

Christmas for the Critters at Ellie Schiller Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

Jo LeCount, membership chairperson for the Friends of Homosassa Springs Wildlife Park, coordinated with the park's Wildlife Care Department to create a special membership drive to raise money for the purchase of animal enrichment toys for the park's wildlife. Her goal was to sell enough new memberships along with donations from employees, volunteers and visitors to buy the sturdy toys that are designed for bears, cougars, otters, foxes and bobcats. The toys came in different shapes including large balls, rings and cylinders with openings to hide treats inside. These toys encourage the animals' natural behaviors including foraging. LeCount and her team successfully raised over \$3,000 to cover the toys and shipping. The toys arrived just before Christmas in time to be distributed by Santa (Art Yerian) along with treats.

The new toys are being thoroughly enjoyed by the park's wildlife.