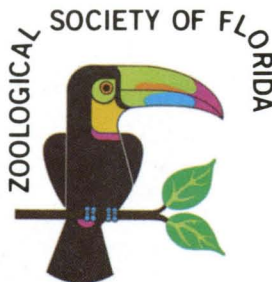


TOUCAN

The Newsletter of the Zoological Society of Florida,
a non-profit organization supporting Metrozoo



TALK

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Dog Days of Summer

by K.T. Taylor, Docent/Volunteer



Those of us who live in South Florida are among the luckiest people in the world. The beautiful scenery and year 'round tropical climate are the envy of most of our northern neighbors. Our megalopolis is exciting, with a delightful international flavor and yet, we still have some old time "Florida Cracker" traditions. Some of us leave all this at the end of "THE SEASON," retreat to mountain cabins for the summer and reappear along with the snowbirds in the fall. Others stay to enjoy the relative peace and quiet of the summer months.

Those of us who stay here year 'round know that in these summer months we can really have our own world and relish

the many blessings we often take for granted. We can enjoy at a leisurely pace the many attractions in this area which our visitors often have to see at a frantic pace. Nowhere is this more easily and comfortably done than at Metrozoo - enjoying nature's wonders with the knowledge and pride that we citizens of South Florida have helped make all this possible.

Wait - don't stop reading - do you "moan and groan" at the thought of a zoo in the summer? If you have avoided your zoo in summers past, you have a treat in store for you now. The pathways, once lined with young saplings, now are bordered with shade trees. Miccosoukee chickees are placed strategically along the

paths. It hardly seems possible that only a few years ago this beautiful park was established on 740 acres out in the "boonies," where there were few ways to escape the summer heat. Metrozoo is now six years old - young in the zoo world. After this short time, we can boast of a well established zoological park. We are no longer in the "boonies"; the area has grown up around us. We now have a shopping center and lovely homes right across the street, with farms and ranches still nearby.

We are fortunate that most of Metrozoo's animals are from tropical climates such as ours. However, even those from cooler climates, such as the European

Director's Message ...

The Society has its construction "hard hats" on again! Some of you may have noticed that the area east of the Galapagos Tortoise is being cleared for the erection of the koala exhibit, made possible through a major gift from the Dr. Herbert and Nicole Wertheim Foundation. Hopefully, koalas will be at home in this beautiful new facility by late 1987, early 1988.

The area north of the present Metrozoo Administration Building has been designated as the site of the new Society Membership/Administration Building. Some of you may not be aware that for the past six years, the Society staff has been working out of three trailers located at the rear of the zoo's administration building. The new building is being underwritten by donations from private individuals who specifically want the Zoological Society and its staff to have a permanent home on zoo grounds.

Both facilities are being constructed through the support of the Capital Projects Committee, led by Chairman John Little, President of Matrix Construction Corporation, DeWayne Little, Vice President of Babcock Company, and Sanford Miot, President of Arvida Southern.

At this time, I would like to take a moment to thank all of the individuals who supported our recent Adopt-an-Animal campaign. This is an important part of our development effort and the funds are used to help defray the monumental cost of feeding and caring for the more than 1,200 animals at Metrozoo. Some of the money is used to purchase special equipment, for example, a scale to weigh birds at the Brooder/Hatchery building or heat strips to keep our reptile collection warm. Occasionally, the money is used for the funding of special holding facilities for breeding rare and endangered species. The Society's very first contribution out of Adopt-an-Animal funds was the purchase of cages for the Bald Eagle Project, with which we are still involved.

In closing, we want to remind you that the Society has taken over the operation of the gift shops at the zoo. As a member, you are entitled to a 10% discount on all purchases over \$10, whenever you show your membership card. Most importantly, every time you make a purchase, you further support Metrozoo.



The Endangered Sumatran Rhino

Metrozoo's involvement in animal conservation projects does not stop here or even in the United States. Although Metrozoo is constantly working in cooperation with the many zoos located in this country, it is often necessary to closely examine what is taking place on the international level concerning the conservation of a particular species.

Metrozoo is currently involved in an important conservation program involving the Sumatran rhino, an endangered species closely bordering on extinction. Bill Zeigler, general curator of Metrozoo, will be taking a two week trip to Indonesia along with several representatives of other major U.S. zoos in order to examine the possibilities of acquiring the Sumatran rhinos. This is not Zeigler's first trip to Indonesia. He previously traveled there to start the process of Sumatran rhino preservation. Zeigler also helped implement an educational program which instructs native breeders on the handling of the rhinos.

Man is by far the largest culprit in the endangerment of the Sumatran rhino. They are hunted mainly for the medicinal qualities consumers in Japan, China and

Thailand mistakenly believe the animals to possess. It is their belief that rhino urine can cure high fevers and mental illness.

Being hunted is not the only problem endured by the rhino; they also face habitat destruction. Malaysia and Sumatra are presently being cleared and cultivated for cocoa and oil palm plantations, leaving the rhinos homeless and accessible to the hunters. The development of this land often leaves a few rhinos stranded in small areas which encourages inbreeding. This inbreeding starts to weaken the genetic pool of the animal which poses even further problems to the rhinos. While there may be a number of rhinos left in Indonesia, few viable populations remain. Zeigler has concluded that if the preservation program is not successful the species will become extinct within the next 60 to 70 years.

Zeigler's trip will largely be a political one involving the acquisition of the proper signatures needed to set the proposed program into motion. If the trip goes according to plan, Metrozoo could be one of the first American homes of the Sumatran rhinos.

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