



# The **Tide**

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Photo by Glenn Rohrbacker

# Visitors welcome: Game Farm celebrates 50 years

BY GLENN ROHRBACKER

Gates opened for the 2019 season, celebrating the Long Island Game Farm's 50th anniversary. During the opening, various animals welcomed the company of visiting families, who took advantage of spring break.

During the opening weeks, until mid-May, guests will have the opportunity to learn about the rescued animals that now have safe homes at the Game Farm as well as the new baby animals, including chicks, bunnies, ducklings and kid goats. Visitors will also be able to pet and hand-feed the animals once they are born as well as enjoy the amusement rides, including the carousel, spinning teacups and pony rides.

According to farm officials, some of the popular animals are still in a Florida sanctuary, where they go to escape the cold weather (just like a lot of New Yorkers). Giraffes, camels, lemurs and more will make their appearances in the middle of May.

Stanley and Diane Novak founded the Long Island Game Farm in 1970, but its

true origin is 70 years earlier. The house on the Game Farm was built in 1900, the barn was constructed before the end of the 19th century, and the property was once a sheep farm. On the park's first opening day, the admission price was \$2 for adults and \$1.50 for children.

While there were not as many animals on the park back then, there were a few animals that the Game Farm no longer exhibits. In the 1970s, the Novaks featured a sea lion show.

Each year since then, the park switches up the shows by introducing new animals and animal shows, such as this year's "Squawk! The Amazing Bird Show," which performs daily starting May 23 through Sept. 2.

Today, the Game Farm is operated by three generations of Novaks: co-owners Diane and her daughter, Melinda, along with granddaughter, Chela.

"My family started the park when I was 9. I've witnessed the Game Farm grow from just a piece of land on a road, to an enriching environment for families of all ages," Melinda Novak said. "As each year

has come and gone, I still look forward to seeing happy little faces light up the farm, whether they be those of our nursery animals or visiting children."

For the month of May, the park is open Thursdays to Sundays, May 2-19. During these dates, the park is open on Thursdays

and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Weekend hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Long Island Game Farm will be open seven days per week, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Sunday starting Wednesday, May 22. For more information, visit [www.longislandgamefarm.com](http://www.longislandgamefarm.com). ■



Who's the G.O.A.T.? This guy has his own enclosure all to himself, but still welcomes passersby who may have some treats.



One of two wallabies at the game farm, hailing all the way from Australia, and a cousin of the kangaroo.



Stan (right) and Yukon (left) run over for some treats from their adopted mother and owner of the LI Game Farm, Melinda Novak.

MT/Rohrbacker