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## They've got the beat Wild Animal Park's 'Music Days' are a hit with the tyke brigade

By Cheryl Walker

**E**SCONDIDO — There'll be a whole lot of stompin' going on this weekend at the San Diego Wild Animal Park, but it won't be the sound of elephants' feet that visitors will hear.

It'll be much smaller feet keeping time to the music when the park presents its 6th annual "Kids Music Days."

"We started this to give people something to do in the off-season," said Michelle Rieches, operations area manager for special events at the park. "February can be miserable when you're trying to find something to do with your children."

Children and their families will have a chance to sing and play along with North County's Nels and the Peanut Butter Cookies Band as they perform original pieces from their two albums, "Live Sandwiches" and "Live Chickens." Also performing are Jack Straws and Campfire Cathy.

"We have education programs ongoing all the time, but this has really become a favorite and families wait for this each February," Rieches said. "It's designed just for youngsters, so this music is just for them. It's interactive and it's fun."

This event draws at least 1,000 extra people per day to the park. Each group gives two shows so visitors can pick the show they'd



Nels and the Peanut Butter Cookies Band highlights the San Diego Wild Animal Park's 6th annual "Kids Music Days," which kicks off Saturday.

3-month-old baby gorilla, Jamani, and the baby giraffe, Ytuke (Y2K).

This summer the park plans to debut its newest animated character, a rhino.

"We're really excited about this because right now we have just one character, our big teddy bear, Parker, who only visits during the Festival of Lights," Rieches said. "The new rhino is just so darling and we're excited because a rhino is our logo. We have yet to name him, but it's got to be something perfect."

Other activities include Butterflies and Orchids in the spring and the Festival of Lights at Christmas.

Nels and the Peanut Butter Cookies will play at 1 and 3 p.m. and Jack Straws and Campfire Cathy will perform at noon and 2 p.m. Saturday, Sunday and Monday

at the park, 15500 San Pasqual Valley Road, Escondido. The shows are included in park admission of \$21.95 for adults and \$14.95 for children 3 to 11. For more information, call (619) 685-3201.

like to attend.

"Nels and the Peanut Butter Cookies Band has worked with the zoo a lot," Rieches said. "They are high-spirited and have lots of antics."

While at the park, families will have plenty of time to see all the animals including the

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