

JUNE JULY AUGUST | 2014



Lincoln Children's

ZOOtracks

**THE PENGUIN CONNECTION**  
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**DREAMS COME TRUE  
ON GALAPAGOS  
ISLAND ADVENTURE**  
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**NEW BABY ALLIGATOR**  
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**Lincoln Children's Zoo**  
1222 South 27th Street  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
402.475.6741

**LincolnZoo.org**

**OPEN DAILY**  
April 9 - October 19  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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**Mission: To enrich lives through firsthand interaction with living things.**



# JOURNEYS WITH JOHN

ARTICLE ON PAGE 3



## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS





# DREAMS COME TRUE ON GALAPAGOS ISLAND ADVENTURE

**BY JESSICA SIMPSON**

Thirteen major islands and seven smaller islands make up the Galapagos archipelago, better known as the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador. Teeming with endemic animal and plant species, the Islands boast one-of-a-kind magnificence. Conservation efforts on the island today help preserve the delicate balance of life found nowhere else in the world, and a group of Lincolmites experienced it for themselves.

The group of 22 traveled by plane to the Islands, but once they were there, they traveled by boat between the Islands and returned to the boat at night. Each Island was completely different than the next, offering incredible new wildlife and scenic experiences.

Tracie Chapo was awestruck by how approachable the animals were. “The animals are tame, but it doesn’t click until you really go there. The guides are incredibly careful to make sure you don’t bother the animals, but you could literally walk up and touch them. The rules state that you must be two meters away, but nothing about an animal would make you think you can’t reach out and touch it,” she explained.

Mary Greenfield was also amazed by the magnificent variety of species. “They were neither aggressive, nor fearful, of human beings,” she said. “We walked beside the birds; we swam with Marine iguanas. You sit on those beaches and see the sea lions and Frigatebirds diving in the ocean and all of the tortoises and flora. It’s beyond imagination. It’s just unbelievable.”

The diverse animal life from island to island comes from adapting to the harsh conditions – the islands are formed of volcanic lava. Tracie said, “It’s a really hostile environment, very hot, dry, rocky and barren. The animals have adapted, so it really speaks to the versatility of the animals. The Marine iguanas are the only marine lizards in the world and presumably they descended from typical land iguanas, but there were not enough plants to eat, so they became marine iguanas to get by.”

Mary was just as captivated by the amazing creatures on the Islands. “You don’t realize what kind of an environment it is until you study the endemic species and see them firsthand. It was a pinch of reality to be in such a pristine environment. It was a constant reminder of how precious those resources are to our planet,” she said.





"It's a remarkable tribute to the resilience of organisms that they've developed in ways that made them perfectly suited to their environment," said Tracie. "Like the Marine iguanas – they stay down so long in the ocean that they lose a lot of body heat. When they come out they bask in the sun to get their body temperature back up, and you hear big sneezes and see them spraying out salt. What a great system, and who would have thought? Sometimes they even have salt crusted on them from the sneezes of their companions."

Of all of the Island's endemic species, the Galapagos tortoise might be one of the most famous. They are the largest tortoises in the world, growing to about 5 feet in length and 550 pounds, and can live to be 150 years old. While there used to be 15 species of the Galapagos tortoise, today there are only 11.

The tortoises were the most remarkable part of Mary's trip. "Sitting among the tortoises in their field was unbelievable – these huge old species. To be in the field with five or

six of them in your midst was just a slice of heaven," she described.

Seeing the giant tortoises was also a dream of John Chapo's, Zoo president and CEO. "This was my first trip to the Galapagos. Turtle John is my nickname, and I had lots of turtles as a youngster and teenager, so the Galapagos tortoise experience is kind of the crescendo. It was a phenomenal lifelong dream to have accomplished this trip."

That the animals had no fear of humans was also unprecedented. "You could literally touch them, though you wouldn't dare. The wildlife, the birds, the iguanas, the sharks swimming – it was so unbelievably unexpected," John said. "Protecting these pristine spaces is key in protecting wildlife, and that goes hand-in-hand with our mission at the Zoo."

John also makes sure there is a strong focus on conservation in all of the Zoo's trips. "Habitats are very fragile, so preservation is imperative," he emphasized. "We hope that people who go on our trips come back with an appreciation

for nature. Then it's a domino effect and they pass it on to others."

The Zoo's mission is truly to enrich lives through firsthand experiences with living things. "We started safaris for adults so people can be immersed and see phenomenal places and exceptional wildlife," John said. "Trips like this one to the Galapagos are purely mission driven, because we want to connect people in as many ways as possible with diverse life on our planet."

Mary summed it up perfectly, "You leave a part of your heart there and take back so much more."











# FASCINATING FACTS

- 13 BLACK & WHITE STRIPES ON TAIL
- FAVORITE TREAT IS CHEERIOS
- ENJOY SUNBATHING

**hello**  
**we are**

ring-tailed  
lemurs



COLLECTIBLE POSTER



# THE PENGUIN CONNECTION



BY RYAN GROSS

“Without, a doubt, the Lincoln Children’s Zoo is shaping up as one of the finest attractions of its kind in the nation and a tremendously exciting entertainment and educational opportunity for Lincolnites and their visitors.”

– *Arnott Folsom, Lincoln Journal, June 16, 1965*

In 1959, the community came together to form a children’s zoo committee. This group of Lincoln citizens envisioned building the finest children’s zoo in the nation, a place where children and adults would be able to get up close with nature and animals. From the beginning, Lincoln

Children’s Zoo was designed for guests to not only see animals but to interact with them. Every exhibit built since the Zoo opened in 1965 has followed that idea. There is no better example of this than the Humboldt penguin exhibit which opened in 2010.

The exhibit was designed to allow guests to get a face-to-face look at these amazing animals. “We wanted to create a way for children and adults to get as close as possible to these rare and near endangered penguins,” said president & CEO, John Chapo. Each year the population of Humboldt penguins decreases. A mere 3,300 to 12,000 are estimated to live in the wild. Zoo staff knew building an exhibit which allowed guests to connect

with the penguins may someday create enough awareness to keep them from becoming extinct.

Not only was the penguin exhibit built to feature an up-close experience but it was also built with a show in mind. Part of their daily routine is getting fed twice a day. “We decided to make their feeding time a game and a show,” said Chapo. “We knew this kind of experience would gather a crowd each day and it allowed us to show our guests what they eat, how they eat and to talk a little about them.”

The shows, scheduled for 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., instantly became a crowd favorite at the Zoo. Families began to plan their visit around the penguin feedings. One thing Zoo staff didn’t expect was how connected





guests would get to each penguin. Each penguin is represented by a different colored band on its wing. It didn't take long for guests to know their names and their different personalities. "I have people tell me they notice Topper is swimming more or Pengee is eating more than usual," said Chapo. "It's amazing they have connected to them in such a way where they now feel the penguins are almost friends or family."

There are so many guests, children and adults whose favorite animal is the penguin. Tanya Thober posted a video on the Zoo's Facebook page in April of her daughter playing through the glass with the penguins. Her caption read, "You will not find a little girl more in love with these penguins than this girl here! She has

been carrying around the newspaper articles of the new penguin Lillian, and calls these penguins 'my pengies.' I think they kinda like her too!"

Two years ago, Nate Lowry bought his girlfriend, Carrie, a penguin adoption. Carrie had always loved the penguins and was excited for this special behind-the-scenes look. As Carrie stood on the deck feeding fish to one of the penguins, Nate dropped to his knee and proposed. Carrie burst into tears and said yes.

One of the more memorable life moments at the penguin pool occurred when Noel and Jenny Bresino were married by Zoo president John Chapo. The couple loved the Zoo enough to celebrate their big day by holding the ceremony

on the penguin pool deck in front of their closest penguin friends and family.

Tanya Thober's little girl, Nate, and Carrie, Noel, and Jenny and countless others have created memories and formed bonds with many of the Zoo's animals. When the children's zoo committee was formed in 1959, they wanted a place where people would not only see animals but interact with them. That committee should be proud of what they accomplished. They built the finest children's zoo in the nation and over the past 49 years have connected millions of people with nature and animals.

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JOEL SARTORE / JOELSARTORE.COM



Saturday, July 26 | 8-10 a.m. | Tickets at [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org)



# Breakfast with the Penguins!

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# WILD WEDNESDAYS!

OPEN LATE 'TIL 8 P.M. WEDNESDAYS  
IN JUNE, JULY & AUGUST

# ZOO CALENDAR

WE WILL SEE YOU AT THE ZOO

## JUNE

FRI 6

### GARDEN PARTY

6 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo | Zoo closes at 3 p.m.

SAT 7

### SUMMER KICK-OFF

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Start your summer at the Zoo! Check out a kids car show featuring real drag racers, go karts and BMX bikes. Get photos with Homer the Hound, I.C. Starz, Pacific the Penguin and more! Plus, see special animal demonstrations and stop by the Safari Cafe for specials.



FRI 13

### ZOO CLOSED

All Day | Lincoln Children's Zoo will be closed for a private function.

SAT 14

### TRAIN BIRTHDAY PARTY

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Celebrate the 51st birthday of the Z.O.&O. Railroad with discounted train rides, conductor of the day contest and fun train activities!

SUN 15

### FATHER'S DAY

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Dads receive one free train ticket or one free admission! Plus, find out which Zoo animals are dads!

## JULY

FRI 4

### RED, WHITE AND ZOO!

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Celebrate the Fourth of July at the Zoo! Active and retired military get free admission and the first 200 guests get a red, white and blue popsicle! Plus, learn about animals at the Zoo native to America.

SAT 19

### BREWS AT THE ZOO

6 - 11 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo | 21+ event

This adults only evening features beer tasting from premier local brewers and live music from Loose Affiliation. Enjoy delicious food and take in the sights and sounds of the Zoo afterhours. Tickets on sale June 18 at the Zoo or [LincolnZoo.org](http://LincolnZoo.org).



SAT 26

### BREAKFAST WITH THE PENGUINS

8 - 10 a.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

This is your chance to feed a penguin! Your ticket includes a buffet breakfast, photo with Pacific the Penguin, special meet and greet with Topper the Penguin and a once in a lifetime opportunity to feed the Zoo's penguins. Only 80 tickets are available. Purchase online today!

## AUGUST

SAT 16

### BACK TO SCHOOL PARTY

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Lincoln Children's Zoo

Get ready for the new school year with a party at the Zoo! Take part in fun activities, see special animal demonstrations and stop at Treetop Toys for great discounts! Plus, bring a school supply item to help children in need.





# AMAZING ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

BY RYAN GROSS

On April 9, the Zoo's opening day, over 100 people packed into the new Animal Encounter Stage presented by Union Bank & Trust to see the Zoo's new baby alligator. Children and adults alike could be heard "oohing and aahing" at the sight of a baby alligator only a few feet away. One little boy yelled out "Is that a real gator?" He seemed to be in disbelief that he was in reaching distance to what will become North America's largest reptile.

Featuring the Zoo's new bobcat and fennec foxes as well as a tortoise, porcupine, macaws, boa constrictors and more, this new addition to the Zoo has become one of the most popular stops for guests. Show times are throughout the day with typical performance lasting around 10 minutes. One mom commented that the length of the show is perfect for her little ones.

The shows were inspired by animal shows at Disney's Animal Kingdom and the Denver Zoo. "We are proud to offer world class animal presentations right here at Lincoln Children's Zoo," said president & CEO, John Chapo. "The demonstrations on our new stage rival those of the biggest zoos in the country." Guests are agreeing with Chapo by continually filling every seat around the stage.

One of the most exciting parts of the show is at the end when guests can ask the zookeeper questions. "Children love this part of the show because they get to ask a real zookeeper anything they want," said Chapo. After one of the fennec fox shows, a little girl raised her hand and proclaimed to everyone, "I can run as fast as a fox." Chapo said it is moments like that which make this new stage so special.

Showtimes are typically 10:30 a.m., noon, 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. The popular penguin show, "Eat that Fish," is at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the penguin pool. "Our guests have the opportunity to watch up to six shows a day now as well as get up close experience in The Hive and at Critter Outpost," said Chapo. "There is more animal interaction this year than we've ever had in our history."









# NEW BABY ALLIGATOR

**BY RYAN GROSS**

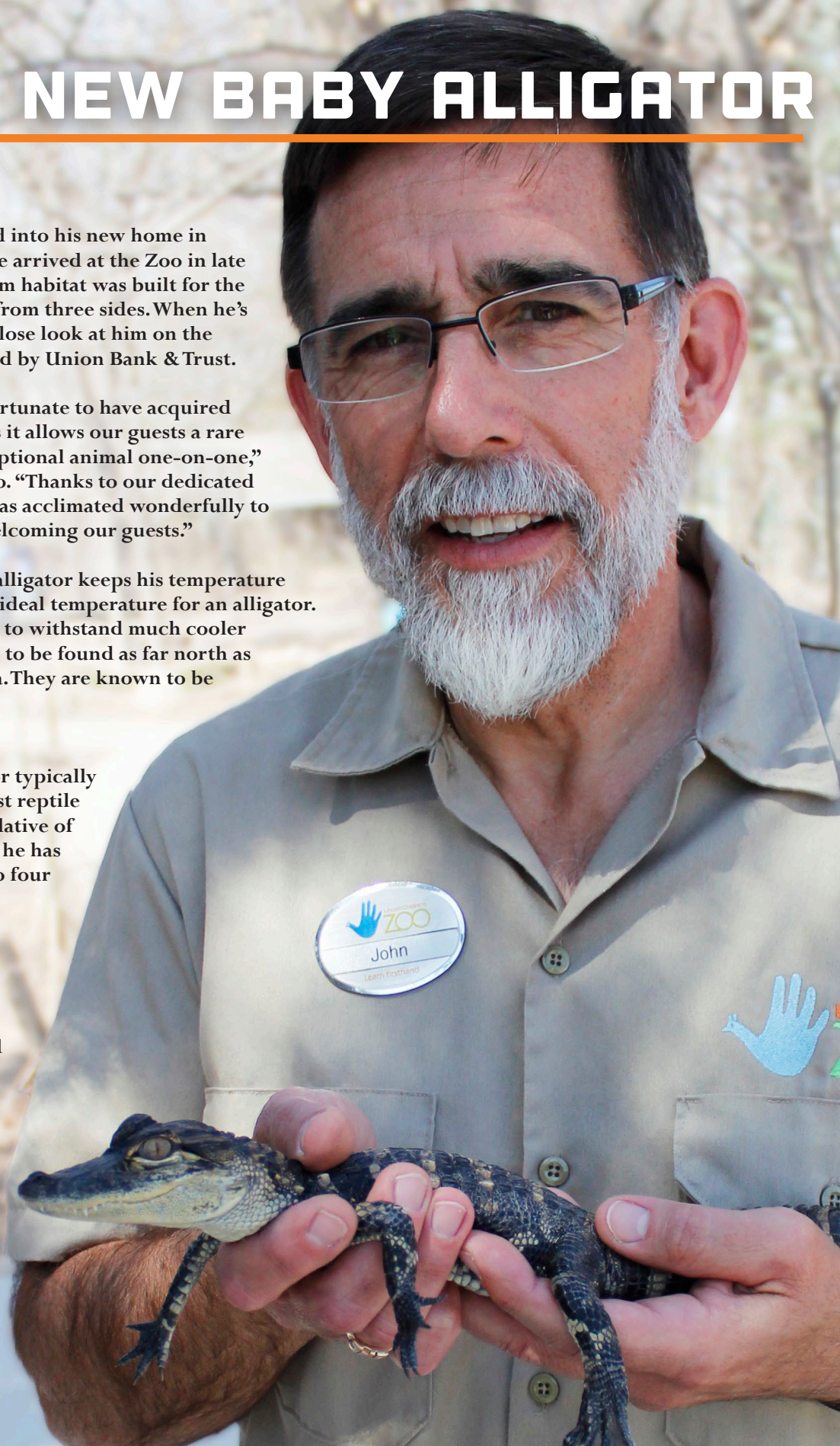
An American baby alligator has settled into his new home in The Hive at Lincoln Children's Zoo. He arrived at the Zoo in late March. At only 14 inches long, a custom habitat was built for the alligator allowing guests to view him from three sides. When he's not in The Hive guests can get an up-close look at him on the new Animal Encounter Stage presented by Union Bank & Trust.

"The Lincoln Children's Zoo is very fortunate to have acquired this baby North American Alligator, as it allows our guests a rare and rich opportunity to meet an exceptional animal one-on-one," said Zoo president & CEO, John Chapo. "Thanks to our dedicated Zoo team members, this little fellow has acclimated wonderfully to The Hive as he is most comfortable welcoming our guests."

The special habitat built for the baby alligator keeps his temperature between 82 and 92 degrees. This is the ideal temperature for an alligator. However, American alligators are able to withstand much cooler temperatures which has allowed them to be found as far north as the Carolinas and even into Oklahoma. They are known to be much less vulnerable to the cold than American crocodiles.

Once full grown, an American alligator typically is 10 to 13 feet long. They are the largest reptile in North America and considered a relative of the dinosaur. After three to four years he has the potential of growing to be three to four feet long. At that point he will move to Florida and live with other alligators his size.

In 1967, American alligators were considered endangered and at risk of becoming extinct. They were included in the Endangered Species Act of 1973 which led efforts in saving these amazing reptiles. Wildlife groups as well as the United States Fish and Wildlife Service began monitoring their numbers and worked to ensure their population would grow. In 1987, the American alligator was removed from the endangered species list. The recovery of the species is known as one of the most successful examples of saving an animal from extinction.





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