



Animals keeping cool during August heat wave

Bears and wolves splash around, a penguin chick learns to swim, and wolverines play in ice

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TACOMA/EATONVILLE-- As a powerful heat wave hits the greater Tacoma area with temperatures nearing 100-degrees, keepers at both Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in Tacoma, Wash. and Northwest Trek Wildlife Park in Eatonville, Wash. are finding ways to keep the animals cool.

Like many kids on a hot day, the 3-year-old grizzly bears at Northwest Trek plunge, splash and wrestle in water. The bears have a 7-feet-deep pool all to themselves!

“We love watching the bears enjoy their pool,” said keeper Haley Withers. “When the temperature is this high, we give them constant access to the water.”

Withers also ensures the gray wolves get a big tub full of cold water to splash in! The wolves have thick fur, and seem to appreciate the extra help to cool off. But, like other canine species, they also have the ability to regulate their body temperature by panting. And like your neighborhood dog, they like to play in the hose too! Something keepers offer them on such a hot day.

A favorite treat among the animals: ice to chill out. The wolverines enjoy rolling around and digging through the ice!

At Point Defiance Zoo, 2-month-old penguin chick Rio is just learning how to swim behind-the-scenes.

“Just in time for the warm weather, Rio’s waterproof feathers came in,” said staff biologist Cindy Roberts. “That means we can start to teach him how to swim safely in a shallow pool.”

The rest of the penguin colony will be spending a lot of time in their own pool at the Zoo’s Penguin Point.

The safety and well-being of the animals is the keepers’ number one priority, and keepers offer all of the animals at both sister zoos round-the-clock access to shade and fresh water. They also get lots of “yummy” ice treats- like “fishsicles” or “bloodsicles” ...not quite a human’s go-to flavor for a popsicle, but they are devoured by many of the animals!

To learn more about Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, visit nwtrek.org

To learn more about Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, visit pdza.org

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