



## IN THIS ISSUE

- WHAT'S NEW AT THE ZOO?
- VERY IMPORTANT BABIES
- ZOO SNOOZE
- STAFF SPOTLIGHT
- KID'S ZONE

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 PERMIT NO 40

# THE INVESTIGATOR

WINTER 2010

St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park Membership Newsletter

## Lone Primate Enrichment

By Chelsea MacLean,  
 Bird & Mammal Intern

As an intern in the bird and mammal department at the Alligator Farm, I am required to do a research project. The topic was wide open so I selected a subject that I thought would not only be beneficial and worthwhile to me and the animal staff here, but to the animals as well. I choose to research ways to enrich primates. Enrichment can come in many different forms, but the general idea is to decrease stress levels in animals by promoting species specific behaviors and therefore improve the overall well-being of the animal. I decided to enrich the primates that were currently without companionship of any kind. There are presently two primates that do not have a mate, Charlie, the spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*) whose long time mate died this past year of old age, and Nippett, the pygmy marmoset (*Callithrix p. pygmaea*). Without other monkeys to interact with and have natural, everyday enrichment, the task of providing it becomes even more important and should be done more frequently. This brings up another problem, finding new enrichment, more frequently to stimulate the lone primates.

Thus far I have done several different enrichment forms. I have provided palm fronds to change their environments/enclosures. I have scattered

food around their habitats to induce foraging behaviors and put meals inside boxes and bags for manipulation. And I have given each a mirror which was very exciting for Charlie. I also placed a snake skin in each enclosure for negative enrichment, this may seem cruel, but it stimulates natural instincts and is not done nearly as often as positive enrichment.

Nippett, thus far, has not been too responsive to any form of enrichment provided to him other than the palm fronds that he likes to scent mark and hide in. He was recently moved into a new enclosure which is stimulating all on its own. Also, with me observing him, he automatically goes into "stealth" mode. He will creep, hunched over, around his enclosure moving extremely slow. Charlie is also intrigued by my presence as he always runs to greet me, but he has also been more receptive and active with the enrichment. I have been researching other forms of enrichment and will continue to provide new enrichments while I am at the Alligator Farm. I hope that my research will provide lots of options for enrichments and when I when my time here is over the keepers will have a much easier time with enrichments for the primates. Or, in Nippett's case, they know what not to do!

## Baby African Slender-snouted crocodiles: Free At Last!

By Jen Walkowich, Reptile Keeper II

# From the Director

John Brueggen • Director

This September I traveled to Brazil for the Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) meeting. The Crocodile Specialist Group is a subgroup of the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and is comprised of many people whose interest is the conservation and welfare of crocodylians from around the world. Membership is by invitation only and therefore means that the CSG is a group of people that are hand picked to have common goals. The CSG meets in a different country every other year and this year's venue was Manaus, Brazil. Brazil has very diverse and strong populations of caiman. In fact, there are six different types of caiman in Brazil! This was my first time to Brazil and I was a bit concerned about the language barrier. I know enough Spanish to get from place to place, but I didn't know any Portuguese before this trip. But I didn't need to worry. The people were very friendly and patient, not to mention that I was traveling with friends. Even though most of them didn't speak any more Portuguese than I did, there is something comforting about being out of your element with someone you know.

The meeting was very productive. There were Portuguese translators throughout the meeting and most presenters had Power Point presentations that made it easy to follow along. In addition to Power



Point presentations there were poster presentations, and our very own Jen Walkowich presented a poster to the CSG group about how we were finally able to breed African Slender-snouted crocodiles at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm.

I was able to take some extra time after the meeting and stay in a lodge on the Amazon River. I got to see pink river dolphins, gray river dolphins, two species of macaws, toucans, agoutis, pied tamarins, squirrel monkeys, and even got to catch piranha and caiman. It was so nice to see healthy populations of these animals and to meet people that truly care about the wildlife that surrounds them. In fact, the

Brazilian money is very colorful and decorated with all sorts of beautiful animals.

I think I was most surprised to learn that Brazil nuts come out of an even larger nut (about the size, shape, and thickness of a coconut). I've always been impressed that macaws can break into a Brazil nut, but in the rainforest they actually have to break through something very similar to a coconut to get to the edible nuts. I saw evidence of other animals that make a living eating these nuts as well. Agoutis (very large rodents without a tail) chew open the larger nut to get at the dozen or so smaller nuts inside.



# THE INVESTIGATOR

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## ZOO HOURS & RATES OPEN 365 DAYS A YEAR!

9AM - 5PM  
Extended hours from Memorial Day  
to Labor Day - Open till 6PM

## HOW TO REACH US

General Information 904/824-3337  
Membership ext. 10  
Gift Shop ext. 14  
Education ext. 29  
Group Sales & Rentals ext. 10  
Rookery Updates ext. 23  
Reptile Department ext. 15  
Bird & Mammal Department ext. 16

## ZOO MEMBERS

**General Public**  
• Adults \$21.95  
• Children \$10.95 (ages 3-11)  
• Children age 2 & under are admitted free  
• Discounts available for locals, military, AAA, seniors and groups

**Zoo Members • FREE Admission**

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Editor & Curator of Education** Katie Girvin  
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**Bird & Mammal Intern** Chelsea MacLean  
**Keeper II - Reptile** Jen Walkowich  
**Newsletter Design** Hybrid Design, Inc.

## MISSION STATEMENT

To maintain the highest standards of zoological professionalism as it promotes wildlife conservation and education. Furthermore, the Alligator Farm is committed to promoting the appreciation of all animal and plant life, but specifically the living species of crocodylians and other animals in its collection.



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# What's New At the



## Brown Pelicans

The Alligator Farm has become home for two wild Brown pelicans. Both pelicans were oiled in the BP oil spill and due to injuries are unable to be released back into the wild. They were being held at Jackson Zoo in Mississippi until a permanent home could be found. After the birds go through quarantine they will be introduced to their new digs, with the Black swans by the KidsZone.



## Charlie's New Home

Charlie, our spider monkey, has left for his new home! He traveled by airplane to Kendaia, Texas to live at Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation. Once he arrives, Charlie will be "tried out" in numerous troops of monkeys. Whatever troop he fits best will become his new family. Either way, Charlie will now have companionship with other monkeys.



## Swamp Renovation

If you visited the Alligator Farm in late September, you are sure to have noticed all the work being done in the swamp. Our maintenance department was doing some much need upkeep to the shorelines. They used some heavy machines to build bigger banks and also added some new bulkheads. You might not notice any changes but without these improvements some of our valuable trees and vegetation could have been lost. Come this spring, hundred of nesting birds will appreciate the construction from this fall!



## Wrap, Unwrap, Wrap

On July 29th our large white van was returned after being wrapped with large decals. The process is kind of like shrink wrapping an Easter egg but on a larger scale. The van looked amazing with a 20 foot Reticulated Python stretched along each side looking as if it was going to make the van its next meal. Unfortunately, our joy was short lived. On August 1st the van was struck by a drunk driver while parked out front of the Alligator Farm. Most of the wrap had to be removed to make the necessary repairs. But the van is rewrapped now and looking good. Let's hope it lasts a little longer this time!



# VIB Very Important Babies

By Gen Anderson, Bird & Mammal Curator

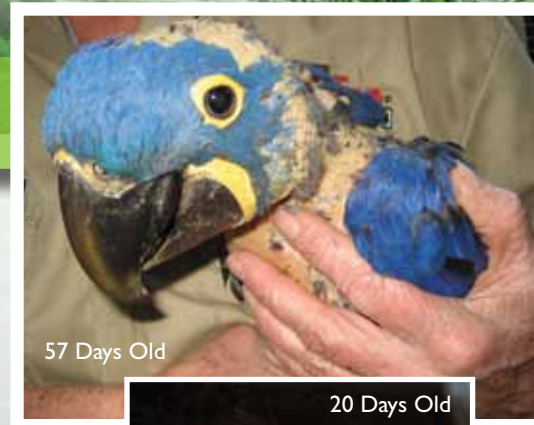
## Geoffroy's marmoset

On June 6th, we celebrated the birth of twins into the growing Geoffroy's marmoset family. Their previous set of twins, born last October 24th, will help raise their younger siblings. Twin births are typical for this species, though singletons or triplets occur on occasion. Mia, the mother, is again pregnant and due around Christmas time. She is one of the most genetically valuable marmosets within the entire zoo population. Once she gives birth, she will receive a break from the demands of child-bearing and receive a form of birth control specifically developed for small primates.



## Hyacinth macaw

Our Hyacinth macaw pair hatched out a chick on July 23rd within a wooden wine barrel nest in their private behind-the-scenes enclosure. The new family will remain off display, but Neptune, their previous offspring from 2007, can often be admired during the Rainforest Review presentation. The St. Augustine Alligator Farm is the only North American zoo to have produced a chick this year. Hyacinth macaws are listed as Endangered primarily due to the illegal bird trade and habitat loss.



57 Days Old



20 Days Old

## Toco toucan

A female Toco toucan hatched out on June 27th. Out of twenty-five recommended breeding pairs in AZA, only two zoos in the country hatched out chicks this year. At 17, the adult male is considered post-reproductive, but apparently he is smitten with his new mate and wanted to prove otherwise! The probability of large toucans to successfully reproduce decreases significantly after twelve years of age. Tocos are considered to be a difficult species to breed due to their special nutrition, climate, and nesting cavity requirements.



## Baby African Slender-snouted crocodiles: Free At Last!

By Jen Walkowich, Reptile Keeper II

Back in early June, the female African Slender-snouted crocodile laid 23 large eggs in her nest. We left eight of the eggs inside the nest for her to take care of while the other 15 went into the incubators for us to watch over. This was important so we could collect data on the eggs. On August 30, we found that the eggs inside the nest had hatched! The parents had helped the babies by opening the nest, carrying them to the water in their mouths, and even helping them break out of their hard-shelled eggs! This is ground-breaking science because not much is known about the African Slender-snouted crocodiles, especially how they are as parents! Currently, 2 babies are on display with the parents, and 3 more babies have hatched out from the incubators with more still to come. So next time you're looking into their exhibit, keep your eyes open for babies that are less than a foot long, and tiny compared to the parents!



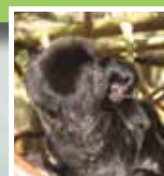
### Other births/hatches this year in the Bird & Mammal Department:



Green acouchi



Collared aracaris



Goeldi's monkey



Green aracaris



## Hey Kids!

Can you identify the close-up pictures below? Each picture is of an animal that lives at the St Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park, but the pictures are EXTREME close-ups. See if you can use your InvestiGator skills and identify what animals they are!



D. Frenshius Tail Porcupine - ear

B. Scarlet Macaw - feathers

C. Red-knobbed Hornbill - eye

A. Indian Ghoral - snout

# MISSION ZOO-POSSIBLE

The Chief needs all InvestiGators on the case! In each "InvestiGator" issue, you will now find a zoo-possible mission. Junior Agents that choose to accept the mission can send in their assignments to be added to the case file. See what other Junior Agents have done in the next issue of the "InvestiGator" as well as receiving the next mission.

**Send Mission Zoo-possible findings to:**  
**The Chief-Katie Girvin**  
**999 Anastasia Blvd., St. Augustine, FL 32080**  
**or drop them by the Alligator Farm.**

### Letter From the Chief:

Junior Agents - I am sending you on a stake out. Go outside (ask your Senior Agents first)! Find a nice spot and sit down. Make sure your comfortable because stake out can be hard work. Observe your surroundings for at least 10 minutes. After your stake out record your findings. Recordings can be pictures, paintings, drawings, poems, or stories. Remember to send in your results for the case file!

The Chief



### CALLING ALL BUDDING ARTISTS!

Send us a drawing of your favorite part of the Alligator Farm and you could see it in the next issue of the Investigator.

**Send artwork to:**  
 St. Augustine Alligator Farm,  
 Attn: Education  
 999 Anastasia Blvd.,  
 St. Augustine FL 32080



Max Gibbs - Age 5  
 Galapagos Tortoise



Zach Nero - Age 5



Erik - Age 7

## UP COMING ED•ZOO•CATION

### NOVEMBER

Parents Night Out	Nov 5
Zoo Camp	Nov 11

### DECEMBER

Parents Night Out	Dec 5
Zoo Camp	Dec 20 - 23
Zoo Snooze	Dec 31 - Jan 1

### JANUARY

Parents Night Out	Jan 7
Zoo Camp	Jan 17 & 18

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Meet Carrie Myers. You can find Carrie working at the TouCantina. She is originally from Soldotna, Alaska (That's Right, Alaska!) and was lured to

Florida by the promise of warm weather. Her favorite part of working at the Alligator Farm is that she gets to be outside. Carrie lives in Jacksonville with Dustin, her nine year old son. During her free time Carrie enjoys drawing, specializing in tattoo design. She is also looking forward to learning how to surf. Carrie's favorite animals at the Alligator Farm are the marmosets because they are "funny."

## QUESTIONS?

Have questions about any of our educational programs? Please call our education department at (904) 824-3337 ext 29 or email at [kgirvin@alligatorfarm.com](mailto:kgirvin@alligatorfarm.com)!

## HOLIDAY ZOO CAMP



Need some time to get your holiday shopping done while your kids have a fun-filled day at the Zoo? Once again, the St Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park is offering day-long mini camps right before the holidays! Sign up for one, two, three or all four days! Each day will include zoo tours, animal encounters, shows, crafts, games, and lots of fun! Lunch will also be provided.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2010**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2010**  
**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2010**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2010**

**GRADES K THRU 5**  
**COST PER DAY: \$35/MEMBERS, \$45/NON-MEMBERS**

## CALL FOR PHOTOS!

Do you have old photos and memories of the Alligator Farm? Well, we would love to see and hear them! Send us any old photos or stories of your experiences at the Alligator Farm and you might see them in an upcoming issue of the InvestiGator!

### SEND PHOTOS AND STORIES TO KATIE GIRVIN.

Please include your NAME, PHOTO DATE, and any PICTURED INDIVIDUALS. If you would like your pictures returned please remember to include your return address. Katie Girvin: [kgirvin@alligatorfarm.com](mailto:kgirvin@alligatorfarm.com) or 999 Anastasia Blvd, St Augustine, FL 32080



Ralph Taylor 1977, nearly daily visitor to the Alligator Farm

Chuck, Matt & Katie Matheny 1987, family visiting from Maryland (Katie Matheny is now Katie Girvin)



W.I. & Dan Drysdale 1947, Drysdale and his elder son Dan