

Uptown Gals show takes flight at Dreher Park

the red-and-green macaw, puffed his vivid f and waved to his audience. Harris hawk soared out greenery, gliding over the arena the seritema trotted the wooden stage, leaping rate to catch a toy lizard. ian eagle-owl perched on r's arm.

re like family to zoologic r Alison Hayner, who rge of animal training, ith Alyssa Supranowicz iassa Dolinsky at the old "Wings Over Water" the Palm Beach Zoo at Park.

a: Behind the scenes, we stars before the show. howed us each bird in

in the downtown

os and videos of the st adventures around

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als

v, as well as others. a long, giraffe-like neck, an crowned crane with -style hairdo slowly head with mine, mimi- very move. Charlie the g white whooper swan ed at us and bit Mimi's

r of the birds are either or donated to the zoo. ners have really bonded birds and the trust be- them is apparent. Accord- alison, who has worked oo for 3 1/2 years, positive ment is key to train- animals. Bad behavior ore: good behavior gets t of either a food treat attention. She is a cal with the birds, and really



Uptown Gals

Jessica Lawten & Mimi Perreault

and reiterated the importance of getting to know them. Many days they arrive before 8 a.m. and leave after 6 p.m. First they give the birds a mixture of food, similar to things they would catch in the wild, and then weigh the birds. Often the only way to tell if a bird is sick is by a significant change in its weight.

Alison said they will continue to develop the show during the summer months and gradually add more birds. Before the show, the trainers placed the show birds — the macaw, a seritema, red-billed toucan and red-tail hawk — into their crates and loaded them on a boat to travel across the lake for the show. The Harris hawk and the Eurasian eagle-owl also arrived at the stage area in preparation for their performances.

Jessica: The birds were excellent performers. Alison and Alyssa, hosts of that day's show, engaged the crowd with facts and history as the birds flew back and forth across the lake. They are prepared for anything, as we found out later when they said that the macaw unexpectedly lingered in the air, flying around in circles instead of to the proper perch. He mimicked a little chuckle when he finally landed, as if he was playing a joke on them.

After the show, Alison took us to the bird area where we played with some native Fulvous



THOMAS CORDY/Staff Photographer

Alison Hayner (left), zoologic manager and animal trainer at the Palm Beach Zoo at Dreher Park, and Uptown Gals Jessica (center) and Mimi make friends with Fulvous whistling ducks while a crowned crane keeps an eye on events in the background. Birds are featured in the zoo's new demonstration 'WOW — Wings Over Water.'

Mimi: A grey male nene goose, which was born at the zoo and is native to Hawaii, seemed to think my rings were goose candy and made his best attempt to chew them off my fingers. I tried to feed him duck food, but he wasn't interested. He continued nibbling at my hands, and when I attempted to pet him he swam around the pond in the cage and flapped his wings like a tattered American flag in the wind, getting the other ducks

I tried to nudge him off but he stayed put. I finally had to pick him up and put him back into the water. I knew he took the separation hard — he left me with a paring gift, a little accident on my leg!

Mimi: Visiting the zoo made me feel like a kid again, and the behind the scenes tour made the show even more interesting. Sometimes I wish I could go back to the days of school field trips

days and Sundays at the stage on Bear Lake. The Palm Beach Zoo is at 1301 Summit Blvd. in West Palm Beach.

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