \$40.00 per senior (65 + years old)
- \$150.00 per family (2 adults, and 2 children)
- \$8.00 per additional child
- Free Miniature Train rides

****Special group rates are available, check out our website for more details**