NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL AVIARY

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

birdcalls

NEW Harpy Eagle Makes Her Debut

National Aviary visitors are showing up in droves to meet the Aviary's newest "super" girl, a female juvenile Harpy Eagle hailing from fellow AZA-accredited Zoo Miami!

Affectionately named Dariéna (*Dare EE awn ă*) by Aviary friends and supporters Brian and Sandra Moroney through the National Aviary's **Name-A-Bird program**, she is the only KNOWN Harpy Eagle living in the Northeast United States.

"Her name is one that is truly close to our heart," says the Moroney's. "She is named in memory of Sergio Seipke, a former Hawk Mountain trainee. In the early 2000's, he led us on an unforgettable birding trip throughout the **Darién** Province of **Panama**, and after combining those two words, we knew we had the perfect name for this beautiful eagle."

Dariéna's unmistakably long talons (roughly the same size as Grizzly Bear claws) and fierce gaze have taken The Charity Randall Foundation Eagle Hall by storm. She serves as an important ambassador for Harpy Eagles and other raptors, whose wild populations are declining due to human activities such as deforestation and pesticide usage. Her presence at the Aviary helps to educate our visitors on the individual environmental actions everyone can take to help make a difference in our shared ecosystem!

"Reducing use of harmful chemicals such as pesticides can truly go a long way to help us protect raptors and other birds of prey," says Cathy Schlott, Director of Animal Programs and Experiences. "Plus, just by making a visit to the National Aviary this summer, guests are directly supporting our efforts to conserve these species and their natural habitats. Raptors help maintain the ecological balance of their environment by controlling the populations of rodents and other small animals. They also serve as an indicator species, educating us on the health of ecosystems. So, it is incredibly important that we shine a light on them and that is what our summer seasonal theme was all about!"

New juvenile Harpy Eagle, Dariéna

Letter From the Executive Director

Summer brought sunshine and even MORE exciting National Aviary happenings!

2026 has already been quite a year for the Aviary. This past spring, we launched a new seasonal theme, *Nesting in Nature*, during which reality TV fans may have also spotted the National Aviary's inclusion in the nationwide ***Survivor 50 Challenge***!

As summer rolled in, so did an incredibly popular theme: *Remarkable Raptors* Presented by S&T Bank. The ultimate highlight of this season was the debut of the Northeast's ONLY known Harpy Eagle, Dariéna.

Dariéna's arrival was just the beginning of the season's *Remarkable Raptors* experiences, from the limited-run, immersive bird show, ***Fierce in Flight***, featuring birds of prey swooping overheard to an all-new way to getting twice the flighted fun during the Flighted Falcon + Friend Encounter.

New programming isn't the only thing that took *flight* — four Peregrine Falcon chicks fledged atop the University of Pittsburgh Cathedral of Learning.

Livestream viewers followed their thrilling journey: from hatching to banding by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and fledging the nest!

The hatchings didn't stop there: four Extinct in the Wild Guam Kingfisher (also known as sihek) chicks hatched at the Aviary, including a female who may potentially join the original nine sihek released onto Palmyra Atoll back in 2024! Hatchings like these are what make the potential for future conservation projects at the *National Aviary S Kent Rockwell Center* in Fox Chapel so exciting.

Each National Aviary visit continues to support these important endeavors, furthering our efforts to save birds and protect their habitats. We couldn't do it without supporters like you. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Cheryl Tracy
Executive Director

NATIONAL AVIARY
PITTSBURGH, PA

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AZA = Association of Zoos & Aquariums
SAFE = Saving Animals From Extinction®
SSP = Species Survival Plan®
IUCN = International Union for Conservation of Nature

Your donations support the National Aviary's work to save birds and protect their habitats.

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PENNSYLVANIA THE GREAT AMERICAN GETAWAY

Winter/Spring 2026

Nesting in Nature, the National Aviary's Winter/Spring 2026 themed season, offered guests a look into the world of nesting and feathered family-building through engaging Seasonal Daily Activities including *Nurturing Nesters* and *Not Just Bird Eggs* Expert Talks. Kids could "build" their own bird nest, dress up as a Junior Veterinarian and practice caring for baby birds, and more with Interactive Play Spaces.

Summer 2026

During our summer theme, ***Remarkable Raptors* Presented by S&T Bank**, guests experienced the thrilling world of fierce raptors including top apex predator, the Harpy Eagle. This season included Seasonal Daily Activities such as *Royal Raptors* Expert Talk, and a brand-new show, *Fierce in Flight*.

A Black Kite during Fierce in Flight

Fierce in Flight was a first-of-its-kind, fully indoor immersive bird show where guests learned the difference between powerful raptors like Black Kites and birds of prey like Hooded Vultures. A few lucky guests also got the chance to hold a Hooded Vulture on their gloved hand!

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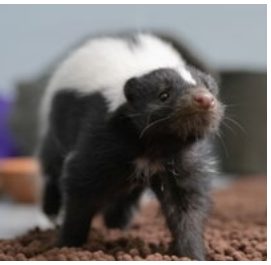
Fall 2026



The National Aviary welcomed TWO new Striped Skunk sisters from the Cincinnati Zoo, monikered **Petunia and Daisy** after a two-round public naming contest! Visitors get a chance to meet them during Expert Talks and feedings during our fall theme, ***Forests* Presented by Peoples**. Immerse yourself in the fall feeling with cozy, seasonal décor. Meet incredible forest species. Caretakers can relax as kids explore **Interactive Play Spaces** where they can 'build' a log cabin, cozy up in a storybook Nook, and even put on a fun puppet show. **Get General Admission tickets now at *aviary.org*.**

Holiday 2026

This holiday season, visit during **Season's Greetings Saturdays** to meet the Grinch, come back for Holiday Brunch or Breakfast with Santa, and be sure to visit our **Gift Shop** to help stuff your stockings! You can also experience the return of ***Jingle Bell Flock***, the Aviary's holiday-themed singalong bird show featuring feathered twists on your favorite holiday classics.

Immersive Bird Shows

Before Jingle Bell Flock swoops in, the National Aviary's most immersive bird show to date, ***Passport to Parks***, sunsets. A few lucky travelers may even have one last chance to hand-feed a Curl-crested Aracari!

Book Visit Now

10:30 am	**Penguin Feeding** *Penguin Point*
10:30 am	**Hand-feed Rainbow Lorikeets** *Canary's Call | Presented by DollarBank*
11:00 am	***Passport to Parks* Show** *Presented by AAA Travel* *Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone™ Theater*
11:30 am	**Tropical Rainforest Feeding** *Tropical Rainforest*
12:30 pm	***Forested Wetlands* Feeding** *Wetlands*
12:30 pm	**Hand-feed Rainbow Lorikeets** *Canary's Call | Presented by DollarBank*
1:00 pm	***Forest Friends:* Expert Talk** Featuring a Skunk & Other Forest Friends! *Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone™ Theater*
2:00 pm	***Passport to Parks* Show** *Presented by AAA Travel* *Helen M. Schmidt FliteZone™ Theater*
2:15 pm	**Hand-feed Rainbow Lorikeets** *Canary's Call | Presented by DollarBank*
3:30 pm	**Tropical Rainforest Feeding** *Tropical Rainforest*
4:00 pm	**Penguin Feeding** *Penguin Point*
4:15 pm	**Hand-feed Rainbow Lorikeets** *Canary's Call | Presented by DollarBank*

= *Requires additional ticket or fee. Please purchase at our Guest Services Desk.*

National Aviary admission is included with **Animal Encounters, and Members get additional discounts.** Schedule your Animal Encounter today, starting at just $16 more than general admission. **Book your next Animal Encounter online before you visit!**

Earlier this year, a non-feathered friend took up residence in the Grasslands habitat alongside our flock of songbirds:

Willy the Southern Three-banded Armadillo! Willy is thriving in his new "digs," which has plenty of space to burrow and scurry around. Stop by the Grasslands on your next visit and say hello to him!

Night in the Tropics guests grooving to live entertainment

Guests Sailed to a *Sunset Riviera* Getaway

Our showstopping annual fundraiser, *Night in the Tropics* Presented by UPMC Health Plan, looked a little different this year.

Due to the Canadian wildfire smoke wafting heavily across Pittsburgh, our incredible team pivoted last-minute to bring the event indoors, ensuring the safety of all guests, staff, and animals. This change in plans didn't stop *Night in the Tropics: Sunset Riviera* from being an extraordinary success, raising a record-breaking $400,000+ in support of the National Aviary's work to save birds and protect habitats. Nearly 1,000 attendees danced their way around the nautical-themed summer party, enjoying live music, up close experiences with feathered friends, refreshing drinks, and delicious food from local eateries!

SAVE THE DATE:
Night in the Tropics 2027 is on Friday, July 16!

The National Aviary Hosts Survivor 50 Challenge

On Saturday, February 7, more than 1,000 people from Pennsylvania and neighboring states were led to the National Aviary, through hints posted on the *Survivor* Instagram account, to find the hidden immunity idol for the Survivor 50 Challenge. The first clue led them to Canary's Call Presented by Dollar Bank, and then to the Wetlands habitat where the immunity idol was displayed. Fans lined up to take a photo with the idol which entered them to win a FREE trip to attend the live finale of *Survivor's* 50th season! Fans also got to meet past *Survivor* contestants Heidi Lagares and Sierra Wright.

Sierra Wright posing with the immunity idol in the Wetlands habitat

Female Guam Kingfisher (sihek) chick that hatched in Spring 2026

Kingfisher Chronicles: Guam Kingfisher Updates

Guam Kingfishers (locally known as sihek) have been listed as Extinct in the Wild by the IUCN since the 1980s, having been decimated by invasive Brown Tree Snakes.

In 2024, nine sihek, including three that hatched at the National Aviary, were released onto the Brown Tree Snake-free island of Palmyra Atoll as part of the Sihek Recovery Program, marking the first time these tiny birds have flown in the wild in four decades.

Fewer than 150 sihek remain in the world. The Sihek Recovery Program, of which the National Aviary is a proud partner, uses a two-step approach to help grow this species' numbers. Some birds remain in expert care to maintain a genetically healthy population; others may be released into the wild (like the original nine in 2024). Together, these efforts are working toward one goal: establishing a healthy, self-sustaining wild population.

This year, the Aviary not only welcomed a mature adult sihek pairing from fellow AZA-accredited institution, Disney's Animal Kingdom, we also hatched FOUR chicks year-to-date; three males and one female! Two of these hatchlings may end up making the journey into the wild later this year, and are currently being housed in a bio secure quarantine at Disney's Animal Kingdom, monitored by dedicated staff who will ultimately determine the final sihek "flying" to Palmyra. Will either of them go? Stay tuned to find out, and follow along on our social media channels as Senior Aviculturist Bri Crane, who has hatched 12 sihek at the Aviary, goes along for the international ride!

Updates from the Wild

Mames in the wild; Photo Courtesy of Martin Kastner-ZSL

This year brings the potential for new life in the wild on Palmyra Atoll, as our very own Mames and Långet have begun incubating eggs! Although the eggs were not fertile (which is normal for first-time parents), every egg laid offers hope for future hatchings, bringing these Extinct in the Wild birds one step closer to establishing a healthy population in the wild.

Mames also holds the record for "Heavyweight of Palmyra" at 78.4 grams! He saw a 32% increase in body weight in just a little over a year.

Learn More

Nesting in Namibia

African Penguins are Critically Endangered: Only 9,000 mature breeding pairs remain in the wild. This fall, as part of the AZA SAFE Program, the National Aviary sent Chris Gaus, Assistant Manger of Animal Care, to Namibia to help deploy artificial nest burrows for the third year in a row! Stay tuned on our social media and website for updates!

Upcoming Fall Events

Brushes & Birds: Great Argus

Thursday, October 15 | 3 – 5:30 pm
Non-Members: $45 | Members: $40 | Includes General Admission

Join Maria DeSimone Prascak of Maria's Ideas (*mariasideas.com*) for an exciting edition of Brushes & Birds, designed for painters of all abilities! Follow Maria's step-by-step instructions and paint your very own portrait of Gus, the Aviary's beloved Great Argus. Come early for some inspiration and see Gus in the Tropical Rainforest habitat!

Learn More

Friendsgiving Brunch

Sunday, November 15 | Seatings at 11 am & 12:45 pm
Adults: $55 per person; Children 12 and under: $35
Includes General Admission

Kick off the holiday season and gather with friends and family alike to enjoy a delightful Friendsgiving Brunch in The Garden Room! Savor mouthwatering entrées crafted by Atria's Specialty Catering. Add on a seasonal brunch cocktail and take in stunning views of the fall foliage in the surrounding park. Then, explore the Aviary's free flight habitats with a brunch-exclusive scavenger hunt!

Learn More

Owl-O-Ween

Sat. & Sun., October 17-18 & 24-25 | 11 am – 3 pm
Included with General Admission

Learn about nature's most elusive creatures and what makes them special during *Owl-O-Ween*! Kids can collect treats and enjoy owl-themed crafts and activities. PLUS, wear your most spellbinding costume and join the Halloween festivities: meet an owl Animal Ambassador during a sp-OO-ky Meet and Greet!

Learn More

Become a National Aviary Member to enjoy FREE admission and discounts on Animal Encounters, Gift Shop purchases, and much more!

Choose the level that fits your needs:

- ***NEW!*** **Family/Grandparent:** *2 named adults and up to 6 children - **$120***
- **Family Plus:** *3 named adults, up to 6 children - **$145***
- **Premium:** *Up to 8 guests (adults or children!) - **$199***
- **Dual:** *One named adult and their guest - **$99***
- **Individual:** *One named adult - **$75***
- **Senior:** *One named adult, 60+ - **$65***

Joint Memberships with the Children's Museum

- **Family with Children's Museum:** *Family Membership AND a Children's Museum Membership for 5 - **$250***
- **Family Plus with Children's Museum:** *Family Plus Membership AND a Children's Museum Membership for 6 - **$310***

Join Our Flock!

Upcoming Holiday Events

Season's Greetings Saturdays

Saturday, November 28 and December 5, 12, & 19
10 am - 2 pm
Included with General Admission

Don't be a Grinch...meet him, and his stink, stank, skunk friend or owl buddy! Get in the holiday spirit during Season's Greetings Saturdays with fun photo ops and festive activities for the whole family! Don't worry - Santa will make an appearance on Saturday, December 5 alongside his penguin helper while the Grinch goes back to Mount Crumpit for the day.

Learn More

Species Spotlight: African Penguin

Thursday, December 3 | 2 - 4 pm | 18+
*Non-Members: **$30** | Members: **$25***

The National Aviary's African Penguin colony is a favorite of visitors and staff alike. During this in-depth class for adults, **MEET an African Penguin Animal Ambassador and learn more about the conservation challenges its wild counterparts face.** Learn from an Aviary expert who helps lead the Saving Animals from Extinction® African Penguin Program about our conservation collaboration that spans the Atlantic Ocean.

Learn More

Holiday Brunch

Sunday, December 6 & 13 | Seatings at 11 am & 12:45 pm
*Adults: **$55** per person; Children 12 and under: **$35***
Includes General Admission

Gather with your friends, family, and fellow foodies for a fabulous spread of seasonal-inspired dishes crafted by Atria's Specialty Catering. After your meal, you and your favorite people can explore enchanting seasonal holiday décor and immersive habitats using a brunch-exclusive scavenger hunt.

Learn More

Check everyone off your list in our Gift Shop!

From birding essentials to handmade jewelry to cozy sweatshirts and socks, you'll find something for all your loved ones — and maybe a little something for yourself! Stay tuned for our Holiday Gift Guide.

Shop Now!

The National Aviary's new male juvenile Brown Pelican (left) alongside longtime resident pelican, Ralph (right)

Donor Society

Thank you to the following individual supporters who made donations of $500+ so far in 2026. Your generosity helps fund the care of our animals. To be a part of our Donor Society, contact Ted.Bartlett@aviary.org or 412-258-9433.

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