



Milo

During a CT scan to check his sinuses, Flacke intubates Milo the koala with an endotracheal tube to administer inhaled anesthesia and oxygen.

ZOO TALES
BY MARY BROLLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROB MAGILL
🕒 5 MIN.

Animal DrCams

Asked when her fascination with animals began, GABRIELLA FLACKE '97 paused. "Probably before I can remember," she said. "But I have pictures and stories my parents have told me from a very young age."

Encouraged at Bradley by Barbara Frase, professor of biology emerita, and chemistry faculty Michelle Fry and Brad Andersh, she decided to become a veterinarian and conduct research in wildlife conservation.

As an associate veterinarian at Zoo Miami, Flacke works with two other staff vets to care for the zoo's more than 3,500 mammals, reptiles, birds and snakes.

Join us for a photo tour of some of the animals she loves.



Bella

Flacke examines the ear of Bella, an orangutan, as part of a routine preventative health exam after she arrived at Zoo Miami from Seneca Park Zoo in New York.

Why she believes zoos are critical for species conservation:

“Zoos serve an important function in engaging and connecting people with wildlife — people who probably won’t ever be able to see many of these

species in the wild. Another vital function is conservation. There are a lot of coordinated breeding programs for endangered animals to safeguard these populations because, for many of them, there is limited to no safe habitat left in the wild.



Quibble

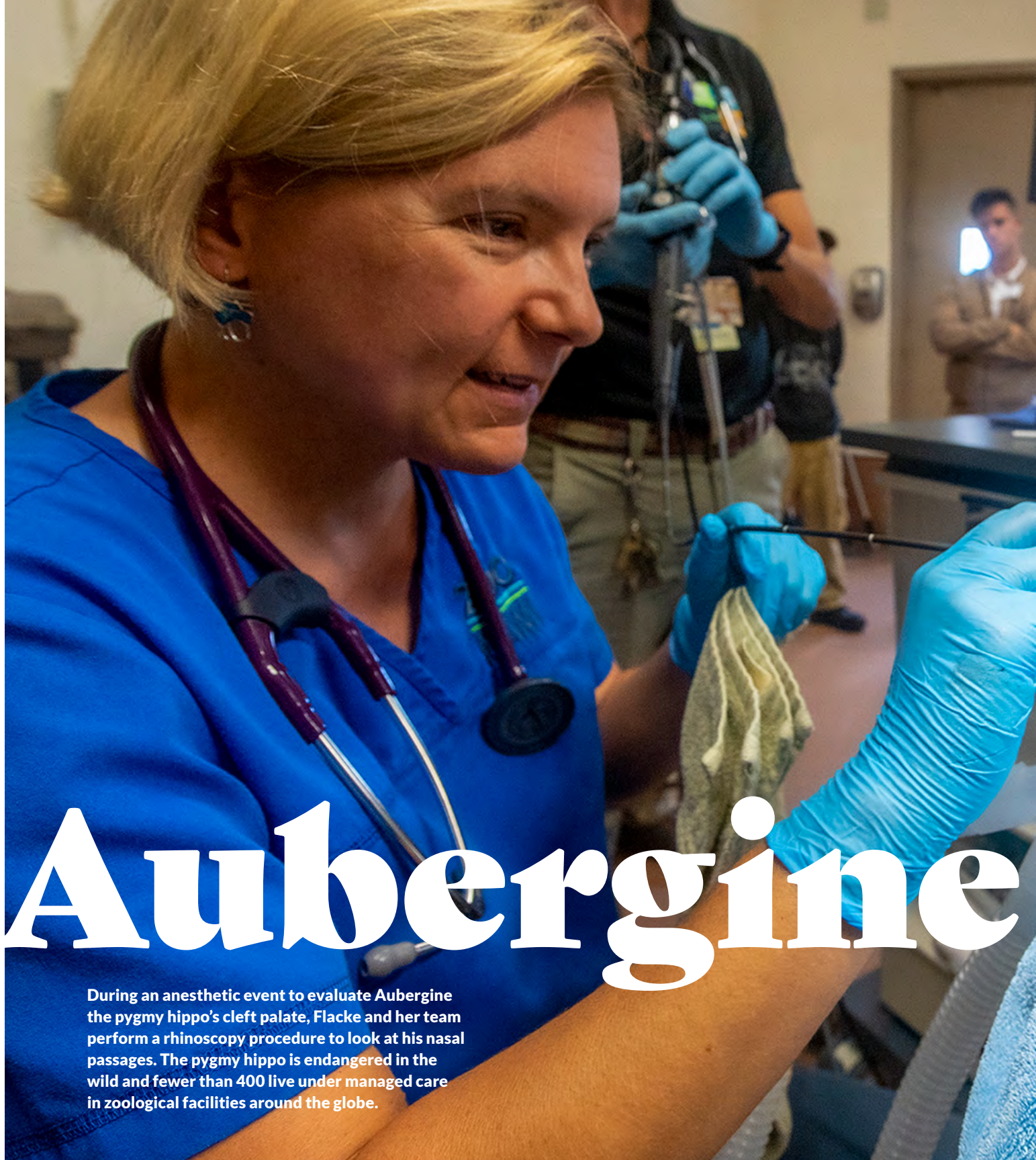
Flacke performs a dental exam on Quibble, an African crested porcupine. Quibble also had his incisors trimmed.

“There’s also a large component of increasing awareness among the public, recruiting people to become interested in science and the planet. Animals that are non-releasable because they’re injured can serve as ambassadors for people to appreciate and learn about. Animals in zoos generally live longer

than their wild counterparts because there’s no predation, and they receive adequate food supplies and medical care when they need it.

“There’s understandably public concern about stress and keeping animals in captivity. We replicate their wild habitat as best we can to minimize stress and maximize welfare,

and everyone would prefer the animals to be in the wild where they ultimately belong. However, the trade-offs are overall a benefit to species conservation, especially as we strive to continually learn and improve animal care and management.”



Aubergine

During an anesthetic event to evaluate Aubergine the pygmy hippo's cleft palate, Flacke and her team perform a rhinoscopy procedure to look at his nasal passages. The pygmy hippo is endangered in the wild and fewer than 400 live under managed care in zoological facilities around the globe.



Why her job is perfect for her:

“It’s a great combination of things. I can do the clinical medicine, I can be involved in research, I am involved in teaching — both undergraduates and veterinary students — and zookeepers, educating them about their animals.

“Zookeepers care for their animals as much as pet owners care about their pets. They know each of them individually, the same way a pet owner knows his or her pet’s quirks and personality.” **B**