Happy Friday Everyone!

This week was all about birds, and our campers were amazed at many birds they found throughout the zoo!

Our first stop were the flamingos, and we spent a lot of time watching the graceful birds as they sifted through the water for their food. Some of the campers noticed that many of our flamingos were standing on one leg while they rested in the shade. Mr. Nick came up with a fun game that everyone could try. He had us practicing different ways to balance. We tried balancing on one foot, then the other, then on our tip toes- the flamingos make it look easy, but it was really hard! Blue camp even tried to balance in a pyramid!

The campers were shocked to come across our next bird friends - the chickens! At the zoo, our chickens are free to roam around as much as they want, so these birds aren’t found in an enclosure. We made sure not to get too close and to give the chickens their space. It was fun to see them peck around for food and the campers loved watching them run off the path as people came by. The keepers explained to us that the chickens have an important role to play at the zoo, too. They sit on the eggs of some of our more exotic birds and help raise their babies for them. The campers were fascinated to find out what great parents the chickens are.

The keepers also told us about one of the most special birds in the zoo, and the campers had to go and meet them for themselves! The birds are called St. Vincent’s Amazon parrots, and what makes this bird special is that the Houston Zoo was the first zoo in the world to hatch this species in captivity. Now we have nine St. Vincent’s that live at the zoo, and they have really fun names like Springer, Bequia and Buccament. When the babies are born, they are all white and fluffy and as they get older they will get their beautiful green, gold and blue feathers. These birds were fun to watch as they used their toes and their beaks to climb around.

Suddenly, the campers heard a lot of chattering and chirping from down the sidewalk. It was the red-billed blue magpie and she was so excited to see us! She jumped up and down and followed us all over the exhibit. Mr. Nick told the campers that magpies are great copy-cats and they can mimic the sounds of other birds and even people. We spent the next few minutes walking around the other exhibits and listening to all of the different bird sounds we could hear. The campers practiced making their own bird sounds too!

Before we left the birds, we made a final stop at Stormy the bird bank! Our campers were so inspired by the birds we met that they wanted to make a donation to the zoo to help save birds in the wild. Each of our campers loved getting to “feed” Stormy pennies from our change collection.

It was great week with our feathered friends, and we can’t wait for next week when our campers join us to monkey around learn all about the primates. We are sure to have even more fun!

- Ms. Kelly and the Camp Zoofari Team