

# **Amidst Closure, New Bedford's BP Zoo to Offer Virtual Keeper Chats and Nature Connection Activities**

The Buttonwood Park Zoo closed to visitors yesterday, in an effort to help stem the spread of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Mayor's office announced the closure in a press release on Monday afternoon and indicated that the Zoo will be closed until at least Sunday, March 22, 2020. The City is expected to make announcements regarding extended closures of the BPZ00 and other city facilities later this week.

In an effort to keep our community connected during this trying time, the BPZ00 will offer "Virtual Keeper Chats", an opportunity to spend time with Zoo Residents and ask questions in real time to Zoo Keepers and Educators. These chats will happen daily, beginning Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 11:00 am on the Zoo's Facebook page. The videos will also be uploaded to the Zoo's YouTube channel.



“During this challenging time we wanted to create programming that allowed followers to stay connected to the Zoo in a fun and educational way,” said BPZ00 Director, Keith Lovett. “Our daily social media offerings will hopefully brighten everyone’s day while also allowing us to continue with one of our key missions of connecting the community to wildlife and nature.”

Additionally, BPZ00 is posting Nature Connection activities daily on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter; ideas and suggestions that families can do together outside to alleviate stress.

“Spending time in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety, improve mood, and boost feelings of happiness and well-being,” said Carrie Hawthorne, Curator of Education at BPZ00. “We hope families will try these activities and share pictures and stories of how it went on our social media pages, so we can all feel connected as a community.”