

National Zoological Park Branch Library

Kay A. Kenyon

SUMMARY. The National Zoological Park Branch of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries is dedicated to supporting the specialized information needs of the Zoo in its commitment to science, education, recreation, and conservation. The library's history, collection, programs, services, and relations with other zoo libraries are described.

INTRODUCTION

The National Zoological Park (NZP) Branch library is one of an increasing number of zoo and aquarium libraries which have been created or expanded to support their institutions' goals in the areas of education, research, recreation, and conservation.

Unlike other zoo libraries, the NZP Branch is part of a larger library system—the Smithsonian Institution Libraries (SIL). While only one professional librarian provides on-site services such as reference, circulation, interlibrary loans, and collection development and management, a centrally located team of other SIL staff provides support services such as administration, acquisitions, cataloging, and book conservation.

The purpose of the NZP Branch of the SIL is to supply the information and research needs of the staff at the National Zoo, e.g., curators, keepers, researchers, veterinarians, pathologists, lab technicians, nutritionists, educators, administrators. There are 320 permanent Zoo staff members plus numerous part-time and visiting

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researchers. The zoo library staff also responds to inquiries from other Smithsonian staff, scholars, scientists, writers, and the general public in the fields of zoology, veterinary medicine, and related disciplines. It also serves as a major link in the national network of zoo and aquarium libraries by supporting a newsletter, preparing bibliographies, and participating in other cooperative activities.

HISTORY

The history of the NZP Branch parallels the history of the National Zoological Park. Established in 1898, the year of the Zoo's founding, the library, housed in the administrative building (Holt House), began as a small collection of books and pamphlets on animal management and zoology. Over the next few decades, the library grew slowly. SIL provided some assistance, especially in cataloging and binding. Then, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Zoo expanded, adding new departments, exhibits, programs, and staff. In turn, the library grew to accommodate the needs generated by the Zoo's rapid growth. In 1972 SIL sent a professional librarian to the Zoo part-time to manage the collection. In 1973 the library was relocated to the Hospital/Research building. Four years later, after outgrowing that space, it was moved to its present location in the Education/Administration Building. In 1975 the Zoo acquired a 3,150-acre conservation and research facility near Front Royal, Virginia. A collection of materials was established on-site under the direction of the Zoo librarian. In 1979 the first full-time professional librarian was hired. Since that time, the library has steadily increased its holdings and added selected subjects such as horticulture and invertebrates, reflecting the Zoo's goal of integrating plants and animals into a biological park concept.

COLLECTION

The NZP Branch's collection consists of approximately 3,700 monographs, 3,300 bound journal volumes (320 current periodical titles), and over 9,000 unbound pieces and ephemera. The library currently collects material in the fields of animal behavior, care of captive animals, veterinary medicine, pathology, animal nutrition,

ecology, animal conservation and endangered species, zoology, and horticulture. Like most zoo libraries, the NZP Branch maintains a collection of zoo and aquarium ephemera including newsletters, annual reports, animal inventories, brochures, and studbooks. It also keeps NZP's annual reports and the publications of its staff. Most of the Zoo's archival material, however, is housed in the Smithsonian Archives.

The collection emphasizes current material. However, there is a small collection of old books and journals dating from the mid-1800s. Any rare book found in the collection is transferred to SIL's Special Collections Branch, which has a temperature and humidity controlled atmosphere.

The collection is primarily in English, with some German material, and is composed mainly of American and European imprints plus a few serials published in Africa, Japan, and Australia.

Although the librarian generally uses the indexes found in online databases, the library does own the printed version of *Zoological Record* (Sections *Pisces, Mammalia, Aves, and Reptilia and Amphibia*) dating back to volume 1 (1864). It also acquires frequently-used abstracting tools such as *Veterinary Bulletin*, *Animal Behavior Abstracts*, *Nutrition Abstracts Series A & B*, and *Wildlife Disease Review*.

Most of the serial subscriptions in the collection are technical and specialized, such as *Journal of Zoo Animal Medicine* and *Zoo Biology*, although there are a few serial subscriptions to general magazines such as *Audubon* and *National Wildlife*. Other valuable resources found in the collection include older titles such as the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* dating from volume 1 (1832), and *Journal of Mammalogy* dating from volume 1 (1919-1920). The library also owns a complete set of the *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Diseases in Zoo Animals*.

In maintaining the collection, the NZP Branch is fortunate to have its valuable books repaired by the SIL's Book Conservation Laboratory. New items, paperbound monographs and serials, and routine repairs, are sent to a commercial bindery through the SIL Binding Unit.

Access to the collection is through two computer terminals in the branch and others located throughout the SIL system. NZP Branch

holdings are included with the other SIL holdings in an online catalog, i.e., the Smithsonian Institution Bibliographic Information System (SIBIS). Manufactured by Geac and modified for SIL, access is by author, title, author-title, subject, keyword, and number (call number, ISBN, OCLC). Being "user-friendly," SIBIS has been greeted with much enthusiasm by zoo staff. The librarian also uses two other modules on SIBIS—Acquisitions and E-mail. Two others, Serial Records and Circulation, are in the planning stages.

PROGRAMS OF NZP

The library's function is to supply the information needs of the NZP staff. This section describes some of the long-term goals and programs of the National Zoo as they affect the NZP Branch library's operation.

The National Zoological Park is dedicated to

public education about the welfare of animals, recreation of visitors, advancement of biological and veterinary science, and conservation. In cooperation with zoos throughout the world, the National Zoo works to save endangered species by using the most modern techniques of reproductive biology and animal husbandry and by promoting habitat preservation.¹

The animal departments (made up of curators and keepers) focus on the care, exhibition, and study of the animals in the zoo from the largest African elephant to the smallest hissing cockroach. The Zoo is increasing its focus on invertebrates and on plant/animal mixed species enclosures that create a more natural ecosystem. The animal departments also contribute to education and aid other zoos. The Departments of Animal Health and of Pathology investigate the causes, prevention, and treatment of disease in captive animals. They examine problems of reproductive physiology. The medical departments also play a major role in pre- and post-doctoral training of zoo veterinarians and other medical specialists. The Department of Zoological Research provides scientific support for conservation, research, and education. It also promotes cooperative exploration of general research problems with scientists from other institutions. The research staff studies animal communication, genetics, reintroduction,

duction of animals into the wild, and nutritional studies of mammal milk composition. The Department of Conservation is dedicated to saving rare and endangered species by breeding programs and research. It aims to further the cause of tropical conservation, particularly by offering a wildlife conservation training course to students from developing nations. The library also supports zoo field researchers working in countries such as Brazil, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela.

The NZP Branch provides services and materials to other departments as well. The Office of Education supplies information to visitors about such issues as the role of zoos in wildlife conservation and develops learning labs, school and outreach programs, and exhibits. The Office of Public Affairs organizes public lectures, symposiums, news releases and other public events. The Registrar tracks animal regulations, animal transport, and animal records. The Office of Management Services is involved in personnel and accounting. The library also serves support services such as the Office of Facilities Management, the Office of Police and Safety, and the Office of Design and Exhibit Planning. Within the support units the library especially supports the Horticulturist and Landscaping units. The library also provides services to the permanent staff of FONZ (Friends of the National Zoo), although its docents and volunteers rely primarily on FONZ's own small collection of books.

SERVICES

A zoo library's location poses a special challenge because staff in a zoo are spread out throughout the institution. At the National Zoo, the library shares a building with the administrative and education offices and FONZ at one end of the Zoo's 163-acre park. The hospital and research staffs are located at the opposite end of the park. The animal curators, keepers, and support staff are distributed in the middle. The staff at the Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal is sixty miles away.

The National Zoological Park Branch has met this challenge by bringing the library to the staff. Some reference material is duplicated and about half of the library's book collection is distributed in various locations throughout the park on indefinite loan. These sub-

collections are maintained by the librarian. The librarian also routes a monthly "current awareness bulletin" to staff at NZP as well as to the Conservation Center and to affiliated researchers working in Brazil and Venezuela. This bulletin includes the tables of contents of current journals and a list of new acquisitions.

The Branch library also provides the staff with online literature searches using DIALOG. The most often used databases include BIOSIS, CAB ABSTRACTS, LIFE SCIENCES, ZOOLOGICAL RECORD, and MEDLINE. Searches may include any topic from the captive management of beavers or calcium balance of lizards to artificial insemination of pandas or pathology of the golden lion tamarin. The librarian also produces bibliographies upon request. A microcomputer with its word processing capabilities has proven helpful in this endeavor.

The NZP Branch also borrows from other libraries. It relies heavily on loans from other SIL branches such as the National Museum of Natural History and Office of Horticulture Branches, and from other area libraries such as the National Agricultural Library, the National Library of Medicine, and the Library of Congress. Access to the OCLC database, as well as the use of a commercial document delivery service, helps in locating and obtaining materials.

The public may use the zoo library by appointment during working hours, 8:00 am-4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Reference service is available, but material must be used on the premises. Photocopying is available for a charge. The public may also borrow materials through their local libraries on interlibrary loan.

NETWORKING

The NZP Branch library serves as a major link between other zoo and aquarium librarians. Most zoo and aquarium librarians are members of the American Association of Zoological Park and Aquarium Librarians Special Interest Group (AAZPA/LSIG). The LSIG meet once a year at the AAZPA Annual Conferences. Its newsletter, *Library News for Zoos and Aquariums*,² is edited and produced three times a year at the National Zoo library. Circulating to more than 200 zoo people, it serves a dual purpose—it is a forum for communication and sharing of materials and ideas among zoo and aquarium librarians, and it is an important communication link

between zoo and aquarium librarians and zoo professional staff. Members of the LSIG as well as the NZP Branch Librarian produce and share bibliographies for the zoo profession and often provide library services to those zoos without librarians. More and more zoo librarians are being asked to advise zoos anticipating expansion or creation of libraries at their institutions. The NZP librarian is also a member of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) and occasionally receives information and advice from this organization.

FUTURE PLANS

The National Zoological Park Branch library expects a slowing down of new acquisitions due to limited space and escalating serial prices. However, with the help of SIL, it will continue to provide professional library service to the Zoo. Cooperation with other zoo librarians will continue to increase as the need for libraries in zoos grows.

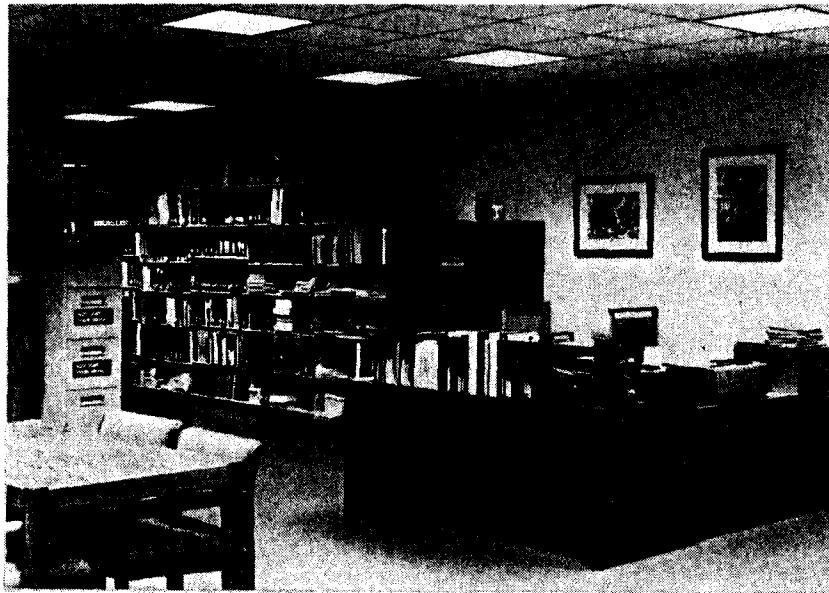


FIGURE 1

STATISTICS

Name of Zoo	National Zoological Park Washington, D.C.
Date Founded	1898
Name of Library	National Zoological Park Branch, Smithsonian Institution Libraries
Telephone	202/673-4771
Name of Library Director	Kay A. Kenyon, Chief Librarian
Library Collection Size	
Number of Monographs	3,700
Number of Bound Journals	3,300
Number of Subscriptions	300
Main Subjects Collected	Animal behavior, veterinary medicine, pathology, animal nutrition, zoology, wildlife conservation and endangered species, ecology, horticulture
Staff size	1 Professional
Online searching done	Yes (for SI staff only)
Interlibrary loans made	Yes
Names of network affiliations	OCLC, American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums Librarians Special Interest Group

NOTES

1. *Smithsonian Year 1986*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987: p. 63.
2. *Library News for Zoos and Aquariums*. Oct 1982—. Published tri-yearly by Smithsonian Institution Libraries, National Zoological Park Branch, Washington, D.C. 20008, Kay Kenyon, ed.