



Liberty Wildlife

Education Program

Summer Bird and Reptile Handling Guidelines

The heat of summer in The Valley Of The Sun is manageable, but can be dangerous to both humans and animals alike if proper care is not taken. We want practice time with our education animals to be possible in the summer time but we need to pay extra respect to the heat and to our ambassador friends.

You may notice that with the exception of vultures you don't see many birds of prey flying or soaring in the heat of the day through the summer months down here on the desert floor. Little song birds are more plentiful at our backyard feeders in the early morning and are very scarce by mid-day. Reptiles are under a shady overhang. They all recognize the need to use cooler hours for foraging and hunting, and the safety in being still and quiet in the heat of the day.

In order to keep Education Volunteers in practice, and both volunteers and animals safe, these guidelines need to be followed for the summer:

Aim to be done with practice time by 9:00 a.m.

- There are people at Liberty really early in the summer – 6:00 -7:00 so you won't be alone on the property.
- If you are soloing we truly expect you to be done by 9:00.
- Be sure to always have a water spray bottle available and use it as needed. Put animals away early if asked to do so or if you think they are too hot.

If you are doing handling practice with a reptile, please sit inside – you may need to check availability of space ahead of time. For example, there won't be room if a vet review is going on.

Make appointments with Practice Partners please

- Practice Partners who make time for you during a Hand Feed shift will have less time available in the summer. You should make appointments year round, but in the summer it is REALLY hard to fit someone in unexpectedly.
- Be accepting of reduced availability. Practice Partner time may be limited if they are doing a hand feed shift – humans need to be done earlier in the heat in order to avoid heat stroke themselves and they are spending limited time with each animal.

Practice extra flexibility

- We do bring most of our education birds out daily right through the summer to weigh them and feed them. However, in general hand feeders are not sitting out with birds but are getting them back into their enclosures with fresh water and an occasional spray down very quickly.
 - Please skip the boxing of birds during solo practice.
 - Boxing birds and glove exchanges during a Practice Partner session are at the discretion of your Practice Partner – they may decide to have you skip it if the bird is too hot, and that could mean you end up with an additional practice later in the year to assure proficiency.