



**SCOVILL
ZOO**
DECATUR, ILLINOIS

critter CHATTER


Decatur
PARK DISTRICT
SPRING 2018

Zoo Calendar

Spring Hours

April 7 - May 25

9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Weekdays

9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Weekends

Summer Hours

May 26 - August 12

9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Daily

Last admission is one hour
before closing

Zoo Admission

Children (under 2) - FREE

Children (2-12) - \$4.25

Adults - \$6.75

Seniors (65+) - \$5.75

Free Admission Days are
Thursdays beginning June 7

Special Events

Critter Egg Hunt

March 31 at 1:30 p.m.

Zippy Zoo Day with Mom

May 12 & 13

Memorial Day Celebration

May 28 (Veterans Enter Free)

Dads' Day Dollar Deal

June 17

Ice Cream Safari presented by

Prairie Farms Dairy

1 - 4 p.m. on July 15

Twilight Tuesdays

June 26 & July 31

Complete 2018 Zoo Calendar
at Scovillzoo.com

Growing and Giving

by Ken Frye, Zoo Director

Last summer, the zoo was bustling with construction crews, volunteers, and staff who worked to complete several important building projects. A new train shed and maintenance building were constructed. A new roof and skylights were added to the cheetah building. Winter housing was built for the howler and spider monkeys, and new fencing was erected around the petting zoo and walking paths. It has been a challenge to respond to AZA requirements, provide new exhibits, and add guest amenities. Much of the zoo's revenue comes from admission fees, train and carousel rides, gift shop sales, and concessions. We also offer "adoptions" of the animals with our Zoo Parent program, which helps

provide animal care. Some individuals have put Scovill Zoo in their wills; others have designated the zoo as recipient of memorial monies. We have received generous donations for many projects over the years. Gifts from Ramona Borders have provided funding for the zoo's Animal Care Center and Veterinary Exam Room. Sponsorships and attendance at Zoo-rific Evening have helped fund the penguin exhibit. We're currently working on a train extension, funded by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation. Gifts large and small are welcomed, as costs continue to rise for animal care and exhibit expansion. Thank you for your support!

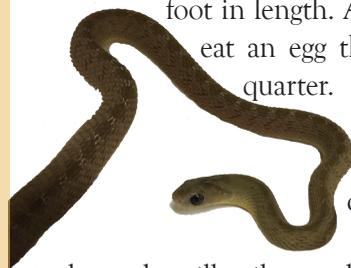
Facebook Live!

Each 3rd Wednesday of the month, Zoo Director Ken Frye and your favorite keepers present interesting facts about Scovill Zoo's amazing animals! Visit and like the zoo's Facebook page to receive notices about upcoming FB Live events! Don't miss our next event on March 21!

New Addition to the Herp

by Ryan Kirkland

A new type of snake has slithered into Scovill Zoo! Our egg eating snake (a species native to southern Africa and northeastern India), is less than one year old and one foot in length. At this size, it can eat an egg the diameter of a quarter. Its keeled scales are ridged and not as smooth as other snakes. In defensive mode, the snake will coil up, rub its scales against



each other, and make a rattling sound to scare the predator off. When fully grown, this snake will be about four feet long. Its extra stretchy skin around the mouth allows the egg to fit. As the egg slides down the throat, it hits a special spiked vertebra that pierces the egg. The snake then constricts the egg and swallows the insides. Once the egg white and yolk have been swallowed, it will spit out the flattened shell.

71 S. Country Club Rd. • Decatur, IL 62521 • 217/421-7435
Email: scovillzoo@decparcs.com • www.scovillzoo.com

Zoo Leaders

Decatur Park Board

Bob Brillely II, President
Chris Harrison, Vice-President
Chris Riley
Stacey Young
Jack Kenny

Decatur Parks Foundation

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Dr. Bill Van Alstine, Vice President
Mindy Chadwick, Secretary
Rod Schanefelt, Treasurer
Chris Riley, Park Board Liaison
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Judy Locke
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Executive Director
Decatur Park District
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Director of Recreation & Facilities
Jamie Gower

Zoo Staff

Ken Frye, Director
David Webster, Assistant Director
Kathy Winter, Ryan Kirkland,
Heather Purdeu, Kevin Rairdin,
Ben Rapson, Mindy Weaver,
Kent Winchester, Brad Yetter,
Wesley Potter, and Nicole Zinn

For the best discounts and
benefits, become a
Friend of the Zoo!

A Howling Good Time *by Mindy Weaver*

Last August, we received two hand-raised wolf puppies, Koda and Niko, from Washington Park Zoo. Koda is dark in color and very shy while Niko is lighter colored, very brave, and outgoing. He has already learned most of Tilly's training behaviors. All of our wolves were hand-raised, which enables us to work with them through special training win-



dows. A birthday party is planned for the wolves this spring. On March 31, the pups will turn one year old! Tilly will be 8 on April 27. The celebration will be held on April 14 at 11 a.m. in front of the wolf exhibit. The wolves will enjoy specially made meat cakes and extra enrichment items. The zookeepers also plan a sing-along with guests. Hope to see you there!

Picture Passes for Members *by Ken Frye*

Come one; come all! Let's meet face to face! Many of our Friend of the Zoo (FOZ) members need to come in to have their pictures taken for their Scovill Zoo photo ID cards. You may have received your membership as a gift, over the phone, or online. You may need to have your children's pictures updated. Your FOZ photo ID card

enables you to be admitted to the zoo more quickly, all season long! Take advantage of one of the following ID card opportunities: March 30 & 31 from 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.; April 7 & 8 from 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. Please call Kathy at 421-7435 if these dates cannot work for you.

Telling Our Stories *by Ben Rapson*

I was ecstatic to attend a recent Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) continuing education course. Discussion topics included budgets, age-appropriate messaging, and dealing with controversial topics; but mostly we told stories. This course was about our stories as keepers and the animals we care for. We shared how our zoo careers began. For me it started because of my childhood fear of the basement. I conquered my fear with the help of my mom and the pets that lived in the basement. My mother made me a "bravery jar." Every time I went to

the basement to do a chore like feed my pets, I put a marble in the bravery jar. My prize for filling that empty jar was a trip to Scovill Zoo. Every keeper has a story of why and how they arrived at Scovill Zoo. What began as a farm/children's zoo 50 years ago has evolved into a modern zoological institution, participating in worldwide population management programs and reaching out with many arms to the Central Illinois community. We tell our stories to entertain, educate, and inspire. Share your story on our Facebook page and tell us what Scovill Zoo means to you.

Meet A Keeper! Q&A by Ken Frye

Scovill Zoo's newest keeper is Wesley Potter, a graduate of Illinois State University with a B.S. in Zoology. Q: Why did you choose to become a zoo keeper? A: I always knew I wanted to work with animals, but it was my high school zoology teacher who made me want to become a keeper. Her excitement and respect for animals resonated with me and allowed me to realize that I needed the unique, first-hand experience involved with keeping. Q: What is your favorite Scovill Zoo animal? A: That would have to be a tie between the red pandas, Lali and Pabu. They are gentle, playful, and curious cubs that are

always excited to see me (and their grapes) in the morning. Q: What is your favorite animal outside of Scovill Zoo? A: My favorite animal of all time is the otter! I love how they use their hands to eat. Young pups are so furry that it is impossible for them to dive under water because the air is trapped against their skin. Too cute!



Missing A Very Special Cheetah by Dave Webster

The deep rumbling purr, amazing speed, and calm trust of people. These were the most impressive things about Scovill Zoo's cheetah, Jafari. Jafari and his brother, Runako, were born and hand-reared at the De Wildt Cheetah Conservation Center in South Africa. At 15 months of age, they arrived at Scovill Zoo, thanks to the interest and generosity of philanthropist Howard Buffett. The cheetah brothers were the first ever in Decatur, and the only cheetahs in Illinois for most of their time here. Heather Purdeu, our primary cheetah keeper, named one "Jafari" which means "dignified" in Swahili. Jafari's role as an ambassador was an important one. He gave thousands of zoo visitors the chance to see a cheetah up-close. Jafari also gave us the opportunity to tell the story of endangered wild



cheetahs. The greatest threat to the world's wild cheetahs is conflict with humans. Through the years that Jafari was here, Scovill Zoo and the zoo's animal keepers contributed about \$70,000 for cheetah conservation. Jafari died recently of age-related kidney failure. He had a long life, living to be 15.9 years old. The median life expectancy for cheetahs in the U.S. is 11.7 years. Currently, of the 324 cheetahs living in U.S. zoos, only six are older than Jafari was when he passed. His brother Runako died of kidney failure in 2015. Two younger cheetahs, Segosi and Kapenda, now live at Scovill Zoo as ambassadors for their species. For Heather, myself, and many at Scovill Zoo, this dignified, friendly cat will always hold a special place in our hearts. In Jafari's memory, Scovill Zoo's keepers are taking donations to sponsor an Anatolian guard dog, which protects livestock in Namibia, so farmers will not shoot predators like the cheetah.

Family Camp Outs

You have asked, and we have listened! The Family Camp Outs return to Scovill Zoo on Friday, June 22 and Friday, September 14. Participants will bring their own tents and sleeping bags. Zoo staff will provide supper, evening activities, a campfire for S'mores, morning "chores," and breakfast. The cost is \$30 per camper or \$120 for a family of up to six. Please call 421-7435 to reserve your spot!

Members Ride Pass!

Do you love to ride the train and carousel? Now you can increase the fun - and your savings - with the Members Ride Pass! Purchase a zoo membership and add the pass for an extra \$110. Perfect for families that visit the zoo ten or more times each season.

\$23 Zoo Fun Pack

If you visit the zoo regularly but don't have a FOZ membership, consider a Zoo Fun Pack that offers the following benefits. Great gift idea!

- 2 admission tickets
- 2 Endangered Species Carousel tickets
- 2 snow cone tickets
- 4 Z.O. & O. Express Train tickets

Call 421-7435 or visit the Gift Shop to purchase your Fun Pack today!

ZooMu Pass

Where can you find wild animals, interactive exhibits, education, and fun? In Scovill Park! ZooMu Family Pass fee is just \$165 for one full year for BOTH facilities! Visit Scovill Zoo or the Children's Museum of Illinois to purchase your pass today!

Mobile Zoo

Can't take a trip to the zoo? Scovill's Mobile Zoo can come to you! Age-appropriate presentations last approximately 30 minutes for younger students and up to one hour for older students. Call 217/421-7435 for rates and information.



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SPRING 18

2018 Foundation Events

Hangin' Out at ZOO CAMP

Scovill Zoo offers a variety of camps for youth aged 5 - 17!
For details, visit scovillzoo.com or call 421-7435.

[facebook.com/scovillzoo](https://www.facebook.com/scovillzoo)

Scovill Zoo Open Golf Outing

Date: Friday, May 18
Time: 11:30 a.m. Lunch
12:15 p.m. Shotgun Start
5 p.m. Reception & Awards

Place: Hickory Point Golf Course

Save the date for the Scovill Zoo Open! You'll enjoy a great day of golf, box lunch, prizes, music, and afternoon wrap-up party. Fee is just \$600/team of four. For details, call Kurt Rogers at 422-2211. All proceeds benefit Scovill Zoo and junior golf programming.



Zoo-rific Evening at Scovill Zoo

Date: Saturday, August 18
Time: 5 p.m.
Fee: \$75/person

With a cool new theme, unique activities, and a footprint extending the borders of this amazing zoo fundraiser, the 2018 Zoo-rific Evening is not to be missed! Delicious appetizers, bars throughout the zoo, animal interactions, live music, and more! Stay tuned for details. All proceeds fund renovations at Scovill Zoo. For tickets and sponsorship information, call Jill Applebee at 422-5911.