



Red panda Moshu

In this issue

- 1 AGING GRACEFULLY**  
*Cold laser therapy helps older animals stay limber*
- 3 A LEGACY FOR WILDLIFE**  
*Former Oregon Zoo director and spouse's planned gift helps Asian elephants thrive*
- 4 NEW AT THE ZOO**  
*Spring arrivals and conservation successes*
- 6 THE UNDERSTORY**  
*Tiny violets fuel caterpillars' transformation*
- TOGETHER FOR WILDLIFE**  
*A note from our executive director and board chair*



## Aging gracefully.

### Cold laser therapy helps older animals stay limber.

Moshu isn't like other red pandas. He likes his apples. He naps. He's a laid-back fellow.

Typically, his species behaves a bit like squirrels, moving with agility and speed. "But Moshu's never been that guy," zookeeper Megan Hagedorn explains. "He just tends to not take anything too seriously."

Moshu likes what he likes, Hagedorn says, and he tends to ignore everything else — an attitude that befits his age.

The median life expectancy for red pandas is around 10 years — and Moshu, who turns 12 this month, is noticeably slowing down.

His care team has adjusted his habitat and routine to help him thrive in his golden years. They soften his biscuits to make snack time easier, and brush his tail to help him with grooming. Ramps throughout his habitat make climbing a breeze.

And a new tool at the zoo's Veterinary Medical Center is helping him stay limber and active: a SpectraVET therapeutic laser.

Veterinary technicians Heather Brittingham, Shara Seals, Rachel Wells and Margot Monti throw this nifty little gadget, not much bigger than your average purse, over their shoulders and head into the zoo to visit their patients.

Cold laser therapy can decrease inflammation and can speed up the healing process, Monti explains. As part of a holistic approach that encompasses diet, medication and habitat updates like ramps, the treatments have produced wonderful results for the zoo's geriatric residents, she says.

(Continued on page 2)





“We are seeing a lot of things happening all at once... His mobility is just through the roof. His appetite’s the best it’s ever been, and we know he is comfy. He really is living the life right now.”

MEGAN HAGEDORN, ZOOKEEPER

*Cold laser... (Continued from page 1)*

The laser’s light is absorbed by tissues, creating photothermal and photochemical reactions that promote cell breakdown and growth. This has been shown to stimulate muscle regeneration and joint healing — and it helps manage pain for chronic conditions like arthritis.

“In essence, it’s increasing the cellular metabolism,” Monti explains. “It’s allowing things to flow through and to process more quickly.”

Vet techs regularly join zoo care staff during daily training sessions to make sure their patients feel comfortable around them. Training builds trust between the care staff and animals. It’s enriching and stimulating, and it allows animals to participate in their own health care, which greatly reduces stress.

Moshu’s care team constructed a simple PVC frame for him to put his front paws on during treatment, and he stands still for a few minutes while receiving his therapy.

Monti has never seen any sign that her patients feel anything during treatment, though human patients have described a mild, vaguely warm sensation.

The addition of the laser to the veterinary team’s toolkit was made possible by a gift from the Douglas and Gloria Rumberger Foundation. Kiersten Shaw represents the foundation, established by her parents, and was inspired after listening to the zoo’s head veterinarian, Dr. Carlos Sanchez, speak about the ways human and animal medicine intersect. She realized how easy it is to take for granted all the behind-the-scenes work that helps animals thrive.

In the past, her family foundation has made gifts to support new habitats such as Elephant Lands, and a plaque hangs at the Veterinary Medical Center in memory of her father, a medical professional for many years. To Shaw and her family, the zoo’s commitment to wildlife inspires their connection. “It’s not just a job for Dr. Carlos and his team,” she said. “It’s a passion.”

And Shaw’s gift is making a real difference for Moshu.

“We are seeing a lot of things happening all at once,” Hagedorn said. “His mobility is just through the roof. His appetite’s the best it’s ever been, and we know he is comfy. He really is living the life right now.”

*Gifts to the Oregon Zoo Foundation provide resources where the zoo needs them most, and they help advance understanding of animal health and well-being. To learn more, email [foundation@oregonzoo.org](mailto:foundation@oregonzoo.org) or call 503-220-2493.*

*This Paws & Tales story presented by*







# A legacy for wildlife.

**Former Oregon Zoo director and spouse's planned gift helps Asian elephants thrive.**

Warren and Ghislaine Iliff loved the zoo and generously included the Oregon Zoo Foundation as a beneficiary in their estate plans. Warren served as zoo director from 1975 to 1985 and cared deeply for the animals and staff.

“We were so fortunate to have him when we did,” said Dave Thomas, a former keeper and education specialist who worked under eight zoo directors during his long career. “What a legacy!”

Thomas says Iliff shepherded the zoo through a time of great growth and change, and he was instrumental in building a lasting relationship with Jane Goodall that helped advance the zoo’s highly regarded work for chimpanzees.

Gifts from the Iliff family’s estate support daily care for the zoo’s much-loved family of Asian elephants and help advance community-based elephant conservation in Borneo.

*Caring for wildlife requires consistent, long-term support. We are grateful to our Wildlife Legacy Society members and endowment fund donors, whose gifts will sustain the zoo’s vital work for years to come. Email [plannedgiving@oregonzoo.org](mailto:plannedgiving@oregonzoo.org) or call 503-220-2493 to learn more.*



Asian elephant Sung-Surin, or Shine, at Elephant Lands



# New at the zoo.

Spring arrivals and conservation successes!



There's an easy way to tell Harper and Duffy apart: male white-cheeked gibbons have black fur, but females like Harper turn white or tan in adulthood.

**White-cheeked gibbon.**

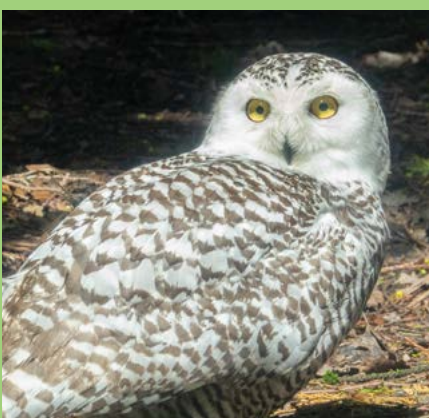
Harper joined fellow white-cheeked gibbon Duffy in Primate Forest. Their habitat is home to both white-cheeked gibbons and Bornean orangutans. Duffy is known for his playful antics around 1-year-old orangutan Jolene, and care staff predict Harper will be part of the fun as well. “At 7 years old, Harper is young and full of energy, just like Jolene,” said Kate Gilmore, who oversees the zoo’s primate area. “We call Duffy ‘Uncle Duffy’ because of how interested he is in Jolene, and I think Harper will make a very fun aunt.”



Rodrigues flying foxes.

**Rodrigues flying foxes.** Three Rodrigues flying fox pups are being raised at the zoo, adding to the growing population of a bat species that was once nearly extinct. Called the “flying fox” thanks to an

expressive furry face and pointy ears, this endangered species is native only to Rodrigues, a tiny island in the Indian Ocean about 900 miles east of Madagascar. The bat plays an important ecological role on the island, where few other pollinators or seed dispersers exist. “Every bat pup is important, especially for an endangered species like this one,” said Kelly Gomez, who oversees the zoo’s Africa section.



Rocky (top) and Banff.

**Snowy owls.**

Two snowy owls made themselves at home in the zoo’s North America area this spring. Visitors can find the fluffy white pair — named Rocky and Banff — near mountain goats and black bears. “Snowy owls are known for their striking appearance, and Rocky and Banff are no exception,” said Jennifer Osburn Eliot, who oversees the zoo’s North America area. “As a male, Banff’s feathers are bright white, while female Rocky’s feathers are white with a dark bar pattern.” Unlike many of their owl cousins, snowy owls spend a lot of their time on the ground, perching on rocks or logs. Also, unlike most owls, snowy owls are active during the day. Eliot reports that Banff and Rocky are especially lively at dawn and dusk.



A 2-week-old Humboldt penguin chick gets a quick exam.

**Humboldt penguin.**

After a couple of peep-filled days spent emerging from its shell, a female chick joined the zoo’s Humboldt penguin colony this spring. The fluffy, pint-sized new arrival was the first Humboldt chick to hatch at the zoo since 2020 — and the 192nd since the zoo began breeding this threatened species in the 1980s. The zoo participates in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Plan for Humboldt penguins, a cooperative program to help create a genetically diverse, self-sustaining population and guarantee the long-term future of these birds.

Oregon Zoo Foundation Board of Trustees

Kim Overhage, Chair	Melissa Bobadilla	Allen Kim	Rob Erickson Trustee Emeritus	Councilor Christine Lewis, Metro Council District 2
Sharla Settlemier, Immediate Past Chair	Laurie Christensen	Niels Marquardt	C. Gregg Hanson Trustee Emeritus	Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Metro Council District 3
Melanie Billings-Yun, Vice Chair	Kevin Hanna	Bandana Shrestha	Nancy Hinnen Trustee Emeritus	Councilor Ashton Simpson, Metro Council District 1
Charissa Anderson, Treasurer	Susan Hartnett	Hannah Smith	Dan Jarman Trustee Emeritus	Julie Fitzgerald, Oregon Zoo Foundation Executive Director
Barbara Wegner, Secretary	Allegra Hodges	Kim Van Syoc	Mark Loomis Trustee Emeritus	Heidi Rahn, Oregon Zoo Director
	Jeremy Horner	Nancy Jo Visenberg		
	Tom Hughes	Sigrid Button (in memoriam) Trustee Emeritus		
	Lance Inouye	Tracey Clark Trustee Emeritus		
	Josef Kiesenhofer			





Let's hear it for the bee!

In celebration of pollinators, we've put together a few resources so you can add a bee house to your landscape. Visit [oregonzoo.org/buzz](http://oregonzoo.org/buzz) and create a space for pollinators — and be sure to visit the zoo's pollinator garden for inspiration!

You make us buzz with joy — thank you for coming together for wildlife!

Bontebok

A rare bontebok calf is the latest chapter in what's considered one of history's most inspiring conservation success stories. Monte, as keepers have named the new arrival, was born April 1 to Winter, an 8-year-old bontebok in the zoo's Africa savanna area.

"This cute little guy is living proof of the impact people can have if we work together for wildlife," said Gomez. "A couple hundred years ago, there were only 17 bontebok left on the planet, and the species was headed for almost certain extinction."

Though unfamiliar to most Americans today, the bontebok "deserves a place in the annals of conservation history," according to The Nature Conservancy. "It is arguably the first African animal saved from human-caused extinction," said Matthew L. Miller, writing in the conservancy's science blog. "Its rescue is flat-out one of the most dramatic conservation success stories anywhere."

In a story that roughly parallels that of the American bison, the bontebok was hunted to the brink of extinction in the 18th and 19th centuries by Dutch settlers to southern Africa, many of whom viewed the native antelope there as pests competing for farmland.

Another antelope species, the bluebuck, was declared extinct in 1799, and it seemed inevitable the bontebok would not be far behind.

By 1837, all that stood between the last 17 bontebok on the planet and certain annihilation was a fence. That year, some sympathetic farmers enclosed the herd safely inside their own property, effectively creating the first African antelope preserve.

The measure wouldn't have worked except for one evolutionary quirk: While other antelope species like the impala, eland and kudu practically fly — soaring 10 feet into the air or higher — bontebok can only manage small leaps and could thus be contained by ordinary livestock fencing.

"The ability to jump," Miller said, "would have been a leap into extinction."

In 1931, Bontebok National Park was established, and the species gradually started to rebound. Today the bontebok population is estimated to be around 2,500 to 3,000.

"It's an incredible conservation story," Gomez said. "And hopefully, we can inspire more successes like this for the future."

Join our Giving Circle and do more.

Giving Circle members share a passion for the natural world, and are committed to supporting exceptional care for all the animals at the zoo.

Through Giving Circle, hundreds of families and individuals across the region are coming together for wildlife!

To learn how you can join this dynamic pack in creating a better future for wildlife, visit [oregonzoo.org/giving-circle](http://oregonzoo.org/giving-circle) or call 503-220-2493.



"This cute little guy is living proof of the impact people can have if we work together for wildlife. A couple hundred years ago, there were only 17 bontebok left on the planet, and the species was headed for almost certain extinction."

KELLY GOMEZ, ANIMAL CURATOR



Bontebok Monte





Jolene learning to climb.



Oregon Zoo  
Foundation

4001 SW Canyon Road  
Portland, OR 97221

# Together for wildlife.

Dear friend,

Your generous support as donors and members makes incredible things possible every day!

When tools are needed to keep our habitats engaging and enriching, we know the funding will be there, thanks to you. From tantalizing lion-size “cat toys” to giant, durable tetherballs for the rhinos, you make a difference for all the animals at the zoo.

When baby orangutan Jolene started learning to climb, her team had the resources to create a safe habitat for exploring because of you.

And you sustain crucial species-saving recovery work — from bringing California condors back in the Pacific Northwest to protecting elephants in Borneo.

Creating a better future for wildlife — and all life on earth — depends on us, and your impact is undeniable. We’re incredibly fortunate to have you in our herd!

With gratitude,

Julie Fitzgerald,  
Executive Director  
Oregon Zoo Foundation

Kim Overhage  
Board of Trustees, chair  
Oregon Zoo Foundation

# The understory.

## Tiny violets fuel caterpillars’ transformation.

Every plant has an animal story, as zoo horticulture manager Seth Menser likes to tell people.

What does it mean for an animal to be connected to a specific plant? For answers, we can look to the delicate heart-shaped leaves of the early blue violet, *Viola adunca*.

An herbaceous member of the violet family, this little flowering plant is the primary food source for Oregon silverspot caterpillars as they complete their life cycles and become butterflies.

It turns out that many pollinators and animals are dependent on specific plants. “Variation is everywhere and critical to life itself,” Menser says. “Over time, plants and animals have passively worked together to create the perfect symbiotic marriage, ultimately becoming somewhat of a reflection of each other’s needs.”



Oregon silverspot butterfly

Oregon silverspot butterflies have been federally listed as threatened since the 1980s, and the zoo works with organizations like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to save these beautiful pollinators from extinction.

Each summer, conservation biologists bring wild female butterflies to the zoo to lay their eggs. The eggs hatch and are carefully tended over the winter.

In spring, the caterpillars are taken to restored meadowland at the Oregon Coast, and placed on violets so they can eat enough to fuel up for their transformation into butterflies.

*Viola adunca* has become increasingly rare in the wild because of habitat degradation. The zoo and partners are working to restore habitats, and encouraging coastal communities to plant violets so native butterflies will be here for future generations. In 2022, we returned 2,153 silverspots to the wild — the largest release in a decade!

Planting violets isn’t the only way to act for wildlife in your garden. Eliminating invasive



*Viola adunca*

weeds and including wildlife-friendly plants in your backyard or landscaping provides excellent food and shelter for birds, amphibians, pollinators and other species. Many native plants thrive without the need for much care, saving water, energy, time and money — all while showcasing the natural beauty in your region!

Do you have a small action you’d like to share? Email [jenny.woodman@oregonzoo.org](mailto:jenny.woodman@oregonzoo.org) and share your wildlife-friendly ideas.

Thanks to our signature partners:

