

ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS AND AQUARIUMS (AZA) FACTS

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. AZA represents more than 230 institutions in the United States and overseas, which collectively draw more than 183 million visitors every year. These institutions meet the highest standards in animal care and provide a fun, safe, and educational family experience. In addition, they dedicate millions of dollars to support scientific research, conservation, and education programs.

Leaders in Animal Care and Welfare

AZA is the independent accrediting organization for the best zoos and aquariums in America and the world, assuring the public that when they visit an AZA-accredited facility, it meets the highest standards. Less than 10 percent of the 2,800 wildlife exhibitors licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture under the Animal Welfare Act meet the more comprehensive standards of AZA accreditation. The highly trained professionals at AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums provide excellent care for more than 800,000 animals, making them the leading experts in care and animal welfare.

Leaders in Conservation

Conservation is a priority for AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and a key part of their missions. Every year, AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums spend \$160 million on field conservation alone, supporting more than 2,600 projects in 130 countries. To date, the AZA Conservation Grants Fund has provided almost \$7 million in support for 375+ projects worldwide.

AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are leaders in the protection of threatened and endangered species. Through AZA SAFE: Saving Animals from Extinction the entire AZA-accredited zoo and aquarium community is focusing our conservation science, wildlife expertise, and 180+ million visitors on saving species in the wild. The AZA Species Survival Plan® (SSP) Program is a cooperative animal management, breeding, and conservation effort that works to ensure genetically diverse, self-sustaining populations of more than 500 species of animals.

Leaders in Conservation Education

As centers for conservation, AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums provide the public with essential connections to the natural world. More than 50 million visitors to AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are children, making accredited zoos and aquariums essential to science and environmental education. AZA-accredited facilities train 40,000 teachers every year, supporting state science curricula with teaching materials and hands-on opportunities for students who might otherwise have no first-hand experience with wildlife. In fact, there is growing evidence that aquariums and zoos are highly effective at teaching people about science and connecting them to the natural world.

Leaders in Professional Excellence

AZA is dedicated to providing our members with the resources they need to be the best in our profession. AZA facilitates cooperative animal care and conservation programs, hosts two conferences a year, offers numerous networking and professional development opportunities, and much more. Learn more about the benefits of AZA membership.

AZA Website: <https://www.aza.org/>