

Bergen County Zoological Park

Monthly Newsletter

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S N O W Y O W L S E X H I B I T

BY C I N D Y N O R T O N

James J. Tedesco, III
County Executive

**Board of Chosen
Freeholders**

James Koth,
Director of Parks

Marianne Vella
Zoo Director

Snowy Owls are one of the largest owls of North America, weighing about 4-6 lbs with a wingspan of 4.5 -5.5 feet. You can see how they got their name – females are white with dark brown or black bars, and males are almost completely white.

These owls live in the Arctic in open, treeless areas called tundra, but they will occasionally migrate further south during the winter months. They generally perch on the ground or on short stumps where they patiently watch for prey such as rabbits, mice or lemmings to pass by. They have a dense coat of feathers for insulation, and those feathers extend all the way down to their toes to protect their feet from the cold.

Unlike most other owls that hunt at night, snowy owls are active during the day. In addition to their keen eyesight, they have excellent hear-

ing which helps them locate prey under the snow. Like other owls, the snowy owl's flight feathers are serrated or fringed at the edges making them virtually silent when



Snowy Owls on Exhibit
Photos by Carmen Baca

they flap their wings. They also have strong talons and sharp beaks that help them catch and tear their prey.

The Bergen County Zoo is home to a pair of captive-hatched snowy owls. We received our female from the

Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, and our male came to us from the Toledo Zoo. These birds are part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Snowy Owl SSP, or Species Survival Plan. This SSP oversees the entire population of snowy owls currently held in AZA-accredited zoos throughout the country, and they recommended this pairing for us. The female is only a year old and isn't ready for breeding yet, so we'll have to wait and see what the future holds for this pair. In the meantime, our snowy owls will be on exhibit all year round so please stop by to see them on your next visit to the zoo!



F R I E N D S O F T H E B E R G E N C O U N T Y Z O O

The Friends of the Bergen County Zoo is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing financial support to the Bergen County Zoological Park for the welfare of its animals, educational programs and family-friendly facilities. It is the generous support of our sponsors, donors, members and zoo visitors that allow us to meet this mission. The Friends offer a variety of memberships for individuals and families. Please visit www.communitypass.net, choose "Friends of the Bergen County Zoo, NJ" (for Community or Organization) and continue through to either Create an Account or Existing Users can Log in. Visit us at www.friendsofbergencountyzoo.org or like us on Facebook! The Friends look forward to seeing you at the Zoo!

SPOTLIGHT ANIMAL: GREEN IGUANA

Green Iguanas are some of the largest lizards found in the America's with their whip-like tail making up about half of that length. Like other reptiles, iguana's are cold blooded, egg laying animals. They vary in color and have black lines on their tail which is covered with rows of fleshy gray spines.

Iguana's live high in the trees of the tropical rain forest and their natural range includes

northern Mexico and runs through Central and South America.

During cold seasons, the iguana will come down from the trees and hide under logs or in holes to stay warm. They often take refuge in water and swim by propelling themselves with their tails.

It is difficult to tell the difference between male and females. In general the

males are larger than the females: their crests are longer, heads are bigger and their bodies are more orange or yellow compared to the female's light green.

Green iguanas are considered herbivores with their diet consisting of plants foods and leaves; in the zoo they eat a combination of fruits, vegetables, grains and a commercial lizard diet.



**Iguana on exhibit
Photo by Carmen Baca**

KEEPING OUR ANIMALS COOL

The hot summer months can be a long season, especially when the sun is burning brightly and the temperatures reach 100 degrees plus. We are always told to stay hydrated and try to find shade so that we do not over heat.

Animals need the same attention during these heat waves. Ever wonder how the Bergen County Zoo keeps their animals cool during the summer months?

The zoo keepers will set up sprinklers and misters; they hose down and bathe an animal. They will also give the animals fruits and ice treats, mouseicicles and even ice blocks and mud piles that the animals can lay in to keep them cool and refreshed.



Photos by Carmen Baca, Sarah Nelson and Lindsay Rasmovich

ANIMAL ART PROGRAM

The Bergen County Zoo has developed an Enrichment Committee which began their obligations at the beginning of 2018. Their goal is to promote and enhance the physical and psychological well being of all the Animal species at the Zoo. Enrichment is necessary for the proper captive management and is integrated into the daily husbandry routine.

Several items are used to meet the enrichment requirements and they are used in countless ways. In that regard, the keepers try to fund raise so that they can continue to order these enrichment items. One of the ways that they fund raise is by selling animal art.

Animal art is created by our animals utilizing non-toxic paints which are then displayed in various different forms such as: frames, tiles, mugs, wine glasses and tote bags. The created arts are then sold at special

events such as, egg hunt, member's night, holiday with the animals.

Additionally, the making of the animal art can also serve as enrichment itself for the animals. They have an day where they assist with their own decorations providing mental stimulation and reducing stress.

If you are interested in animal art it, you do not necessarily have to wait for one of our special events to purchase it; it can be requested in advance by contacting the our supervising animal keeper at mtedeschi@co.bergen.nj.us



ANNUAL MEMBER'S NIGHT

Every year the Bergen County Zoo in participation with its non-profit group (Friends of the Bergen County Zoo) organizes a night for members where they receive special access to the zoo after hours. During this event, members are able to get behind-the-scenes tours of the animal care center as well as the animal holding complex; complimentary train rides; special amphitheater shows and animal demonstrations; and refreshments. It's a night that we give back to our members and thank them for their support of the zoo. **(Missed out on the event—consider becoming a member for future events like this one)**



Photos by Carmen Baca

WAYS TO SUPPORT THE ZOO

There are numerous ways to support the Bergen County Zoo:

- Consider becoming a zoo member
- Sponsor an Animal
- Enroll in our docent/volunteer program
- Purchase Animal Art

Information on all of these programs is available at the Zoo, our website or by calling 201-634-3100 ext. 3110



Bergen County Zoological Park
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Bergen County Zoological Park



www.co.bergen.nj.us/bcparks

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ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

The Bergen County Zoo is proud to be an AZA Accredited Zoo.

The Association of Zoos & Aquariums provides its members with the services, high standards, best practices, and program coordination to be leaders in animal welfare, public engagement, and the conservation of species.

Reminders:

Bergen County Residents must provide proof of residency to receive the discounted rate. Forms of proof are: Driver's License, Utility bill to the residence, Bergen County issued ID Card.

Zoo Members must show their membership card to enter the zoo for free.

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