All she could manage to say was, “Dog! Dog! Dog!” The driver slammed on the brakes to avoid spooking the pack of African painted dogs lounging near the road in the early morning.

The truck was packed with people and gear — solar panels, batteries and supplies for living on the savanna. For days, they had scanned the roadside for tracks, and Beth Foster worried she might return to Oregon without ever seeing the animal that brought her here.

After almost 20 years as a keeper, caring primarily for lions and painted dogs, this was the first time she had seen dogs in the wild. Thanks to a grant, generously funded by donors to the Oregon Zoo Foundation, Foster spent two weeks working with Greg Rasmussen at the Painted Dog Research Trust in Zimbabwe, an organization she and the Oregon Zoo have collaborated with for years. The trust’s mission is to save this highly endangered species while training local graduate students in the rigors of conservation and scientific field research.

“I’m almost 50,” Foster said. “I’ve worked with African animals for my whole career, and I hadn’t gone to Africa — to finally have that opportunity was amazing!”

Foster traveled to the trust’s headquarters near Victoria Falls with longtime ZooGuide volunteer Roger Williams. As soon as they arrived, they were put to work. The two spent their days building a much-needed storage shed, collecting water and doing anything they could to help.

“They live so minimally,” Foster said. “They put every dollar toward having a facility that can accommodate research, education and tracking the dogs.”

Immersive fieldwork gave Foster another new experience. “You just throw a sleeping bag down on the ground and — goodnight! See you in the morning,” she laughed. “Being out in the field and learning how to not be scared of just sleeping in the middle of Africa was something else.”

When asked if she would like to return to Zimbabwe someday, she didn’t hesitate: “In a heartbeat.”

(Continued on page 2)
Threatened by poaching and habitat loss, African painted dogs are one of the most endangered species in Africa, with fewer than 5,000 left in the wild. Besides contributing to the conservation of them in the wild, Foster’s ongoing collaboration with Rasmussen is helping her care for the painted dog pack here at the zoo.

In November 2018, our painted dog Ella gave birth to 12 pups. When Rasmussen told Foster there was no existing nutritional breakdown for milk to raise healthy puppies, she trained Ella to allow her to take milk samples. Now, zoos and field biologists all over the world have a better understanding of the nutritional needs of painted dogs.

Foster spends around three hours a day observing the zoo’s dogs, watching as the pups grow and develop into different roles within the pack.

“They’re born with their roles,” Foster said. “If you don’t pay attention to that, you are setting them up for failure.”

For Foster, this donor-funded trip was an opportunity that will fuel her work in many ways.

“It’s so important for my job, for my inspiration,” she said. “We are a really big force out there for painted dogs because of how much collaboration and information we’ve been able to put out into the community.”

The foundation’s Heart of the Oregon Zoo campaign has committed $1 million to support strategic investments in animal welfare, ensuring African painted dogs and all the animals in our care receive the very best.

To learn more, email do-more@oregonzoo.org or call 503-505-5494.
It’s an exciting time of year at the zoo’s Jonsson Center for Wildlife Conservation, where each new California condor chick represents a step toward saving an endangered species.

"With only about 500 of these endangered birds in the world, every egg counts," said Kelli Walker, the zoo’s lead condor keeper.

In 1982, only 22 condors remained in the wild and by 1987, the last condors were brought into human care in an attempt to save the species from extinction. Thanks to the commitment of the Oregon Zoo and its partners, the condor population now totals more than 500 birds, with most of those flying free.

Oregon Zoo Foundation donors have played a critical role in this work since the zoo joined the Condor Recovery Program in 2001. Thanks to their generous support, the foundation raised more than $2 million for the Jonsson Center, a remote 52-acre facility designed to limit human contact and maximize the young birds’ ability to thrive in the wild once they are released. The foundation’s current Heart of the Oregon Zoo campaign is raising an additional $2 million for wildlife conservation, with a focus on the California condor and other endangered Northwest species.

“Zoo supporters and conservationists are the key to success as we work to fund all that goes into raising healthy chicks,” said Julie Fitzgerald, the foundation’s executive director. "We’re working with the zoo to raise the funds — when we succeed, we’ll see condors in the skies of Oregon.”

A return to Oregon skies will not come without obstacles. Lead poisoning and “microtrash” pollution are among the greatest threats to condors. In 2015, the foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made it possible for the zoo to hire Leland Brown, an educator and outdoor enthusiast who works with hunters in the Pacific Northwest to reduce the unintended impacts of lead ammunition on wildlife.

Although there have been no documented condor fatalities at operating wind plants, several wind industry companies have taken proactive measures to minimize risk to condors. One such measure is a geofence – a virtual perimeter that can be created around any geographic area, like a wind farm. Some condors are outfitted with GPS transmitters. If a bird with a GPS transmitter crosses a geofence surrounding an operating wind plant, the company can implement measures such as curtailing, or temporarily powering down, turbines to minimize potential risk to that bird.

As the condor recovery program prepares to establish a new release site in Northern California, emerging technology like these geofences may reduce risks to condors. Historically, condors lived throughout the Columbia River Gorge, into Idaho and all the way up into British Columbia.

Travis Koons, who oversees the zoo’s bird population, considers the prospect of condors returning to Oregon as a career goal.

“I’m 37 now,” he said. “By the time I retire, I want to see a condor in Astoria with my grandkids.”

Soaring California Condor
Bringing an endangered species back to Oregon

Wind farms, like Avangrid Renewables’ Leaning Juniper facility near Arlington, produce 11% of electricity in Oregon. The Avangrid Foundation is a supporter of condor recovery at the Oregon Zoo.
Veterinary Spotlight
Dr. Kelly Flaminio cares for more than 200 different species

From a hornbill hatchling exam to a sea otter weigh-in, Dr. Kelly Flaminio has seen it all in her nine years as a veterinarian at the Oregon Zoo.

Describe a typical day at work.
Every day is different, which is one of my favorite parts of my job. I could be doing any number of things — from radiographing a fish, to examining Hottentot teals (small ducks), to helping keepers determine the correct amount of meat for our growing painted dog pups.

What is the biggest misconception about your work?
The most common question I get asked is, “What animals do you specialize in?” The answer is: All of them! From insects to elephants, I take care of all the animals that call the Oregon Zoo home.

“I wanted to commit my work to ensuring the animals had the best life possible so they could inspire other people in my community like they had always inspired me.”

What inspired you to choose zoo veterinary medicine?
I have always been fascinated by the natural world and passionate about conserving it. When I was young, I dreamed of going on safari or trudging through the rainforest. My favorite subjects in school were always biology and physiology. Throughout my life, zoos had a strong impact on me, helping to educate me about animals I dreamed of seeing in the wild. Later in my education, I still felt passionate about zoos. I wanted to commit my work to ensuring the animals had the best life possible so they could inspire other people in my community like they had always inspired me.

What has been your most exciting moment on the job?
Sometimes animals have a rough start to life and need intervention from very early on. This can happen for a variety of reasons, but it tends to be very intensive because baby animals are so delicate and require specialized care. I have worked with multiple young animals that needed extra help in their start to life. Nothing is more rewarding than seeing animals that you nursed back to health as neonates take their first romp around their new habitat, fly using their wings for the first time, or take their first swim. Zuberi, a southern ground hornbill, now flies in the Wildlife Live show; Kali, a Rodrigues flying fox, lives in the African Rainforest area; Bashi, a Speke’s gazelle, romps around with his giraffe friends; and, Flora and Hobson, the river otters — it was thrilling when they took their first swim with Tilly.

Recently, foundation donors helped purchase equipment for the Veterinary Medical Center, including a CT scanner. What effect has this had on your work?
The CT scanner is a great new addition to our diagnostic abilities at the zoo. It allows us to do advanced imaging on site, rather than traveling with animals to other hospitals (increasing anesthesia time and potential stress). The CT scanner is yet another tool to keep our animals healthy, and it has provided invaluable information, especially in treating western pond turtles with shell disease. I feel very lucky to work at one of the few zoo hospitals where this technology is available.

What do you do for fun when you’re not tending to the needs of animals at the zoo?
I have always loved sports and being active. On weekends, you can usually find me playing volleyball, football or basketball. In the summer, I’m usually on my bike or swimming in the river, getting ready for my next triathlon race!

How can you help your zoo?
As a nonprofit organization, the zoo relies on ticket sales, memberships and donations to operate — even when we’re temporarily closed to visitors. Make a difference right now and become a member, renew your membership, adopt an animal or make a donation. Your support can help sustain the Oregon Zoo during this uniquely challenging time.
One of the most common health problems in dogs and cats is dental disease. It affects 68% of cats and 76% of dogs. Here at the zoo, regular dental checkups are part of a preventive care program that helps all our animals stay healthy — from orange tabbies like Buddy to African lion Zawadi and everyone in between.

Buddy, a resident of the zoo’s Family Farm Catio, gets regular dental exams, including cleanings to promote healthy teeth and gums.

In addition to preventive care, Zawadi and all the big cats at the zoo get bones each week to keep their teeth healthy and strong.

We thought Buddy would want you to know your pets should have their teeth cleaned once each year and receive dental checkups twice a year.
Welcome, Moshu!

Furry, adorable tree-dweller is settling into his new home with Mei Mei

What could be cuter than a red panda? Two red pandas! Moshu, a fluffy 8-year-old, was reunited with his longtime companion Mei Mei at the Oregon Zoo in early winter, and has settled right in.

"Moshu and Mei Mei know each other well, and it’s been wonderful to see them pick up where they left off," said keeper Sara Morgan.

These highly skilled climbers are not related to giant pandas, in spite of their name. Over the years, genetic research has proven these endangered animals are probably related to weasels, raccoons and skunks, but they are in their own, independent family, Ailuridae. They do share a giant panda’s pseudo-thumb, a modified wrist bone used to grasp bamboo.

When active, Moshu is a voracious snacker who loves noshing on bamboo. Since bamboo makes up about 98% of a red panda’s diet in the wild, the zoo’s horticulture team makes sure we have lots on hand. Red pandas also enjoy leaf-eater biscuits and fruits, such as grapes. When not snacking, naps appear to be their favorite pastime.

While exact numbers are uncertain, there could be as few as 2,500 red pandas left in the wild. They’re threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, with human growth and development, timber harvest and livestock grazing all major contributors. Poaching and wildlife trade are also a concern. You can help red pandas by purchasing paper and wood products certified by the Forest Stewardship Council to ensure they are sustainably harvested in ways that benefit both forests and people.