



# WILD THINGS

News and Information from The Greenville Zoo



Winter 2009

## Alligator Snapping Turtles

*Macrolemys temminckii*

By: Barbara Foster, Reptile Curator

For the latter part of May and all of June this year, the two female alligator snapping turtles *Macrolemys temminckii* were digging holes all over the alligator exhibit. They were searching for the perfect place to lay anywhere from 16-55 eggs, preferring to leave them at least a foot or more underground.

On June 22, 2009 a small nest of 8 eggs was found and placed in an incubator in the reptile building. After about 3 months, tiny snouts began to appear from four of the eggs that are roughly the size and shape of a ping pong ball.

After a week or so, the hatchlings had absorbed all of their yolk material and were interested in eating their first meal. Being about as big around as a quarter, a tiny stick of floating turtle chow was their first meal. Since then, they have dined every other day on ¼ inch pieces of minnow, earthworm, mealworm, crickets, and trout chow.

The hatchlings are being maintained in an off exhibit area right now, but a five year old hatchling can be seen on exhibit next to the blue tongued skink in the reptile building. It may be ten years or more before the zoo is able to tell whether the turtles are male or female, and can take a wild alligator snapping turtle 15-25 years before they reproduce for the first time.

Alligator snapping turtles are the largest freshwater turtle in the world and occur in 14 states within the Mississippi River drainage.



*Look closely to see one of the eggs hatching.*

That does not include South Carolina, where the similar looking common snapping turtle is found with great regularity.

Ironically, about the same time the alligator snapping turtle babies were hatching in the reptile building, I came across a baby common snapping turtle hatchling on the zoo walkway. I assume the mother resided in either Richland Creek or the Reedy River across Cleveland Park from the zoo. It was a perfect opportunity to show the staff just how superficially similar, yet amazingly different the species are from one another. Of course, anyone can look up a picture on the internet for identification purposes, but if you find a turtle in Upstate South Carolina that looks like a snapping turtle, it is most likely a common snapper!

### *In This Issue:*

- \* *Important Dates*
- \* *Education Class Registration*
- \* *Thank you's*



## Membership Reminders

- Renew on line at [www.greenvillezoo.com](http://www.greenvillezoo.com). You may also renew by mail or at the zoo office.
- Moving? We mail at bulk rate and the post office will not forward mail to your new address.
- Bring along a photo ID with your membership card every time you visit our zoo or any of those on the reciprocal list.
- Planning to use your membership card while traveling? Call and double check reciprocity guidelines. Zoos periodically change their policy and we can keep you up-to-date.
- Remember! Membership cards are used for admission to reciprocal zoos. Guest passes from the Greenville Zoo are only valid at our facility. Likewise, we do not accept passes from other zoos.

We have been informed by **Riverbanks Zoo** that beginning January 1st, 2010, they will offer **ONLY a 50% admission** to our members.



## An Important Membership Message:

We are in the process of creating a member email list to electronically distribute the newsletter and keep all members informed of current events at the Zoo. If you are interested, please visit our website at [www.greenvillezoo.com](http://www.greenvillezoo.com) to sign up!

(Please note: We value your privacy. The Greenville Zoo will not share your email address or other personal information.)

## Don't Forget!

The Zoo will be closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The normal operating hours of 10 AM to 5 PM apply to all other days.

## Thank You!

We thank all the sponsors for participating and making events at the zoo so successful in 2009!

Bi-Lo Charities  
 Pepsi Cola of Greenville  
 WESC Radio  
 WSPA TV  
 Frito Lay  
 General Electric  
 Gerber Childrenswear  
 California Dreaming  
 Greenville Tech Alumni Association  
 K12 South Carolina Virtual Charter Schools  
 Concept Packaging, Inc.  
 BMW  
 White Horse Packaging

Equally as important are the volunteers that included UPS, Hands On Greenville, Washington & Lee Alumni, Carolina High School, Brashier Middle College Charter High Beta Club, Greenville Tech - International Group, and of course, our own Greenville Zoo volunteers. Many thanks to each of you!



Even the lions received pumpkins for Halloween!



## About Boo In The Zoo

Dear Members,

We apologize to those of you who came for Boo in the Zoo on Members Only Night to find the gates closed and a sign saying the event had been cancelled for that evening with no other explanation. We have received several calls and emails expressing the frustration you felt and the disappointment of the children.

We were forced to cancel due to the steady and ongoing rain received prior to the event. The grassy areas and soccer field usually used for parking during large crowds were too wet. The City's Parks and Recreation Department did everything they could to dry the field including pumping water out of the deeper areas. Unfortunately, with the slow steady rain and overcast skies, it was not safe.

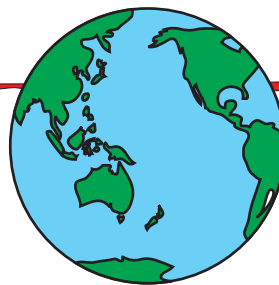
After meeting with Parks and Recreation crews, zoo staff and checking forecasts on Thursday, the decision was made; we had no choice but to cancel. There was no place to park the volume of cars. Alternative parking lots were considered as well as trying to organize shuttles from downtown, but there was no means to handle the volume of guests. We wanted to make sure our members knew in plenty of time to try to avoid what happened on Friday. A press release was sent out early Thursday afternoon to all media outlets. A cancellation was posted on the website and the zoo's phone message was changed to alert members who called ahead. Regretfully, our efforts were not enough to reach every member.

For those unable to attend one of the other evenings, there isn't much we can say to make up for the disappointment your children felt. As parents ourselves, we do understand. Canceling was the only option with the current parking structure of the zoo. However, getting information to you in a timely manner is something that we are vigorously looking at to take the responsibility off of the media outlets and put back in our hands. With the new technology available to us, we are looking at the most effective means to get information to members in a timely fashion for not only unfortunate situations like this, but also to let members be the first to know about new births, new animals, education opportunities, events information, and other changes in store at the zoo.

We appreciate the support of our members and do not take your disappointment lightly. While we cannot change what has happened in the past, we can do our best to make sure that it does not happen again. Hopefully, this letter explains what led to the cancellation of the Members Only Night event and that you understand the decision was not made lightly.

Sincerely,  
Greenville Zoo Management Staff

## **EARTH DAY** **MARCH 11TH**



The Greenville Zoo's Education Department and the City of Greenville will play host to a conservation observation event. Enjoy the zoo while learning about animal habitats, compost "cooking" with

with chef Betty, recycling and litter control, water quality and what all this has to do with animals!

**\* Admission for Earth Day is FREE for Zoo Members and registration is not necessary \* Time: 10 am - 2 pm \***



# HURRY! SIGN UP NOW AND JOIN IN ON THE FUN!!!

## ZOO TOTS

Zoo Tots is designed for one parent & their toddler (ages two and three) and provides an opportunity to discover the fascinating world of animals. Classes are held in the Conservation Station and combine “on your own explore time” with a more structured “animal time”.

Cost per program:	
Members	\$15
Non-members	\$25

Time:	
10:15 - 11:00	2 year old class
11:15 - 12:00	3 year old class

Choose one, two or all three topics. Price is for parent/child pair. Programs are limited to 14 children and fill quickly, so register early!

### JANUARY 9TH, 20TH AND 23RD

#### DINO-MITE

It's a bird! It's a reptile! No, it's a... Well, scientists aren't sure what type of animal dinosaurs were, but they sure were cool! Become an archeologist for a day, and discover these prehistoric giants.



### FEBRUARY 13TH, 17TH AND 20TH

#### HOME SWEET HOME

From nests way up high in the trees to tunnels way under ground, animals have homes just like people do. Homes help keep us safe and snugly warm. Come meet some animals and compare their homes to yours.

### MARCH 13TH, 24TH AND 27TH

#### RAINFOREST RASCALS

You can hear them (and sometimes smell them), but deep in the jungle it is sometimes hard to see the wildlife surrounding you. Join us as we take an imaginary journey into the most amazing habitat on Earth, the tropical rainforest!

\* Please note that Zoo Tots is designed for one parent and one toddler only. Siblings can be a distraction to other participants and the program.

## Zoo Camp 2009 Thank You

Thank you to the following who donated materials for our wonderful igloo: PET Milk, Happy Cow Creamery, everyone who donated milk cartons, Payless Shoesource #5778, and the Shoe Carnival on Woodruff Road.

## SATURDAY SAFARIS

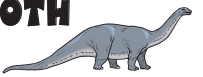
Saturday Safaris will meet in the Conservation Station, located just past the ticket booth. Classes are designed to help children discover the fascinating world of animals and combine a lesson with crafts, activities, trips in to the Zoo and animals in the classroom.

*Cost:	
Members	\$15
Non-members	\$25

Times:	
10:00 - 12:00	Ages 4 & 5
2:00 - 4:00	Ages 6 - 8

### JANUARY 16TH AND 30TH

#### DIGGIN' UP DINOS



Paleontologists learn about dinosaurs from the bones they uncover. We will be paleontologists for a day to dig up dirt on dinos!

### FEBRUARY 13TH AND 27TH

#### LOVEABLE COUPLES

Chores! To-Do Lists! We all have them - come discover what chores the “lovable” couples at the Greenville Zoo do to help support each other!

### MARCH 6TH AND 20TH

#### MARCH MADNESS

Spring is in the air and animals do the craziest things. Who do you think might be the silliest? Join us as we discover who is the silliest animal of them all!

### ATTENTION HOMESCHOOLERS!

Be sure to check out our website to see new classes and new age groups for homeschool programs! There's still time to register for classes beginning in January!







# GREENVILLE **Zoo**

150 Cleveland Park Drive  
Greenville, South Carolina

Non-profit  
Organization  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Greenville, SC  
Permit 1291

The Greenville Zoo is an accredited institution  
of the American Zoo and Aquarium  
Association.



**Admission:**  
\$6.00 Adult, \$3.00 Ages 3-15  
Children under 3 admitted free.

**Hours of Operation:**  
10 am to 4:30 PM seven days a week  
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and  
New Year's Day.

**Telephone:**  
(864) 467-4300  
(864) 467-4850 (Education)

**Mailing Address:**  
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Greenville, SC 29601

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