

STONEHAM SUN

With news from Stoneham and surrounding communities

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Nancy Romanik, education program manager at Stone Zoo, holds a 10-month-old American alligator named Louis while Tyler Boisvert, 3, of Lowell, pets him. WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO / DAVID SOKOL

What's new at Stone Zoo

Visitors to Stone Zoo will notice several new faces this summer with the addition of a number of new species including a male Matschie's tree kangaroo, six cotton-top tamarins and straw-colored fruit bats.

The zoo also welcomed the birth of four Lynx kittens in May.

Aside from the kittens, all of the new additions can be seen in the newly renovated Windows to the Wild exhibit space, which is also home to Caribbean flamingos, prehensile-tailed porcupines, Inca terns, hyacinth macaws, red-rumped agouti and Central American agouti.



An American alligator is seen here inside its exhibit that recently opened at Stone Zoo in Stoneham. WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO / DAVID SOKOL

SEE ZOO, A2

"We are excited to highlight these new species at Stone Zoo. Guests will delight in visiting with these fascinating new additions and learning more about their natural history and unique adaptations," said John Linehan, President and CEO of Zoo New England.

"After such a long winter, we're thrilled to present a robust offering of programs and experiences at Stone Zoo this summer and we hope that people will discover all that the Zoo has to offer, including visiting with some of the newest additions to the animal family," he said.

MATSCHIE'S TREE KANGAROO

These endangered animals are native to the Huon Peninsula in northeastern Papua New Guinea where they can live in elevations up to 6,562 feet. Primarily arboreal, tree kangaroos climb by wrapping their forelimbs around tree branches and hopping with their hind legs, which allows their arms to slide up the branch. Matschie's tree kangaroos are well adapted for life in the trees and are able to leap almost 60 feet down to the ground. These marsupials have reddish brown fur with light tan or yellow fur on their stomach, feet, tail and the edges of their ears. In the past, Zoo New England has supported a large scale conservation project in their native range that works with the indigenous people to preserve this unique species and the tropical forests they inhabit.

COTTON-TOP TAMARINS

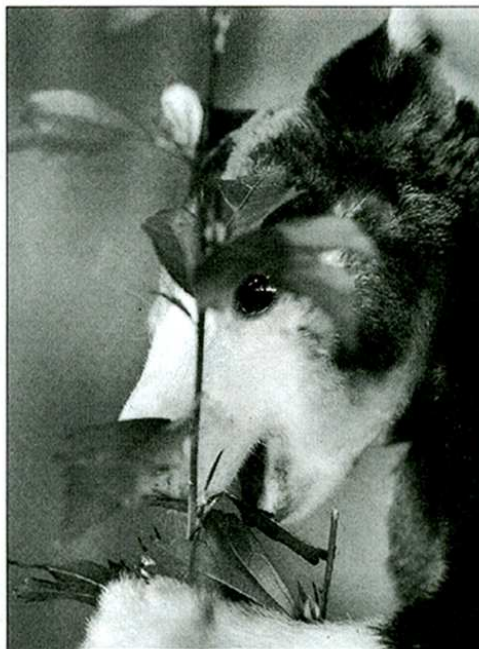
Cotton-top tamarins are a small, but striking, endangered monkey native to the tropical forest of northwestern Colombia. Cotton-top tamarins have a monogamous mating system and live in groups numbering up to 19 individuals. Groups consist of a dominant mated pair, their young and few subordinate adults or young. These small primates, which are about the size of a squirrel, have a long white crest of hair stemming from the forehead to the nape and flowing over their shoulders. Zoo New England has supported field work and education efforts in Colombia to preserve cotton-top tamarins.

STRAW-COLORED FRUIT BATS

Straw-colored fruit bats are native to the forests and savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa. These



Pete Costello, assistant curator at Stone Zoo, places Rose of Sharon branches in the enclosure of the Matschie's tree kangaroo, which is a new animal on display at the zoo. WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO / DAVID SOKOL



A Matschie's tree kangaroo feeds on the branches of Rose of Sharon. WICKED LOCAL STAFF PHOTO / DAVID SOKOL

nocturnal animals have long tapered wings measuring up to 3 feet, which allow them to fly long distances. In fact, they have even been found 125 miles out to sea. Because straw-colored fruit bats feed on nectar and blossoms, they play an important role in pollination. They also serve as agents in seed dispersal - in effect planting seeds for future harvest.

AMERICAN ALLIGATOR EXHIBIT

In addition to the new faces in the Windows to the Wild exhibit space, a new American alligator exhibit debuted at Stone Zoo at the end of May. The exhibit, located within the Alfred Huang North American Crane Exhibit is home to three gators ranging in length from 5 to 7 feet. Guests are invited to learn more about the gators at the daily education encounters at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (weather permitting),

where they can see a young gator, measuring 1 foot long, up close.

LYNX KITTENS BORN

The staff at Stone Zoo is pleased to announce the birth of Canada lynx kittens, which marks the first successful births of this species at the zoo.

On May 19, Patty, the female lynx at Stone Zoo, gave birth to four kittens. Unfortunately, one of the kittens died within 24 hours. The remaining three kittens are doing well and are becoming quite curious about their surroundings.

On June 19, the kittens, a male and two females, had their first medical exam where they were weighed and their overall health was assessed. The male weighs 2 pounds 3 ounces, while the females each weigh 1 pound 12 ounces.

"The three kittens appear healthy, bright and alert," said Dr. Susan Bartlett, Zoo New England Associate Veterinarian. "As with

any new birth, we are carefully monitoring the mother and kittens. The mother is very protective of her kittens and is doing everything a lynx mother should."

Zoo New England participates in the Canada Lynx Species Survival Plan (SSP), which is a cooperative, inter-zoo program coordinated nationally through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). SSPs are designed to maintain genetically diverse and demographically stable captive populations of species. The births are the result of a recommended breeding between Patty and her mate Hutch.

Since their birth, the kittens have been in the nest box with their mother. They are expected to make their public debut in a few weeks at their exhibit in the Yukon Creek section of the zoo.

"We are extremely excited about these births and are looking forward to when they make their exhibit debut," said Pete Costello, Assistant Curator of Stone Zoo, who added, "Patty is a very protective mother and she even covers up the kittens with straw when she leaves the nest box. The kittens have been nursing well and they are starting to become very interested in their environment."

In the wild, Canada lynx can be found in Alaska and Canada. They have been reported in the northern plains and Great Lakes states as well as in states including Wyoming, Oregon, Utah, Colorado and Maine. While they primarily live in dense forests, they may also be found in rocky areas and the tundra, primarily in Canada. Their numbers substantially decrease in the more populous southeastern region.

Stone Zoo has exhibited Canada lynx since 2000.