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Media Contact: Tiffany Ruddle
312-742-5791
TRuddle@lpzoo.org

Lincoln Park
Zoo

How Much Wood Would a Groundhog Chuck? *Lincoln Park Zoo groundhog experts tackle questions on Feb. 2*

(Chicago – Jan. 31, 2011) Is there six more weeks of winter or is spring right around the corner? Snoozing Chicago groundhogs, aka woodchucks, might not be ready to take questions in early February, but lucky for them Lincoln Park Zoo experts have the answers.



On February 2, zoo researchers will be responding to groundhog-related queries on Lincoln Park Zoo’s [Twitter feed](#) and [Facebook page](#), as well as posting live updates from the field and shedding some light on what – if anything – groundhogs have to do with weather prediction.

“The origins of this quirky myth are a little fuzzy,” said Liza Lehrer, a research coordinator at the zoo’s Urban Wildlife Institute. “Groundhogs are almost always still hibernating in early February, and we have no evidence that they possess psychic abilities of any kind.”

Lehrer would know, as she has spent the last few months getting the inside scoop about Chicago-area groundhogs and has been studying the creatures for years.

Lincoln Park Zoo’s Urban Wildlife Institute aims to solve problems that arise when wild animals and humans share the same space. Groundhogs, often deemed a nuisance animal due to their penchant for digging deep burrows in residential areas, are a great case study.

Researchers from the zoo and the University of Illinois use radio tracking devices to follow groundhogs that have been moved from their original habitats. And what are they hoping to find out?



“Do movements and survival of relocated groundhogs vary from those of groundhogs that are not moved? Do relocated groundhogs create conflict in their new homes? Do they attempt to return to their original locations? We can apply that knowledge to other cases, like coyotes, turtles, and bird species,” said Urban Wildlife Institute Director Seth Magle, PhD.

So tune in to social media where Magle, Lehrer, and the Lincoln Park Zoo team will do their best this Groundhog Day to shed some light on any and all woodchuck wonderings.

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ABOUT CHICAGO'S LINCOLN PARK ZOO

Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo, a historic landmark founded in 1868, is dedicated to connecting people with nature by providing a free, family-oriented wildlife experience. A leader in conservation science both globally and locally, the zoo exemplifies the highest quality animal care and educational outreach. The not-for-profit zoo, managed by The Lincoln Park Zoological Society, is a member-supported organization and one of the nation's only free, privately managed zoos. For more information, call (312)742-2000 or visit www.lpzoo.org.