Award Recognizes 25 years or More of Continuous AZA Accreditation

In January the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) announced the recipients of the Association’s Quarter Century Award. Established in 2015, this new award acknowledges facilities that have maintained AZA accreditation continuously for 25 years or more, highlighting their commitment to animal care, welfare, conservation, education, and more. The inaugural group of 119 awardees includes many facilities that have successfully achieved AZA accreditation well beyond the 25 year mark.

To achieve accreditation from AZA, these facilities have completed a thorough review to assure that they meet and will continue to meet rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association.

Rescued Sea Otter Pup Finds Home at Shedd Aquarium

As part of a collaborative partnership with Monterey Bay Aquarium, Shedd Aquarium welcomed a 10-week old orphaned southern sea otter pup that was found alone on Carmel Beach in Carmel, California in January. Currently, only twelve North American institutions, including Shedd Aquarium, can provide the necessary space, staff, and experience for stranded sea otter pups. A team of six to eight experts gave the pup constant care and attention.

“There are limited options for stranded otters: reuniting with mother in the wild, rearing for release by a surrogate sea otter mother like the program at Monterey Bay Aquarium, or being placed in an AZA accredited zoo or aquarium. If those options are not available, pups may unfortunately have to be humanely euthanized,” said Tim Binder, executive vice president of animal care for Shedd. “Organizations like Monterey Bay Aquarium are doing critical work to try and reunite these species and when there are no other options – Shedd stands at the ready to assist in urgent animal care needs like providing a permanent home for Pup 719.”

The Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Sea Otter Program has been studying and helping recover the threatened southern sea otter since 1984. The program works with wildlife rescue facilities and other aquariums, such as Shedd Aquarium, to respond to every sea otter that comes ashore in distress along the California coast.

Summer Zoo Camp at Riverbanks Zoo and Garden

Riverbanks Zoo and Garden will host its Summer Zoo Camp, thanks in part to a $200,000 donation from Colonial Life & Accident Insurance Company. Campers will experience up-close animal encounters and tour exhibits behind-the-scenes while learning about the importance of animal body coverings and communication. The Botanical Garden also offers programs featuring garden adventures and the importance of healthy food choices.
Brown Bears Find New Home at Toledo Zoo

Toledo Zoo recently welcomed Dodge, a rescued young male Kodiak bear, as he joined the Yellowstone grizzly cub sisters, Montana and Cody. The zoo has also entered into a partnership with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Kodiak Brown Bear Trust to educate the public about the plight of brown bears and the effects of human/wildlife conflict.

“We would like to thank the Toledo Zoo for their willingness to commit to caring for the rescued Kodiak cub. It is a tremendous responsibility to commit to the long-term care, enrichment and public education that goes along with Dodge. We take placement of orphaned wildlife very seriously and are quite selective of facilities. While it is rare for Kodiak bears to be relocated from Alaska, we are proud to partner with the Toledo Zoo, such a well-respected organization known for providing exceptional animal care.” said Nathan Svoboda, Area Wildlife Biologist – Kodiak Archipelago, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Accredited zoos work in partnership with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state wildlife agencies and other bear conservation organizations in the placement of at-risk, nuisance and orphaned bears.

Save Vanishing Species Stamp

The Save Vanishing Species semipostal stamp benefits the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF), which supports private-public partnerships to protect African and Asian elephants, great apes, marine turtles, rhinos, and tigers in their native habitats.

MSCF programs help to sustain wildlife populations, address threats such as illegal poaching, reduce human-wildlife conflict, and protect essential habitat. By working with local communities, they also improve people’s livelihoods, contribute to local and regional stability, and support U.S. security interests in impoverished regions.

The difference between the cost of the semipostal rate and the first class rate is transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which administers the MSCF. The stamp has generated $2,898,838 since September 2011, and is available for purchase at www.usps.com.

Woodland Park Zoo to Open New Butterfly Exhibit

Visitors to Woodland Park Zoo will be able to get close to butterflies and other animals like potbellied pigs when a new exhibit opens this summer. The new Butterfly Garden also will educate guests about the threats facing butterflies and other pollinators.

With its new Banyan Wilds exhibit showcasing tigers and sloth bears, and a very successful WildLights festival, the zoo in 2015 set an attendance record of 1.3 million guests. It was the third consecutive year of record-breaking attendance at the zoo.

“Thanks to the community’s support, 2015 was a banner year for Woodland Park Zoo. Connecting the hearts and minds of more than one million visitors a year to the wonders of nature gives us hope that we, collectively, can take meaningful action to help ensure a brighter future for our planet for all living things,” said Bruce Bohmke, acting president and CEO. “The exciting, up-close experiences planned for this year are sure to be crowd pleasers.”