

Lincoln Park Zoo Penguin Experts

Dave Bernier, General Curator

Dave Bernier has been working at Lincoln Park Zoo for more than twenty years and has managed small and large mammals, birds, reptiles and almost every animal in between while at the zoo in addition to managing 80-plus Animal Care staff. Bernier has been pivotal in zoo research in a vast and varied array of topics including ornate box turtle shell composition, armadillo endocrinology and reproduction biology as it pertains to Sichuan takins. Bernier's knowledge has a strong impact on the zoo and has played a critical role in everything from population management to exhibit design including the Robert and Mayari Pritzker Penguin Cove.

Sunny Nelson, Hope B. McCormick Curator of Birds

Sunny Nelson has years of hands-on experience working within different avian species across the globe. Since her arrival to Chicago in 2010, Nelson has been able to spread her wings at Lincoln Park Zoo evolving from Lead Keeper to a Zoological Manager to Curator of Birds. Nelson has been intimately involved in avian conservation efforts from rearing endangered chicks with the Great Lakes Piping Plover Restoration Program to developing a master's project on Bali mynah conservation. Nelson's immense knowledge of birds enables her to provide winged species, including African penguins, optimal care, husbandry and enrichment.

Andy Van Laan, Zoological Manager of Birds

Andy Van Laan's avian care experience ranges from tiny lesser green broadbill to large cinereous vulture. Van Laan has been integral in managing the animal care team for bird species across the zoo including McCormick Bird House, Regenstein Bird of Prey, Hope B. McCormick Swan Pond and now, Robert and Mayari Pritzker Penguin Cove. Using husbandry methods under Van Laan and Nelson's leadership, avian breeding has resulted in successful hatches of European white stork, black-necked stilt, Chilean flamingos, snowy owl and masked lapwing, to name a few.