

FACT SHEET

- The Phoenix Zoo is one of the nation's largest privately owned, non-profit zoological parks, standing on 125 acres in Phoenix's Papago Park. It has not received any operational funding from any municipal source. Approximately half of the Zoo's acreage has been developed.
- The Zoo opened in 1962 as the "Maytag Zoo" by famed appliance family member Robert E. Maytag.
- The Phoenix Zoo is home to approximately 1,300 animals including 200 endangered or threatened birds, mammals and reptiles from around the world. Each lives along one of four distinct trails: Tropics, Africa, Arizona and the Nina Mason Pulliam Children's Trail.
- In the past few years, the Phoenix Zoo has introduced several new animal habitats and visitor amenities including the new primate walk-through exhibit, Monkey Village, a new entry experience and Stingray Bay.
- The Phoenix Zoo is accredited by the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (www.aza.org).
- The Phoenix Zoo is the most popular year-round attraction in metro Phoenix, hosting more than 1.4 million visitors annually.
- The Phoenix Zoo offers a variety of educational programs for children, teenagers and adults. Each year, some 61,000 children take part in the myriad of on going programs.
- The Phoenix Zoo relies heavily on volunteer assistance to maintain daily operations. Throughout the year, more than 400 individual volunteers give of their time at the Zoo.
- The Phoenix Zoo is open every day, rain or shine (excluding December 25). Regular season hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call for summer hours and prices.

Zoo Admission:

Regular Season: Adults \$14, Children \$6, Seniors \$9

Summer: Call for prices.

Kids two and under: FREE throughout the year.

EXECUTIVE STAFF

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Jeff Williamson

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General Curator:

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Director of Visitor Experiences:

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BY THE NUMBERS: FAST FACTS ON THE PHOENIX ZOO

- The Zoo is home to more than 1,300 animals including more than 400 species of mammals, 500 species of birds and 500 species of reptiles and amphibians.
- More than 1.4 million visitors come to the Zoo annually.
- The Zoo's annual budget is about \$19 million.
- The Zoo's principle sources of revenue are: admissions 22%, memberships 17%, educational programs and special events 17%, food service 13%, retail sales 10%, fundraising 9% and group services 9%.
- There are 40,000 member households.
- The Zoo participates in 32 Species Survival Plans to breed and maintain endangered species populations in captivity.
- The Zoo has 160 full-time and 80 part-time employees and 410 volunteers.
- There are about 100 viewing exhibits on four distinct trails: Tropics, Children's Trail, Africa and Arizona.
- The Zoo sits on 125 acres in Phoenix's Papago Park. About 40 of those acres are currently developed.
- More than 1,200 plant varieties make up the Zoo's botanical collection.
- Each year, more than 160,000 visitors ride the Zoo's narrated Safari Train.
- Between education programs and regular admission, the Zoo impacts about 625,000 children each year.
- Nearly 250,000 people visit the Zoo's annual lighting event, ZooLights, during a period of approximately 45 days.
- On average, the Phoenix Zoo pays about \$550,000 on utilities including electricity and water usage. Electric bills in the summer months are about \$10-13,000 each. During the ZooLights holiday light event, it's about \$52,000 for the 45 days of the event.

HISTORY OF THE PHOENIX ZOO

The Phoenix Zoo is the nation's largest privately owned, nonprofit zoological park. In 1961, Robert E. Maytag, a member of the famed appliance family and an active newcomer to Phoenix, gathered friends together founding the Arizona Zoological Society. Their goal was to plan and build a zoo for the Phoenix area.

The community response was enthusiastic, but unfortunately, Maytag did not live to see the completion of his dream: he died unexpectedly six months before the scheduled opening of the zoo. For a short while, the fate of the zoo was uncertain, but the Society and community rallied to its support. The "Maytag Zoo" opened its gates as promised in November of 1962.

In the early years, times were rough. The Zoo struggled to survive without the support from tax-derived governmental treasuries. But stability came with time and community support, and in 1963, the zoo was renamed "The Phoenix Zoo" and grew large and more prosperous through the '60s.

In the 1970's a building boom began at the Zoo adding a dozen or so more exhibits, as well as landscaping and visitor amenities, making the Zoo a more attractive and comfortable place to visit.

From the beginning, the Phoenix Zoo gained an international reputation for its efforts on behalf of wildlife. In its first year of operation, the last seven known Arabian oryx on earth were brought to the Zoo to begin a captive breeding program. It seemed the animal's final stand against extinction. Against all odds, however, it worked - miraculously so. Today, "Operation Oryx" is recognized as one of the greatest wildlife conservation stories in the world. The Zoo celebrated the birth of its 225th oryx in May of 2002.

In the 1980s, the Phoenix Zoo continued growing dramatically, coming closer and closer to Robert Maytag's vision. A new entrance complex was completed in 1985, the African Savanna in 1986 and a new Children's Zoo in 1987. Many of the other existing exhibits underwent remodeling during the same period.

During this same time, further improvements included comprehensive additions to landscaping, extensive remodeling of the Arizona Exhibit, and two new major attractions: Baboon Kingdom and Tropical Flights aviary. The Zoo was also reorganized into a distinctive four-trail system to help emphasize the relationships of the plants and animals and the habitats in which they live. The four trails include Tropics, Children's Trail, Arizona and Africa. The Discovery Trail is the former Children's Trail. In 1997, one of the Zoo's most ambitious exhibits, the Forest of Uco, opened to the public. Lush rainforest landscaping that immerses visitors into the environment surrounds the one-mile walking trail. Uco is home to many species, including the popular spectacled bears.

In 1998, Harmony Farm opened on the Children's Trail. Harmony Farm centers itself around one of the oldest and most recognized buildings at the Zoo, the Big Red Barn. The area is also home to a popular petting zoo area, and a myriad of other domestic animals including sheep, goats and even mules. Its goal is to communicate to visitors the importance of the interrelationships of people, plants and animals in an increasing urban society.

1998 was also a difficult year for the Zoo, as Ruby, the 25 year-old painting elephant who was due to give birth any day, underwent an emergency cesarean section and died due to complications from her pregnancy. Thousands in the Phoenix area adored the world-famous elephant, and a tribute on Veterans Day's brought more than 40,000 visitors to the Zoo. It was triple the highest ever one-day attendance in the Zoo's history. The next year, Ruby's House opened to honor her memory and celebrates nature through a variety of classes in a lush outdoor setting.

In 2000, the Zoo opened Desert Lives, a naturalistic exhibit space and a renovated home to the Arabian oryx and native Arizona bighorn sheep. This award-winning exhibit showcases the animals in a manner that offers beautiful, uninterrupted sight lines of the creatures in their natural settings.

In 2004, the Phoenix Zoo opened Monkey Village - a new primate walk through exhibit. The Zoo also introduced new animals and returning animal favorites such as white rhinos, otters and a jaguar.

In 2006, Stingray Bay opened as a seasonal exhibit and one of the newest hands-on, interactive Zoo features.

In the next several years, the Phoenix Zoo will embark on a period of tremendous change. Our principle objective is to provide meaningful experiences to children and families that are rooted in the natural world - those that focus on real life and real relationships both on grounds and in the community. Efforts in the next five years include exhibit renewal, new joint use administrative building for volunteer, staff and other community partners, and major improvements to the infrastructure, pathways and additions to connect experience services.

PHOENIX ZOO CHRONOLOGY

- April 1961** Robert E. Maytag and friends from the Arizona Zoological Society decide to build a zoo in Phoenix, Arizona. Signs sprout up around Phoenix that call to "Build the Zoo in '62!"
- Jan. 1962** Groundbreaking in Papago Park, Phoenix.
- March 1962** Robert Maytag dies suddenly; his widow, Nancy takes over as president of the Zoological Society.
- Nov. 1962** "Maytag Zoo" opens with Children's Zoo, Arizona Exhibit, and infant gorillas, Hazel and Congo.
- Feb. 1963** The Zoo selected as site for captive breeding program of the endangered Arabian oryx. Only a handful of oryx exist in the world.
- June 1963** New Zoo is struggling and partly to garner additional community support, its name is changed to "The Phoenix Zoo".
- May 1964** First Arabian oryx born in the Phoenix Zoo's program.
- April 1972** Formation of fundraising men's auxiliary, The Wildest Club In Town.
- Nov. 1972** Tenth anniversary; annual attendance reaches 500,000.
- Feb. 1980** The 100th Arabian Oryx is born in the Phoenix Zoo's program. Total world population now exceeds more than 400.
- Jan. 1986** Zoo opens a six-acre African Savanna featuring giraffes, ostriches, gazelles and others.
- Oct. 1987** New Children's Zoo opens with a complete renovation of the Zoo's oldest exhibit.
- Nov. 1987** Twenty-fifth anniversary.
- Oct. 1987** First Boo! at the Zoo Halloween event. Boo! at the Zoo is now a favorite event for more than 21,000 visitors each season.
- Feb. 1988** 200th Arabian oryx born at the Phoenix Zoo. World population now exceeds 1,200.
- Sept. 1988** First ZooFari culinary black-tie fund-raiser.
- April 1990** Ruby, the painting elephant, premieres her artwork at Bishop Gallery in Scottsdale, AZ. Local interest develops into national and international coverage.
- Dec. 1990** Baboon Kingdom opens. Arizona Trail remodeled.
- Dec. 1992** First ZooLights holiday lighting event.
- April 1992** Tropical Flights aviary opens.
- Jan. 1996** Zoo's holiday light festival, ZooLights, reaches attendance of 220,000. Now one of the nation's largest holiday light events.
- May 1996** First endangered Mexican wolves born at Zoo.
- April 1996** Black-footed ferret, part of comprehensive breeding program at the Zoo, is reintroduced back into the wild. The program is a joint effort with Zoo, US Game and Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish.
- Jan. 1997** The Forest of Uco opens. The two million-dollar rainforest exhibit features the endangered spectacled bears and attracts thousands of visitors opening day.
- Oct. 1997** Annual Zoo attendance reaches 1.2 million.
- Nov. 1998** Harmony Farm opens on the Children's Trail (formerly Children's trail). Complete renovation and expansion of petting Zoo and "big red barn" area.
- Nov. 1998** Ruby, the much-loved painting elephant, dies due to complications from pregnancy. She was twenty-five-years-old.
- Nov. 1998** Veteran's Day memorial for Ruby at the Zoo. More than 40,000 visitors come to pay tribute. Triple the highest one-day attendance in the Zoo's history.
- Jan. 2000** Desert Lives opens. Award-winning naturalistic exhibit area for native Arizona bighorn sheep and Arabian oryx.
- May 2002** The Zoo's 225th Arabian oryx is born.
- Nov. 2002** The Phoenix Zoo's 40th Anniversary Celebration.
- April 2003** Opening of Enchanted Forest, a new natural place space for toddler-aged children and their caregivers.
- Spring 2004** Arrival of new jaguar and otters.
- Oct. 2004** Two female white rhinos arrive at the Zoo. Rhinos will make their home in the renovated rhino exhibit that was left vacant after the Zoo's much loved, long-lived rhino, Kehtla, died in 2003.
- Nov. 2004** Opening of Monkey Village, a new walk through exhibit.
- Summer 2005** Zoo introduces new entry experience.
- Nov. 2006** Zoo opens Stingray Bay, a new hands-on experience featuring stingrays and the following year - sharks.
- April 2006** Zoo opens a new Conservation Center on site.
- Spring 2007** Highest-ever spring attendance in Zoo history.