



WILD, WILD, WESTERN-THEMED LIVE-ANIMAL SHOW KICKS OFF A SEASON OF WONDER AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO

Plus, Budgie Buddies are back, and it all happens the weekend of May 12-13

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Tacoma, Wash. – Have you ever seen a dog fly? How about an aardvark sticking out its impossibly long tongue? Or a majestic Canada lynx parading past on his “snowshoe” paws?



And did we mention chickens? A flock of hilarious chickens running across a stage. Or, how about a red-legged seriema bashing a toy frog against a rock as she might in the wild? Throw in a couple of pyrotechnic explosions, and you have a wild west adventure guaranteed to entertain! All of this and more will play out daily on the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater stage beginning with a seasonal Grand Opening Weekend of the

live-animal show “The West is Wild” on May 12 and 13.



Plus, on the same weekend, the budgies are back! The colorful Australian birds will fly right up to guests and eat seeds off of a stick.

Zoo visitors may purchase the seed sticks for a nominal fee.

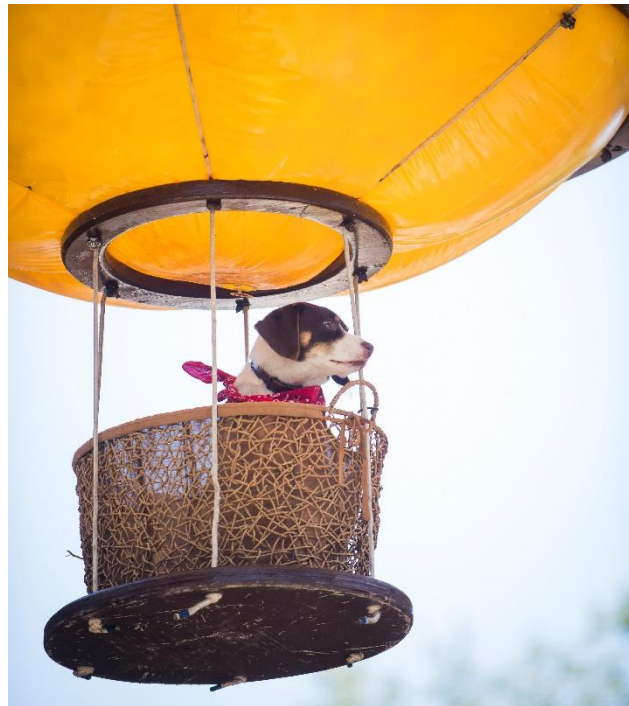
Watching the birds flit to and fro

across their aviary is a popular activity on any trip to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Children and adults alike enjoy seeing these beautiful birds up close.

Over at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater, “The West is Wild” will be presented twice daily on weekends, at noon and 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays; and once on weekdays – at noon.

There’s a new sheriff in the fictional Triple R Town, and he’s come to enforce the recycling code. And help people learn about reducing waste and reusing items instead of throwing them away, too.

But he’s not like just any other lawman. This is Sheruff Bones (aka Herald the dog or his understudy, Mazie Mae), and he leads a cast of talented zookeepers-turned-actors and amazing animals in a fast-paced show that will amaze and inspire visitors to learn more about these animals, yearn for experiences in the outdoors, and be motivated to help the environment.



And Sheruff Bones is ready to enforce the law, presiding over an action-packed show that highlights rappelling, mountain biking, snowshoeing, bird-watching, picnicking and other activities that people can do right in their own Puget Sound-area backyard.



The audience will be amazed by leaping clouded leopards Orchid and Banyan. Kids and adults will giggle at the flock of stampeding chickens, and marvel at Gonzo the Southern tamandua, a colorful and interesting type of anteater with a 16-inch-long tongue.

The show takes place on a stage that's been transformed into the fictional Wild West town of Triple R, where the watchwords are reduce, reuse and recycle.

Talented zookeepers and zoo operations department staff members, including one who once worked on Hollywood film sets, created just the right atmosphere for the show.

When Sheruff Bones comes riding in on his custom-made hot air balloon at show's end, visitors will have learned quite a bit about enjoying the outdoors.

Zoo guests also will leave with facts they can use to help the environment and keep wild places beautiful and safe for the animals that live there. Small actions like using rechargeable batteries and reuseable water bottles, shopping bags and lunch

containers can have big results.

The show is presented with support from Mary Bridge Children's Hospital and Sound Credit Union.

"Our staff has worked hard to create a fast-moving show that we believe children and adults will enjoy," said Senior Staff Biologist Maureen O'Keefe. "We are excited to get back on stage with a cast of animals that are inspiring ambassadors for their species."



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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).

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Photos:

1. Tilli the aardvark demonstrates how she might dig ants out of the ground with her very long tongue during the "The West is Wild" live-animal show at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.
2. Twiggy, a red-legged seriema, shows how a member of her species would bash its prey against the ground to break up the bones before eating it. Twiggy is one of the stars of the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater Show at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.
3. Herald the dog, as Sheruff Bones, rides to the rescue aboard his hot-air balloon during a live-animal show at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.
4. An endangered clouded leopard enthralls spectators at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater Show at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.
5. Mazie Mae is the new dog in town. She serves as Herald's understudy during the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater shows at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Herald was adopted from the Humane Society for Tacoma Pierce County; Mazie Mae was adopted from the Animal Aid and Rescue Foundation.

Photo credits: Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium