

Wild Times

January | February 2021

DIGITAL

"In times of uncertainty, we can find respite in nature."

Bert Castro
President/CEO



phoenixzoo
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PHOENIX ZOO

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ZooLights

Now – January 31, 2021

HOURS

Now – January 31, 2021

9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Daily) | 8 a.m. (Member Early Entry)

ZooLights

Now – January 31

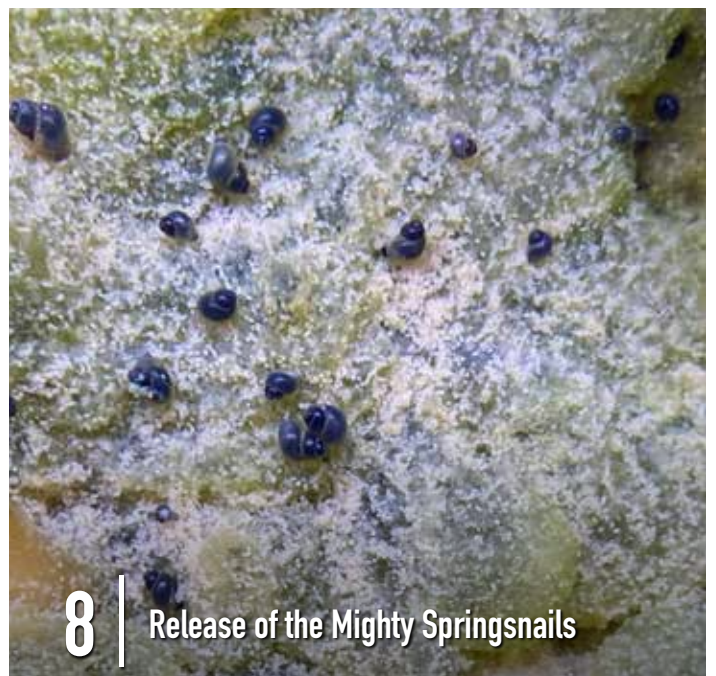
5:30 – 10:30 p.m. (Nightly)

February 1 – May 31, 2021

9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Daily) | 8 a.m. (Member Early Entry)

Please note: Encounters, tours and experiences are not open until general public hours. Also, we do our best to have the majority of our animals in their habitats by opening time, but this cannot be guaranteed.

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Dear Zoo Friends,

I don't know when I've ever been so happy to see a new year begin. Without a doubt, 2020 was an unbelievably difficult year. But the challenges of the year also gave us the opportunity to demonstrate flexibility in our business model and develop innovative ways for people to continue to engage with the Zoo, despite the global pandemic. From Digital Safaris to Cruise the Zoo, our community showed an unbelievable eagerness to learn about wildlife and safely visit the Zoo. The response to our fundraising efforts from the Valley community and beyond was humbling and provided us much needed financial support as we navigated a year that strained our operations beyond our worst nightmare.

As we enter 2021, we want to take a moment to circle back to our commitment to diversity. It might have been easy, and even excusable, for diversity efforts to take a back seat in a year with so many pressing issues. But we promised we would take action that makes our organization more diverse, equitable, inclusive and accessible. We may not have gotten as far along as we'd hoped in 2020, but here are just a few initiatives that we've undertaken to demonstrate our ongoing work toward diversity.

Through a collaborative project with local cultural institutions and non-profits that serve underrepresented communities, our Human Resources team is developing new recruiting and selection standards and protocols to actively engage those groups. The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation Board of Trustees is diligently looking at its recruitment and selection process as well, to ensure that our governing

body better represents our community. Some members of our Executive Team participated in an Equity Leadership certificate program through the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance and a workshop on Building Diverse Representation in Conservation facilitated by the Wildlife Conservation Society.

We collaborated with the United Way on the Pantry Pack program, inviting our ZooLights guests to bring donations of food for this much-needed mission. Even though the financial strains of 2020 did not allow us to provide a discount in return for their donation, our guests stepped up and donated, showing their compassion for those in our community who were in need this holiday season.

We're very excited about the potential of a recent partnership we entered into with other local cultural institutions, along with non-profit organizations that serve marginalized communities in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The goal is to develop a workforce development program to increase access to museums as a career option for underserved communities. This program is intended to serve as a model for building a more diverse and inclusive workforce within cultural institutions, and to cultivate career opportunities, job skills and professional networks for underrepresented groups. It is our hope that this program will inspire a lifelong appreciation for our industry from those who may have never considered it as an accessible career path. If funding is approved, this program is expected to launch in October 2021.

While I certainly don't know what lies ahead as we continue to navigate COVID-19, it is my hope that 2021 will bring us relief from the virus and a return



to a time when we can safely resume our normal activities. We will keep doing our very best to make a visit to the Zoo as safe as possible. I wish all of you a happy and healthy New Year!

Sincerely,

Norberto J. (Bert) Castro

*President / CEO, Arizona Center for Nature Conservation
Phoenix Zoo / South Mountain Environmental Education Center*

HELLO 2021!!

What's New at the Zoo.



With 2020 in the rearview mirror, we look forward to a new year of hope and prosperity. Though no one can predict exactly what the future holds, we can share some of the great things that are happening at the Phoenix Zoo in 2021.

First is the selection of our CEO, Bert Castro, as Chairman of the Board of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States. Founded in 1924, the AZA is a nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation.

Bert has had a long illustrious career working for zoological institutions beginning with volunteering at the Tulsa Zoo to eventually becoming Executive



Director/ CEO of the Oklahoma City Zoological Park and Botanical Garden. Since 2008, Bert has brought decisive, dedicated leadership to the Phoenix Zoo, turning it into the world-class institution that it is today. "I am honored and humbled to assume the role of Board Chair and look forward to working with the dedicated and passionate group of zoo and aquarium professionals that make up the AZA," says Castro.

This spring, the Zoo will host an unique bird migration when The Lost Bird Project arrives on April 22. Created by sculptor Todd McGrain, this incredible art installation features five stunning bronze sculptures that will be placed throughout the Zoo. This impactful work represents five extinct North American birds — the passenger pigeon, great auk, Labrador duck, Carolina Parakeet and heath hen — and was created to raise awareness of vanished species and inspire a greater connection with the

Earth. Accompanying prints and photographs can be viewed inside the Savanna Grill along with an Arizona Highways retrospective featuring the breathtaking images of some of the magazine's world-renowned photographers.

Are there any new animals and habitats to view? Of course there are! The Arizona Trail will see the return of the coati and a coterie of always amusing prairie dogs. Visit our Tropics Trail to check out the beautiful new habitat for our toco toucans and don't forget to stop by and say hello to our brand new maned wolf siblings in their habitat near Crossroads Cafe.

Though it's still almost a year away, mark your calendars for a celebration to remember! Thirty years ago, the Phoenix Zoo hosted its first holiday light show that has now grown into one of the Valley's favorite traditions. It's the 30th anniversary of ZooLights and our staff are already planning how to make it shine even brighter.

We look forward to creating and sharing more memories with all of our guests in 2021.

**From everyone at the Phoenix Zoo to you,
Happy New Year!**





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WILDLIFE IN FOCUS

The Phoenix Zoo *Now* and *Then*

January 13 – March 31, 2021



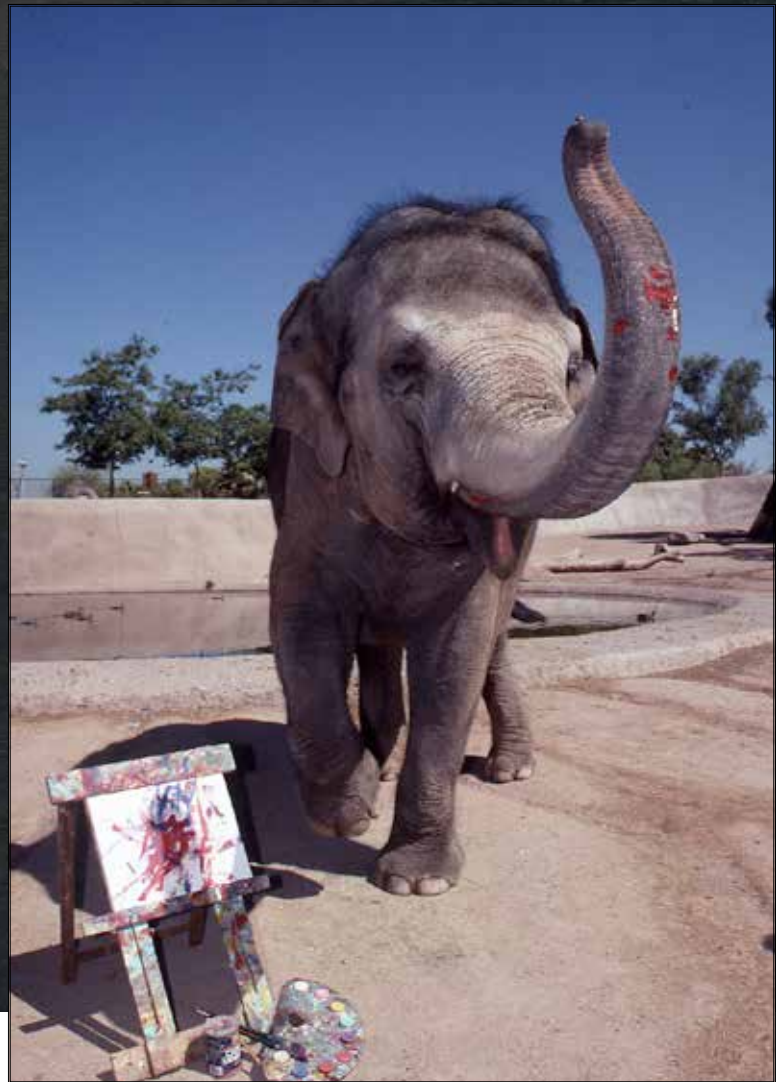
If you have ever tried to get a great photo of an animal, you know how difficult it can be. Beyond the technical challenges of lighting, shutter speeds and composition, you must deal with a subject that has no intention of 'striking a pose.' Luckily, the Phoenix Zoo has a number of dedicated, contributing photographers that regularly dazzle us with their incredible work – and now it's time to put them in the spotlight.

From January 13 to March 31, the Phoenix Zoo will host a retrospective of stunning images from eight talented photographers. Viewers will experience a trip down memory lane, ranging from animals recognizable today to beloved favorites such as Hazel, Duchess and Ruby. The exhibit will also feature behind-the-scenes photos from our Joyce Corrigan Animal Care Center, providing

an inspiring glimpse into the amazing care these species receive.

Since first visiting the Zoo in 1965, Dave Seibert has become one of the Zoo's most prolific contributors. He acknowledges the challenge of photographing animals and admits, "capturing a good moment takes patience. The light, composition and emotion need to come together." Though it can take wildlife photographers years to hone their skills, Dave is hoping the show will inspire even more people to pick up their cameras and explore the magnificent flora and fauna throughout the Zoo.

Dave feels the exhibit is a great way for people to see these beautiful animals in "extraordinary detail and sharpness that normal viewing distance doesn't allow". He has been an integral part of planning the



show, coordinating with current photographers, compiling images and working with Kara Schilling to gather old photos of beloved animals who are no longer with us. Kara has been employed at the Zoo for 25 years, as a keeper, supervisor, and now a curator and says that helping with the show has brought back so many fond memories. One of her most cherished is working with Ruby, the famous painting elephant. "She is greatly missed by those of us who knew her and having worked with her is a highlight of my career."

Yet beyond invoking memories, the heart of the show are the animals, unique and majestic. This exhibit is not only a tribute to them but also to our Phoenix Zoo photographers who have dedicated their time and talents to put our wildlife so beautifully in the lens.

Art on the Wild Side is located inside the Zoo's Savanna Grill. Entrance into the exhibit is included with Zoo admission.

Phoenix Zoo Contributing Photographers

Joseph Becker

Bill Driver

Dick George

Steve Marquez

John Qoyawayma

Dave Seibert

David Wagner

WJ Wheaton



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Making New Learning Connections

with



At the Phoenix Zoo, we're always looking for new ways to engage children in learning and that's been even more crucial during the pandemic. So when the opportunity arrived for us to partner with the new learning app Zigazoo, we got really excited about the potential.

Zigazoo is a safe, fun way for children to participate in online learning activities and for us it's become a unique way to interact with young learners from across the country. With online safety in mind, all posts are screened for child appropriate content before being published and accounts are verified before user access is given.

We post short videos on our webpage to share information and pose questions. The children viewing then create their own short video responses that are posted for others to learn from as well. "It's neat to see how enthusiastic the video responses are," shared Zoo educator Matt Strangways. "It's obvious that kids (and their caregivers) are easily adapting to the platform and are making strong connections with the content."

Can you scratch an itch in a silly way? - Phoenix Zoo



Can you paint a turkey? - Phoenix Zoo



In one Zigazoo video, we visited the Zoo's Arizona Trail and found a log with holes made by carpenter bees. Viewers learned about why the bees made holes and then were asked to look in their own neighborhoods for evidence of animals, including insects, and post a video of what they found.

Some of our posts include challenges for kids to complete. After watching a video of one of our toucans interacting with a homemade puzzle feeder made from a box and newspaper, we asked our Zigazoo friends to create a toy for their own pet(s) and share online. This allowed us to showcase behavioral enrichment, a critical component of our animal care, and encourage kids to use behavioral enrichment to stimulate the lives of their own pets.

Zigazoo allows us to be silly and serious with many topics and ideas. By encouraging kids to look to their homes, parks and neighborhoods for inspiration, we're helping turn their own spaces into living laboratories just like the Zoo. As a bonus, as educator Mike Foley noted, "Not only can we

Who's in your flock? - Phoenix Zoo



connect with kids right here in the Valley, we're able to introduce the desert and the Phoenix Zoo to kids all over the world."

Developing Zigazoo content is an easy, natural fit for us. Drawing inspiration from our beautiful 125 acres, Zoo educators brainstorm ideas and then partner with our Communications team to create several video posts in just a few hours.

Since we launched our Zigazoo page in September we've attracted over 11,800 subscribers and over 166,000 channel views for our Phoenix Zoo projects. We're excited to reach younger audiences through Zigazoo and to watch them grow with us as we have lots of other creative virtual education content to offer.

If you'd like the children in your life to connect with the Zoo through Zigazoo, you can download the app at [zigazoo.com](https://www.zigazoo.com). Make sure to look for and follow the Phoenix Zoo!

Can you find evidence of animals living in your neighborhood? - Phoenix Zoo



Can you walk like a giant anteater? - Phoenix Zoo



There was nothing like going early for the member time before it opened to the public, and you would hear Kitambi roaring in the mornings. I miss him. That was a very special way to start the day.

~ Claudia I.

Every day when I get to see and spend time with my kids is my favorite time.

~ Ashleigh J.



We decided to take a break at the elephant encounter,

and there were no benches, so, we just sat right on the ground. And then my four-year-old looked up at me and said, "Mommy this is the best day ever."

~ Meghan B.

Thanks For The Memories!

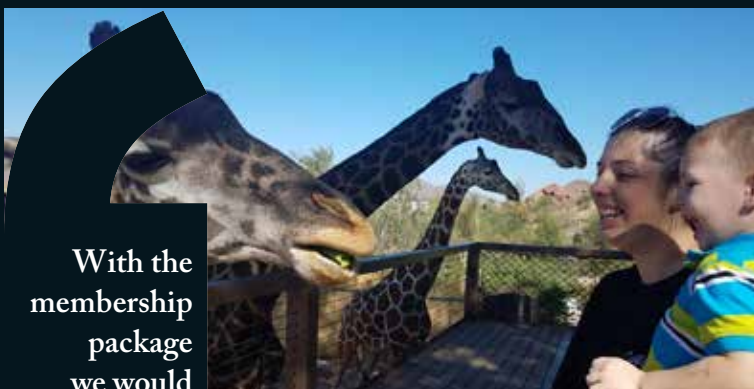
Guests share their favorite Phoenix Zoo moments.

My favorite memory was the first time, after the first shutdown, I wore my cheetah mask, and the cheetahs kept looking at me like I was one of them but not one of them... They were really puzzled!

~ Susan H.

Duchess was always a gem to see. Often wrapped up in a sheet, it felt like she spent her days watching a favored television program as she observed the people who came to visit her.

~ Owlhof



With the membership package we would come by

almost weekly! We got to see the big bug exhibit, we would always have to catch a ride on the carousel, but the thing my son always talks about being his favorite thing about the Zoo was the time we fed the giraffes!

~ Justina G.

Your mule bit
my jacket and
wouldn't let go.
It didn't hurt,
but my girlfriend
couldn't stop
laughing.

~ Thomas K.

Pedro was my favorite
animal at Harmony Farm!
Miss you buddy.
RIP Pedro.

~ Elle B.

I loved that
time where I
saw the rhino
hornbills mate.

~ Alexis M.





Squirrel Monkey
(Photo by David Wagner)



phoenixzoo

ARIZONA CENTER *for* NATURE CONSERVATION

LET'S CELEBRATE!

January 5

National Bird Day

January 20

Penguin Awareness Day

January 21

Squirrel Appreciation Day

February 2

Hedgehog Day

February 15

National Hippo Day

February 20

World Pangolin Day

February 27

National Polar Bear Day

HAPPY HEDGEHOG DAY!

Everyone knows Groundhog Day. It's the quirky holiday on February 2 when famed Punxsutawney Phil predicts if there will be six more weeks of winter.

Yet in Europe, there is another rodent meteorologist that is celebrated – the hedgehog! Since there are no native species of groundhogs on the continent, February 2 is known as Hedgehog Day. The premise is similar – if the hedgehog sees its own shadow then winter weather will stick around for six more weeks. In addition, if you happen to see a hedgehog, then you are in for some very good luck.

Our Ambassador Animal Resources team must have a lot of good luck - they see our two male African four-toed hedgehogs daily! Named Havoc and Plato, these adorable little guys will be roughly 2 ½ on February 2. Weighing in at only 1 - 2 lbs., they are also known as African pygmy hedgehogs. Yet don't let their small size fool you... they are tiny but tough!

Did you know?

- Their small bodies are covered with about 6,000 quills, which are usually used as a defense mechanism.
- When a hedgehog gets scared, it curls up into a ball so that its quills are pointing in all directions, making it very dangerous to predators.

FEATURED CREATURE HEDGEHOG



- In the extreme heat of summer, African hedgehogs 'aestivate' – lowering their metabolic rate and living off stored body fat until it's cooler. This is the summer version of hibernation.

Want to help celebrate Hedgehog Day?

Send Havoc and Plato a gift from our AAR Wishlist! Just [click here!](#)



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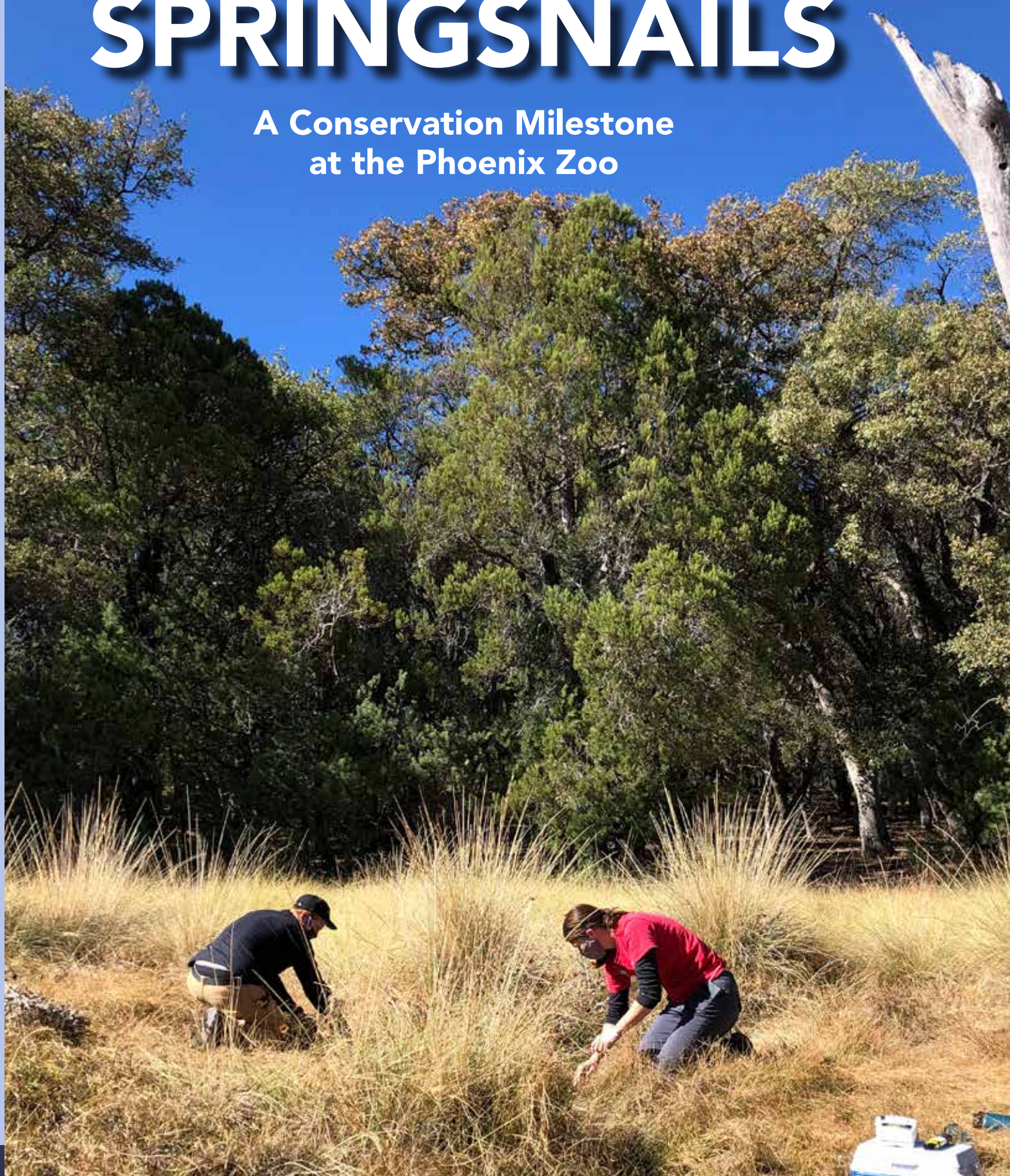


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RELEASE OF THE MIGHTY SPRINGSNAILS

A Conservation Milestone
at the Phoenix Zoo



From a distance, it might have looked like the biologists working in the marshy grass were just folks out hiking. However, this was a banner day for the team, one they'd worked toward for years. For the first time, they were putting springsnails raised in human care out into the wild in an effort called a translocation. Four hundred tiny snails raised at the Phoenix Zoo would now live out the rest of their lives in the animals' natural habitat in southeastern Arizona, boosting the wild population and providing hope for future generations of Huachuca springsnails there.

The Huachuca springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis thompsoni*) is one of the smallest wildlife species found in Arizona. Staff at the Phoenix Zoo's Arthur L. and Elaine V. Johnson Native Species Conservation Center have been working with springsnails since 2008 - initially with two other species of the miniature mollusks. As Arizona Game and Fish Department Invertebrate Wildlife Program Manager Jeff Sorensen noted, "Nobody's raised *Pyrgulopsis* in human care before, especially long-term. We took a chance initially with the Three Forks springsnail, then with Page springsnails. Three Forks springsnails didn't do quite as well as we'd hoped, but we had better luck with Page springsnails. I'm thrilled with how well the Zoo has done with the Huachuca snails, and how much we've learned."

Over the years, Zoo staff have evaluated every aspect of the care they're providing the springsnails and assessed the animals' responses. Three Forks and Page springsnails would survive for a time, but not reproduce in substantial numbers, not enough to allow for releases. With snail lifespans of only about one year, our goal was to get multiple generations to survive in our care. Ultimately, Zoo biologists determined that water filtration was the

key. Although the snails are tiny, to thrive, they needed a larger volume of flowing water with the right mixture of dissolved minerals. A re-envisioning of the tank and filtration system has led to great results. From an initial group of 200, the population at the Johnson Center has grown to 5000+.

Readers may have an impression of what a wildlife reintroduction looks like – a crate opens dramatically and the majestic beast scampers off into a bright future in the forest or on the savanna. A springsnail release is not quite like that. Having been transported carefully to the field site from the Zoo in small plastic food storage containers, the snails are given time to acclimate to the temperature and pH of the water where they're released. Since they are known to gather in spots within the Zoo habitat, the biologists decided to release them in groups at three locations within the marshy area – one at the top of the springhead, one lower with suitable rocky substrate and a third spot with what appeared to be a slightly different microhabitat. We also released a mix of juvenile and adult snails in case one age class was better suited for successful translocation than another. The snails are "gathered" in a pipette, a straw-like tool, and then released.

Our AZGFD partners offered Zoo Senior Conservation Technician Whitney Heuring the opportunity to release the first snail. "It was an honor to get to put the first snail back," said Heuring. "After working so long with these animals, it was really rewarding to be part of the release." All our technicians work with every species





at the Johnson Center, but they develop deeper connections with different species. Whitney has a special fondness for the snails.

"Springsnails are such small animals, they're easily overlooked," noted Heuring. But when you look closely and get to know them the way the Zoo team does, you may see them in a different way. "The tank is only 2' x 4' but so much is going on in there. Every day I look into the tank and see their intricate whorls, I'm reminded of how beautiful they are."

Conservation Technician II Zack Stevens shares Whitney's enthusiasm, but puts it differently: "I've grown an affinity for some of these less-charismatic animals that a lot of people overlook. Putting them under a microscope, you see that they're individual animals. Working with them every day, you see their behaviors and get to know them." Stevens shared the pride he feels in the team's work, too. "We're doing something right here, and there's potential to learn a lot more that can help springsnails in the wild."

The November release took place at a known Huachuca springsnail site, meaning the species had been found there historically. However, not many snails were observed there in recent surveys. Since the site met the specifications for good springsnail habitat, with food, rocky material and good water quality, the hope is that the Zoo-raised animals will settle in and breed, helping boost the springsnail population there for generations. Plans are in the works for a release at a neighboring site in the Huachuca Mountains. With the Zoo population booming, there should be plenty of snails available for translocation.

As we continue refining how we care for the Huachuca springsnails at the Zoo, we are preparing to take in new populations of snail species of greater conservation concern. There is only one remaining wild population of San Bernardino springsnails left in the US, and our wildlife agency partners would like our help in bumping up that population. We're ready to help however we're needed, and suspect we'll be developing strong connections while caring for them as well.



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The "Antler" name draws on an analogy between our thoughtful donors who have remembered the Phoenix Zoo in their will or estate plan and the deer that leave behind its antlers

for the nourishment of other living creatures. Membership in this society is extended to those who share with us their intention to leave a legacy with the Phoenix Zoo.

These very special Antler Society gifts will fund conservation and education programs well into the future and ensure the financial sustainability of the Zoo for generations. Many habitats and programs at the Zoo have been developed through the generosity of Antler Society members.



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Email: ltoth@phoenixzoo.org

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Backstage Adventures

If you're looking for a truly unique experience, join us for a Backstage Adventure and get an insider's glimpse of some of our animal habitats such as flamingo, elephant and Stingray Bay.

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Looking for the ultimate Zoo tour? Try a Premium Adventure – a fully customized experience for you and your special guests.

* Discovery Tours, Backstage and Premium Adventures are limited to same party groups only and all tour participants are required to wear a face covering during the tour.





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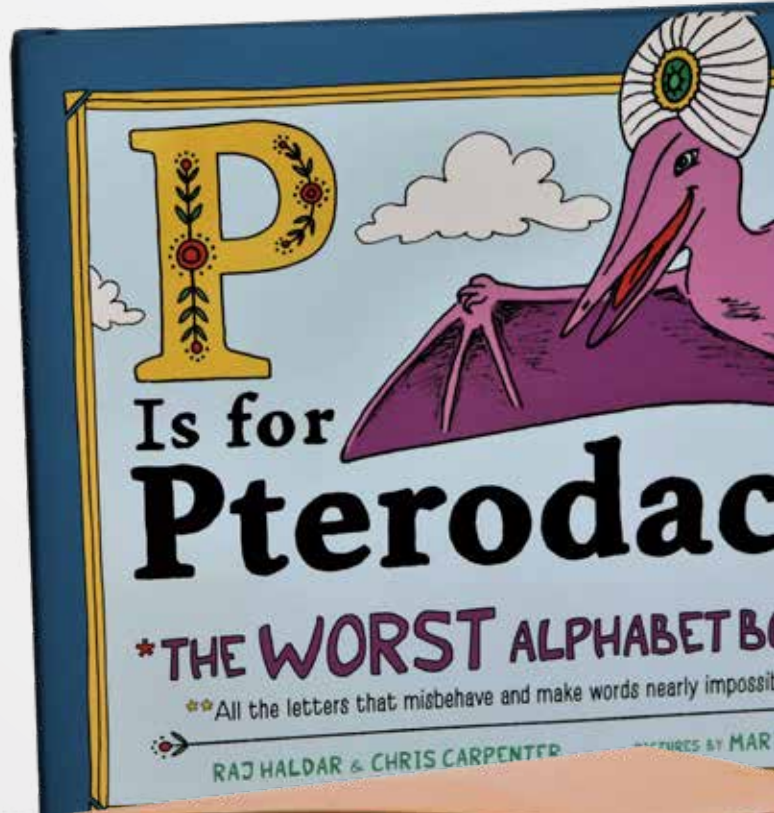
Go wild building these mini animal figurines. We have four Arizona themed options to choose from: Roadrunner, Great Horned Owl, Desert Bighorn Sheep, and the Western Diamondback Rattlesnake.

Match a Track | \$16.99

Show off your animal tracking skills with this matching game. The task is to match 25 tracks to their animals. Beat your opponents by making as many matches as you can.

Floof: Zoo Babies | \$21.99

Floof creates hours of fun for you and your children. The bucket includes three, 3D animal molds, one paw track roller, and the lighter than air Floof. Let your imagination run wild while creating elephants, lions, and monkeys, oh my!



The Desert Marketplace Gift Shop, operated by Event Network, is committed to sustainability in honor of the Phoenix Zoo's mission. Items in the store are made with reusable materials, environmentally-friendly ink is used for signs and product packaging is made of 90 percent post-consumer recycled materials.



If you've strolled through ZooLights this year you may have come across a dazzling, electric elephant named 'ELI'. Located near our Land of the Dragons habitat, this beautiful, illuminated piece was created by Fred George of Intended Vibrations.

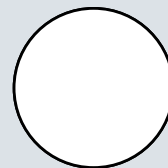
Okay Crafty Kids, can you draw your own elephant? Try these 6 simple steps and create your own work of art... and don't forget to color it in!



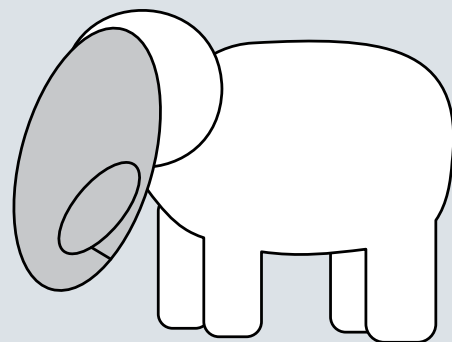
Proud of your elephant drawing – share it with us! Scan or take a photo and send to cboisen@phoenixzoo.org. Artwork will be selected at random. Please include name and age.

For more fun animal crafts and activities, [click here](#) for our Ed-Zoo-cational activities page.

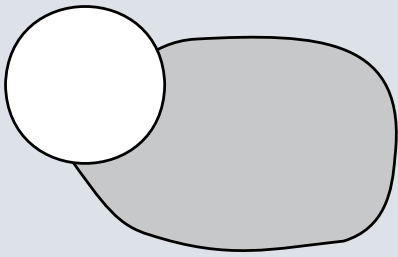
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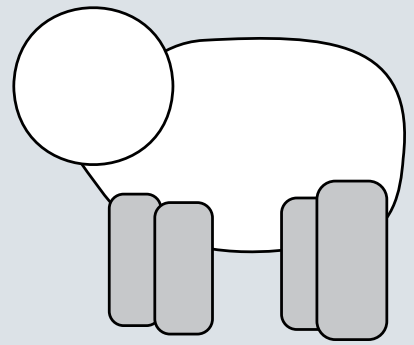
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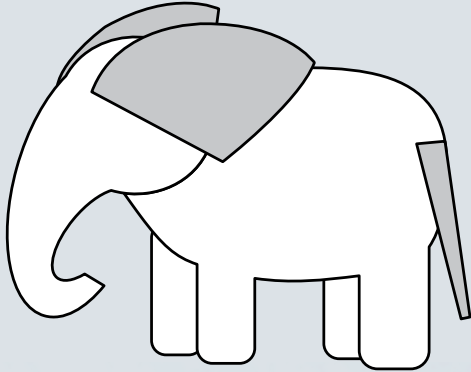
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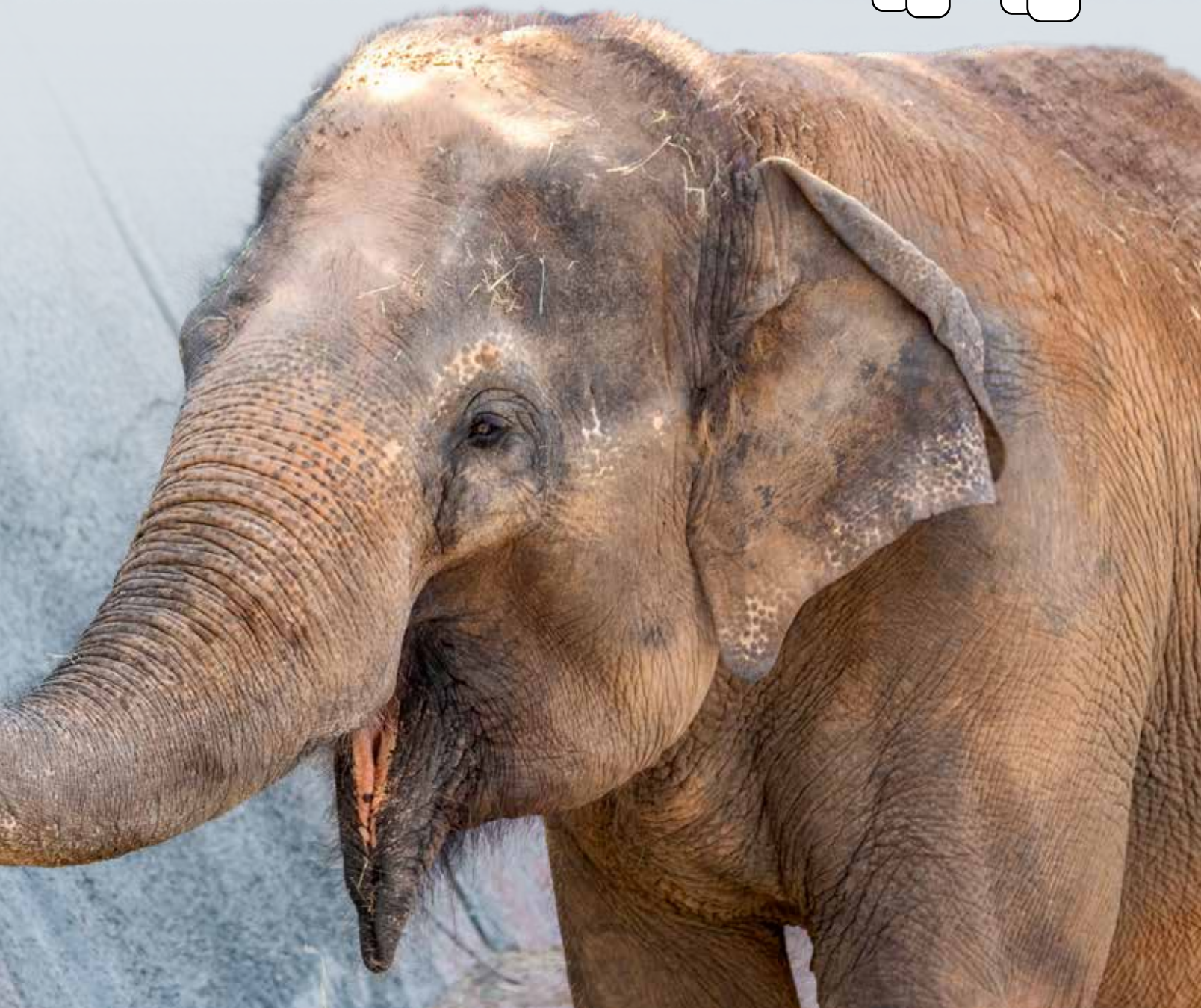
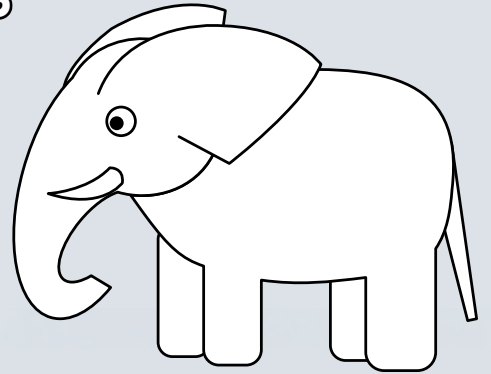
3



5



6





American Alligator
(Photo by David Wagner)

*Arizona Center for Nature Conservation advances the stewardship
and conservation of animals and their habitats while providing experiences
that inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world.*

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