ANNUAL REPORT

This year we focused on growth and expansion to further promote our mission to inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world.
Our commitment to conservation remains our top priority and you’ll read about our efforts both here in Arizona and around the world in this Report. We continue to find partners like Huss Brewing Co., a local independent craft brewery who created their brewer’s Conservation Series benefiting our efforts to conserve Arizona species like the black-footed ferret and the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl.

We made national news for a record no one wanted to break when the Valley experienced 31 consecutive days with temperatures of 115 degrees or higher! As always, we took great care to insure the health and safety of our animals, our staff and volunteers, as well as our guests. During the hottest months, we closed the zoo daily at 11 a.m. for the first time ever and provided access to climate-controlled indoor spaces with plenty of water and shade for our animals.

We are back up to full staff for the first time since the pandemic. There are now over 1,000 people working and volunteering at the Phoenix Zoo and our turnover rate for full-time employees is at an all-time low of 1.8 percent. This is a statistic I am really proud of, because it shows that the Zoo is a great place to work. Our volunteers served over 33,000 hours equating to over $700,000 in value and we certainly value their time and expertise and are grateful they have decided to share their talents with us.

We remodeled our Gift Shop at the end of 2022, which now has a larger footprint and better accommodates wheelchairs and strollers. There continues to be a greater focus on sustainable products and packaging and 2023 broke all records with sales of $3.6 million.

Our special events are doing great, with thousands of guests enjoying events like Roars & Pours and Spooky Safari. The Doornbos Discovery Wildlife Amphitheater, which officially opened just before Covid, saw its first sell-out crowd for a presentation by Pete McBride and Kevin Fedarko during the grand opening of River to Rim: Hiking Through the Grand Canyon, a photo exhibit in the Zoo’s new Wild Side Gallery. We also broke a record by hosting 505 birthday parties this year!

Overall, 2023 was a fantastic year for the Zoo. As always, we are grateful for all the support we receive from our sponsors, foundations, corporations and all of our individual members and donors from our community. We are proud to have so many supporters who understand our mission to inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world. We have so much more coming in 2024 and we hope to see you all at the Zoo!

Sincerely,

Norberto J. (Bert) Castro
President and CEO,
Arizona Center for Nature Conservation/Phoenix Zoo
ANIMAL UPDATES

MASAI GIRAFFE

It’s a girl! Sunshine gave birth in October to her third calf, fathered by Migou. Aurora, whose name was voted on by our guests and won in a landslide, took her first steps on the African Savannah habitat on a crisp morning in November. We are excited to see her continue to explore her surroundings as she gets her long legs underneath her.

AFRICAN LIONS

African lions Kamara and Zenzi joined us from the St. Louis Zoo in November. In February, the five-year-old sisters quickly adjusted to their new home on Predator Passage. They share their habitat with Bobo, the male African lion, and are currently spending time getting to know each other. Their pairings are a breeding recommendation so we hope to welcome cubs in the near future.

RINGTAILS

On May 31, two ringtail kits were born at the Phoenix Zoo to first-time parents Statis and Buggy! Austin (male) and Sedona (female) were exciting additions as the first kits born at the Zoo in 20 years. The kits have developed well and are heading to other AZA facilities soon for future breeding.

AMUR LEOPARD

Jaipur, the three-year-old Amur leopard, came to us from the Greenville Zoo in South Carolina to claim his spot on Predator Passage. Jaipur is a member of a species with fewer than 100 individuals estimated to be currently living in the wild in southeast Russia and northern China. The Amur leopard is critically endangered and part of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Program™ (SSP). We are honored to be a part of the effort to protect him and his species.

GREEN ARACARIS

The Phoenix Zoo had two green aracari chicks hatch on May 8 and 9, one male and one female. These two represent the first successful breeding and Rudging of this species at the Zoo since 2001.

SPOTTED HYENAS

Mother and daughter spotted hyenas, Tamu and Tarkis, can be seen snuffling and patrolling the fence line of their habitat. From Bush Gardens in Tampa, Tamu and Tarkis embraced their move to Phoenix and wasted no time making their way outside to delight guests and explore their new habitat.

RED RIVER HOGS

Two red river hoglets named Olive and Puggles arrived from the Kansas City Zoo and are enjoying rooting around in the dirt in search of food. The mother and son were tentative upon arrival but have begun to express themselves and enjoy the weather as they spend time in their habitat.

SQUIRREL MONKEYS

The Zoo welcomed 15 new common squirrel monkeys, including one male and 14 females from Oklahoma. These young, breeding-age monkeys have settled in, with baby that arrived soon after. Prior to their arrival, renovations were made in the Monkey Village habitat including higher barriers to accommodate the playful energy of the troop.

TOCO TOUCANS

The Zoo received a female toco toucan as a breeding companion for our male. Love was in the air, and they bred quickly, resulting in two male chicks that hatched in early July. Both chicks were healthy and Belding from the nest cavity in late August. As part of the SSP breeding recommendation, one chick is scheduled to go to the Columbus Zoo and the other to the High Island Zoo.

CERRO AZUL GIANT TORTOISE

The 2023 hatching of this species of Galapagos tortoise was the first at an AZA facility since 1992, and the first ever at the Phoenix Zoo! The Cerro azul giant tortoise is the smallest managed population of Galapagos giant tortoises with only 12 total animals, including the one hatched here this summer.
There’s More to Explore at Predator Passage! Traverse the six-acre expanded Africa Trail to get a glimpse of some of the world’s top predators. Gaze upon African lions from the 20-foot-tall Predator Passage Tower and stroll along the beautifully constructed trail between habitats of the Amur leopard, fennec fox, red river hogs, spotted hyenas, Rüppell’s griffon vultures and coming soon...meerkats! Predator Passage gets you closer than ever before to the plains and forests of Africa, as viewing windows and vantage points surround these unique and beautiful habitats.

When the Pride Campaign began raising funds in 2016, Predator Passage was still several years away from breaking ground, but alone welcoming guests. The extension marks the completion of the Pride Campaign, which also included the expansion of the Arthur L. and Elaine V. Johnson Foundation Conservation Center, the construction of Galápagos and Aldabra tortoise habitats, the sand cat habitat, the Doo-nanbo Discovery Amphitheater and Giants of the Asian Realm, an area used by both Indu, an Asian elephant and Chutti, a greater one-horned rhino.

Since the grand opening of Predator Passage in November, the new habitats have been full of life. Our three lions, Boboo, Kamara and Zuri can be seen together often as they begin to form a pride of their own here at the Zoo. Across the way, our Rüppell’s griffon vultures have been laying eggs that we hope will contribute to the sustainability of the endangered species in AZA populations, as we work with Ramat Gan Safari in Israel on incredibly important vulture repopulation projects. Jasper, the Amur leopard, represents his especially vulnerable species here in Phoenix. We hope he can contribute as a member of the breeding population of his species in the future. Predator Passage provides not only a home for these animals but offers us a chance to contribute to species conservation. We are working hard to secure a future that includes all inhabitants of Predator Passage and the Zoo as a whole.
COLLECTION NUMBERS

INVERTEBRATES
38 SPECIES | ~16,000 INDIVIDUALS*

FISH
10 SPECIES | ~8,000 INDIVIDUALS*

AMPHIBIANS
23 SPECIES | 108 INDIVIDUALS

REPTILES
124 SPECIES | 372 INDIVIDUALS

BIRDS
118 SPECIES | 455 INDIVIDUALS

MAMMALS
84 SPECIES | 390 INDIVIDUALS

*Some managed as groups including ~11,000 Hauchoa springtails (invertebrates), ~8,000 Gila topminnow and desert pupfish (fish).

MEMBERSHIP

To celebrate the grand opening of Predator Passage, we held an exclusive member-only event at Desert Tents. Members enjoyed access to activities and experiences including coloring stations, readings of Steer the Dung Beetle by author Susan Stolze and interactive stations with biofacts. The fun didn’t stop there. Every guest to the Zoo during the Predator Passage grand opening also joined in the celebration by participating in an African drum circle with the Musical Instruments Museum. The festivities drew nearly 40,000 guests throughout the week and were an exciting way to honor all the hard work that went into preparing the exciting new feature of the Africa Trail. Members were also able to purchase a member-only Predator Passage t-shirt and received gifts of wildflower seeds to grow at home!
CONSERVATION

BLACK-FOOTED FERRETS RELEASED TO THE WILD

We welcomed 26 endangered black-footed ferret kits from six litters this breeding season. Twenty-one kits and 12 adult ferrets from the Zoo were flown by the Arizona Game and Fish Department to the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center in Colorado for potential release to the wild, or to breed at other facilities. Roxy, one of the ferrets from the Zoo, was released with her kits at Southern Plains Land Trust in southeastern Colorado. We’re hopeful they’re doing well and will contribute to the wild population of ferrets in the coming years.

BIG NEWS FOR SMALL SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

Did you know the Zoo’s Conservation team cares for an endangered plant? The tiny Huachuca water umbel is flourishing in the creek at the Zoo’s Johnson Center. This is the first year we’ve seen the umbel flowering since 2018, which is an encouraging sign that the plants are healthy in their Zoo home. In addition to the umbel, tiny springgale species are thriving at the Johnson Center. We released 2,000 Zoo-raised Huachuca springgals to the wild in 2023 and are working on husbandry and management protocols for threatened San Bernardino springgals as well. In mid-December we welcomed a new snail species, the Quitobaquito tryonia springgall, known to be present in only one location in southern Arizona currently. Stay tuned for more news as they get settled into their new habitats at the Zoo.

SSSSUPER YEAR FOR SNAKES!

The Zoo celebrated the birth of 19 narrow-headed garter snakes in 2023. Twelve of these were released to the wild in August, shortly after their birth. The remaining garter snakes are doing well at the Johnson Center. We’re thrilled to share that previously released Zoo-born snake were observed in the field this year by a University of Arizona graduate student. This marks the first time we’ve had proof of successful overwintering, which is a great sign that the snakes from the Zoo are up to the challenges of life in the wild.
PATH OF THE JAGUAR

Work continues on our US Fish and Wildlife Service-funded Path of the Jaguar project in Costa Rica. We’ve sorted and analyzed nearly 625,000 photos and videos from wildlife camera-traps deployed in farms, forest fragments and intact forest patches. Together with our collaborators, we deployed 16 gunshot detection units to deter jaguar poaching and other poaching activity, and 10 biodiversity detection units to listen for rare three-wattled bellbirds in the region. Initial testing has been encouraging, though challenging. Our multi-national team continues its work in acoustic ecology, community-based conservation and education and economic livelihood project support.

BORDER CATS

The Zoo’s Field Conservation Research team and ASU West partners launched a new border cats project in the Pajarito Mountains in southern Arizona, with support from the Arthur L. and Elaine V. Johnson Foundation and Pardosa’s Small Cat Conservation Fund. Thirty cameras were deployed and collected, yielding nearly 17,000 videos over 81 days. Twenty different mammal species were recorded, although we did not capture images of ocelot or jaguar, which we were hoping to find. We’re eager to get started on “Pajaritos 2.0” in the new year, as this was just the first study of its kind conducted in this region. We’re interested in seeing whether species diversity changes seasonally in the region and look forward to continuing to work with ASU School of Life Sciences Undergraduate Research program students on this project.

HUSS COLLABORATION

Huss Brewing Co. has collaborated with the Phoenix Zoo on the cutest beer possibly ever created! Debuting with the first of three beers exclusive to the Zoo, this past fall we introduced the Black-footed Ferret IPA. Sales of the beer benefit the black-footed ferret, one of the most endangered mammals in North America. Alongside Huss, the Zoo plans to feature a new native species every four months that will complement the season and help champion the many conservation efforts of the Zoo. The second collaboration will benefit the cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl. Cacti Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl Lager will be a light, crisp and refreshing beer to enjoy as we welcome spring to the Valley.
VETERINARY UPDATES

TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION

Dr. Laxitter is the thirteenth Zoological Medicine intern to participate in our one-year clinical training program. This program is for graduate veterinarians seeking more clinical training in zoo and wildlife medicine and planning to make a career in this field. All of our previous interns are working in the zoo and wildlife medicine field and making important contributions to the care of wildlife!

BOOOO

In preparation for African lion Bboo’s move to his new Predator Passage habitat, he received a comprehensive physical examination and blood was drawn for laboratory analysis. The process of anesthetizing a lion is always a challenge but his exam went well and he made a good recovery. He is now enjoying his new home and can be seen out in his habitat alongside new lionesses Zuri and Kamara.

BEES

Bess, one of our Bornean orangutans, has had some pelvic floor laxity since 2014, after giving birth to her son Jwa, who is now at Zoo Miami. Over time, the pelvic floor muscles continued to weaken, which allowed tissues to partially prolapse. Alongside a consulting surgeon, Zoo vets conducted surgery to reduce this prolapsed tissue. Bess has done well and made a full recovery.
LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

CAMPS
2023 was our busiest Night Camp since 2019. Camp Zoo and Winter Camp both sold out and we piloted two new camps as well, totaling over 2,500 campers in 2023.

FIELD TRIPS
Thanks to generous support from PNC Bank, we welcomed 200 foster children and their family members to spend a Friday at the Zoo, including a boxed lunch, cruise rides and a meet and greet with some of our ambassador animals. We also hosted the annual meeting for the Arizona Department of Education’s Migrant Education Program. Ninety parents, representatives from Access ASU, and district coordinators from around the state met at the Zoo to learn about how the Phoenix Zoo can support learning for them and their families. In January, 2024, 71 students in this program enjoyed a field trip to the Zoo with STEM activities and special experiences.

TRAILBLAZERS
This year we welcomed our inaugural Youth Advisory Council, the Trailblazers. This diverse group of young teens is advising us on the best ways to engage their peers, completing conservation service-learning projects and honing leadership skills.

NFL COLLABORATION
As part of community engagement for the Super Bowl in February, the Phoenix Zoo partnered with Force Blue and NFL Green on a trash clean up and invasive apple snail removal program along the Salt River. This large community volunteer event included former NFL players participating in clean-up efforts. Representatives of Learning and Engagement were on hand with information about our work with springtails and an activity for kids to learn more about our native snails.

ENGAGE
Conservation Science Night saw over 100 attendees this year. We engaged audiences of all ages and abilities, allowing our talented scientists to connect and share their work comfortably with even the youngest attendees. Sixty percent of Conservation Science Night attendees reported that compared to before the event, they knew how to help native wildlife, meeting our vision of creating an environmentally literate community.

The Phoenix Zoo is meeting our vision of creating an environmentally literate community.
IN THE NEWS

IT’S HOT OUTSIDE

During the scorching summer of 2023, which brought record-breaking heat to Phoenix, including 55 days reaching temperatures over 110 degrees and a relentless stretch of 31 consecutive days of temperatures of 115 degrees or higher, the City garnered international attention. As The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, NBC Nightly News, CNN, The Associated Press, Reuters, Agence France-Presse and countless other national and local news outlets reached out, our teams showcased the innovative measures taken to ensure the well-being of the animals, staff and Zoo guests during the sweltering heat. Featured in news stories across the world, the Zoo’s strategies of frequent cold showers, tasty blood-sicles, adjusted operating hours and around-the-clock access to temperature-controlled indoor spaces allowed our animals to find comfort in their habitats and escape the oppressive heat. Zoo guests were encouraged to arrive early to enjoy the Zoo as hours were adjusted to close earlier than ever before, at 11 a.m.

WORLD SERIES BET

In October the Arizona Diamondbacks made it to the World Series for a showdown with the Texas Rangers. We made a friendly wager; the losing Zoo would name a rattlesnake after the opposing team. Sadly, the Dbacks couldn’t close it out, and we were forced to introduce the world to Ranger, a Western diamondback that lives on the Arizona Trail. While we wish the Dbacks had secured the win, it was a fun bet that garnered plenty of media attention and delighted many Texas Rangers fans on social media.

OFF-SITE CONSERVATION PLANS

Southern Arizona’s Green Valley News keeps up to date on the latest progress of the Zoo’s Sahuara project for an off-site conservation facility slated in the future.

WOOD YOU LOOK AT THAT!

One of the largest eucalyptus trees along the main lake has been carved into a work of art. Though beautiful, the eucalyptus was posing a safety risk in addition to being a non-native and high-water usage plant. However, it gave us the opportunity to create an impactful work of art – and a unique photo spot, too! The 11-foot tall pelican was carved by artist Barry France, with a chainsaw as his only tool.
AWARDS & ACCOLADES

2023 ACCREDITATION INSPECTOR OF THE YEAR

Phoenix Zoo President/CEO Bert Castro was recognized as Inspector of the Year in Operations by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). Of Bert, the AZA stated, “He has volunteered as an accreditation inspector since 2000. Bert’s strengths as an inspector include his depth and breadth of knowledge, sense of empathy, and keen attention to detail.” Congratulations to Bert on this exciting recognition from the AZA!

RANKING ARIZONA/ AZ BIG MEDIA

The Zoo was once again voted #1 in Attractions: Zoos & Wildlife Parks by AZ Big Media. We have ranked in the magazine since 2001 and have consistently been #1 since 2012! Thank you to everyone who voted for us over the past 22 years, proving the Zoo is fun for all ages!

ARIZONA FORWARD

The Zoo was honored to receive the Award of Distinction from the Arizona Forward Environmental Excellence Awards for our Parking Lot Restoration & Expansion Project. The Zoo submitted for this award in collaboration with the City of Phoenix. The new and refurbished parking lots were built with a focus on the environment and giving guests easier access to the Zoo, especially during our busiest months of the year and at events like ZooLights.

KIDS OUT AND ABOUT

The Zoo was excited to come out on top of Kids Out and About Top 20 Places to Take Kids in Phoenix, voted on by local parents, grandparents, and caregivers.

FLAMINGOS, ZEBRAS, AND ACCOUNTING—OH MY!

Phoenix Zoo CFO/Controller Bonnie Menendez was interviewed for ASU’s W.P. Carey Magazine as a distinguished alumni of the university.

PHILANTHROPY RECOGNITION

Congratulations to JoEllen Doorenbus who received the Outstanding Philanthropist Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals of the Greater Phoenix Area. In addition to her generous financial contributions, JoEllen has consistently volunteered her time and expertise to our organization. She is currently a member of the Zoo’s Board of Trustees, a member of the Development Committee, Governance & Nominating Committee, Veterinary Medical Center Campaign Cabinet and an active member of the Phoenix Zoo Auxiliary. She has also held the leadership positions of Board Chair, Development Committee Chair, Auxiliary President and event chair for many of the Zoo’s fundraising events.

TRIEXPERT

The Zoo was honored to receive the Expert’s Choice Award. The award is given to the world’s best hotels, restaurants and attractions who are consistently rated as outstanding by professional reviewers.

BEST OF PHOENIX

The Phoenix Zoo earned Best Family-Friendly Fun and Best Zoo in New Times’ 45th annual BEST OF PHOENIX® issue. These awards are voted on by readers.

WILD SIDE GALLERY

Since debuting on February 2, 2023, the Wild Side Gallery has showcased two art installations. Between River and Rim: Hiking Through the Grand Canyon and Inspired: Arizona Artists Celebrate the Natural World. Both installations captured the imagination of Zoo guests and provided the artists with the opportunity to display and sell pieces to a new and intrigued audience.

Phoenix Zoo President/CEO Bert Castro said of the Gallery, “Realizing the potential that this building had to be reimagined with a goal to inspire our guests through art, presented an opportunity we wanted to seize. We look forward to bringing a variety of artistic exhibits, interactive activities and learning opportunities for our guests to enjoy as they visit the Gallery and the Zoo.”

Since opening, the Wild Side Gallery has seen more than 10,000 guests and we are excited to welcome more artists to adorn the walls with pieces of artwork.
STINGRAY BAY REMODEL
Stingray Bay closed to the public on June 12, 2023, for a much-needed face lift. The stingrays were safely moved to a holding pool behind the scenes allowing the work to begin. The 12,000-gallon touch pool was resurfaced, new shade structures were erected, and the guest viewing areas were expanded and covered with pavers.

LIGHT TUNNEL
A new 200-foot-long immersive tunnel of lights was created for the 2023-24 season of ZooLights. The tunnel displayed a dazzling kaleidoscope of nearly 8,000 vibrant bulbs. Spanning 20 feet wide and 16 feet high, it was the shining star of the holiday light display offering the perfect backdrop for countless video and photo-taking opportunities. The tunnel created unforgettable memories for ZooLights guests.

SAVANNA
Two shade structures were installed on the Savanna to provide shade to even our tallest residents. Renovation of the Savanna habitat continued with a most clean-out, river rock removal, addition of new soil and grass and a new 10-foot-tall fence allowing the inclusion of new animals to the habitat in the near future.

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

WILD SIDE GALLERY PATIO & ENHANCEMENTS
Restoration efforts continued at the original 1970s building, now the Wild Side Gallery. Enhancements included unveiling the original windows, allowing natural light to illuminate the Gallery and providing a picturesque view of the Arizona Trail. Also, the introduction of patio areas enhances the versatility of the space, offering a charming setting for small gatherings, staff meetings and events.

SPACE FOR MORE!
A new 4,500-square-foot storage building was completed, facilitating space for Horticulture, Living Collections and Events teams. The flexible space provides a secure and weather-resistant storage solution for essential items.

COOL THE ZOO
The Phoenix Zoo is pleased to announce the receipt of a $164,312 grant from the Arizona Office of Tourism’s Visit Arizona Initiative (VAI) Outdoor Recreation Revitalization Grant program. The grant has facilitated the “Cool the Zoo” project, focusing on enhancing guest experience during the summer months. This initiative includes the installation of misting fans, shade structures and water bottle filling stations throughout the Zoo. Additionally, a Cool the Zoo marketing campaign is set to launch in the Spring of 2024, providing a comprehensive approach to ensure a more comfortable and enjoyable experience.
EVENTS

WILDLIGHTS FOR WILDLIFE
Wildlights for Wildlife, a charity drive in support of the non-profit Phoenix Zoo, ushered in ZooLights with a sneak peek at the holiday light display. More than 160 ears drove through the illuminated wonderland after indulging in delicious cuisine from some of the Valley’s favorite food trucks. Guests enjoyed entertainment acts, animal encounters and even a mobile gift shop! Through sponsorships, vehicle reservations and a 50/50 raffle, nearly $90,000 was raised.

SPOOKY SAFARI
We had a scary good time this year at the Zoo’s inaugural Halloween event, Spooky Safari! With more than 7,500 attendees, we saw ghosts and goblins of all kinds line Zoo paths in search of candy, facepainting, ghoulish games and creepy crafts.

DINOSAURS IN THE DESERT
Guests journeyed back in time to a world where colossal dinosaurs and other ancient beasts dominated the landscape. This self-guided experience was included in general admission to the Zoo and delighted guests along the Desert Lives Trail from October 2022 – April 2023. More than two dozen creatures were featured, including the Titanaboa, Allosaurus, Gigantspinosaurus and many more. The Beer Research Institute collaborated with the Zoo and created three unique specialty dino brews: Shredder, a Mexican lager; Tyrannosaurus Rex, an amber beer and Headbanger Haze, an IPA. The creative and eye-catching designs for the beer labels were crafted by renowned comic artist Jay Flores, adding an artistic touch to the collaboration. Exclusive to the Phoenix Zoo, these dino brews offered guests a one-of-a-kind beverage experience.

505 PARTIES
In 2023, the Phoenix Zoo achieved a remarkable milestone by hosting a record-setting 505 birthday parties within its enchanting grounds. This accomplishment speaks to the Zoo’s popularity as a unique and memorable celebration destination. Families had the opportunity to choose the perfect spot for their special occasions from several venue locations strategically placed around the Zoo, including Siamang Ramada, Tropical Flights, Neely Center and Millhouse. This all-inclusive experience ensures that every birthday party at the Phoenix Zoo is a truly memorable and enjoyable affair.

ROARS & POURS
Roars & Pours, touted as the Wilden Happy Hour in the Valley, drew nearly 6,500 guests in 2023 for an extraordinary after-hours experience at the Zoo. This exclusive 21 and over event allowed attendees to sip and stroll through the Zoo’s captivating surroundings, including animals in their habitats, while sipping a variety of beverages. The evening offered more than just drinks, as guests also had the opportunity to enjoy up-close animal encounters and presentations, adding a touch of wildlife wonder to the festivities. Roars & Pours provides a unique and child-free experience, creating a memorable blend of entertainment and relaxation for those seeking a distinctive way to enjoy the Phoenix Zoo after sunset.
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BIG CATS OF ARIZONA

Ground has broken on the new Big Cats of Arizona habitat on the Arizona Trail. The over five million dollar expansion will provide new homes for the Zoo’s jaguars and mountain lions. This expansion will increase the space for our jaguars by more than double their current habitats’ size, and the mountain lions’ new habitat will increase by approximately five times its current size.

COATI YOU WAITING FOR?

On Giving Tuesday, we launched our appeal for a new coati habitat. Long-time Zoo members and volunteers, Gael Parks, lead the way with a $10,000 match as we raised money to upgrade the habitat of this iconic Arizona native mammal. The total amount raised on Giving Tuesday was nearly $68,000. Combining this with the nearly $83,000 brought in by our year-end campaign, and a $50,000 donation from Zoo friend and Guardian Member, Lynn Brown, brings the total raised for our new coati habitat to over $200,000! Funding efforts for this exciting project continue into 2024.

PHOENIX ZOO AUXILIARY

You’ve probably spotted women in black and white striped vests roaming the Zoo during a daytime visit or at an event. You may have even wondered who these women are and why they wear these vests. The iconic zebra stripes are synonymous with the Phoenix Zoo Auxiliary, a group of women who are dedicated to philanthropy and supporting the Zoo.

The Auxiliary, started by Nancy Maytag in 1961, had only four members their inaugural year. Now, the Auxiliary is more than 100 members strong!

In 2023, the Auxiliary participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of Big Cats of Arizona. The Auxiliary generously contributed $50,000 to the project, which will provide new homes for the Zoo’s mountain lions and jaguars.

Sixty-two years later, this group of women continues to embody Nancy Maytag’s first description of the Auxiliary, “Doing a little fundraising and being helpful wherever we’re needed” when it comes to a new project or improvement at the Zoo.

NEW ANTLER SOCIETY MEMBERS

In loving memory of my son, Scott A. Baker
Vicki Broman and Jack Wesolowski
Crystal DeVels
June E. Durrill
Jill M. Ford
Lorraine Frias
Desert Ron
Mark Schoenberg
Elizabeth Aiken Toth
SUPPORT & REVENUE
FY2023 REVENUES
$48.5 MILLION

ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIPS $28.8 MILLION | 59%

CONTRIBUTIONS $9.8 MILLION | 20%

FOOD, MERCHANDISE, EXPERIENCES, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS & HOSTED EVENTS $7.3 MILLION | 15%

INVESTMENT INCOME & OTHER $2.6 MILLION | 6%

EXPENSES
FY2023 EXPENSES
$38.2 MILLION

PROGRAM SERVICES $31.1 MILLION | 81%

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL $3.6 MILLION | 10%

FUNDRAISING & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT $3.5 MILLION | 9%

PROGRAM SERVICES 81%

MANAGEMENT & GENERAL 10%

FUNDRAISING & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 9%

INVESTMENT INCOME & OTHER 6%

FOOD, MERCHANDISE, EXPERIENCES, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS & HOSTED EVENTS 15%

ADMISSIONS & MEMBERSHIPS 59%

CONTRIBUTIONS 20%

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FY2023 EXPENSES
$38.2 MILLION

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

For the year ended June 30, 2023 For the year ended June 30, 2022

SUPPORT AND REVENUE
Admissions & Memberships $28,725,162 $23,170,083
Educational Programs 610,310 410,381
Group Services 1,712,900 1,279,960
Food & Retail 3,014,041 4,639,796
Contributions ** 9,490,361 16,294,764
Investment Income (Loss) 3,557,396 (1,690,641)
Other 30,650 189,157
Total Support and Revenue $68,479,506 $64,664,115

EXPENSES
Program Services $31,096,594 $24,615,305
Management & General 3,585,791 3,135,489
Funding & Membership Development 3,545,800 2,429,483
Total Expenses $38,238,185 $30,180,277
Change in Net Assets $19,241,321 $14,483,838

NET ASSETS Beginning of Year $80,461,153 $63,792,914
Net Assets End of Year $99,702,474 $88,276,752

** Includes revenue from donor restrictions prior to release for Capital Campaign and other projects of $8,375,003 for 2023 and $1,774,745 for 2022. For 2023, includes $1,394,243 in proceeds from the CARES Act Employee Retention Credit and $10,600,000 from the Modified Nonaux Operator’s Grant.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

June 30, 2023 June 30, 2022

ASSETS
Current Assets
Cash & Cash Equivalents $14,128,338 $28,020,127
Treasury Bills, short-term 20,202,057 10,584,050
Contributions Receivable 101,336 76,184
Uncollectible Accounts 421,096 1,446,506
Other Current Assets 4,021,015 5,617,219
Investments 15,911,209 8,782,409
Endowment
Asset reserved for long-term purpose Cash 5,794,889 4,770,106
Contributions Receivable 3,473,837 3,081,455
Operating Lease Rights of Use-Assets 755,042
Property: Equipment, net 57,690,746 56,900,796
Beauty School Assets 15,351,096 15,044,049
Other Assets 31,223 24,373
Total Assets $106,793,859 $89,985,342

LIABILITIES
Current Liabilities
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses $4,312,899 $3,799,889
Unearned Revenue 4,871,421 4,804,390
Current portion of operating lease liabilities 68,174
Operating Lease Liabilities, Net of Current Portion 246,538
Total Liabilities $13,951,915 $8,690,484

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted net assets $67,641,940 $62,294,853
With donor restrictions 21,425,513 27,564,129
Total Net Assets $89,067,453 $89,859,382

Net assets as percentage of total liabilities 519% 792%

** Includes revenue from donor restrictions prior to release for Capital Campaign and other projects of $8,375,003 for 2023 and $1,774,745 for 2022. For 2023, includes $1,394,243 in proceeds from the CARES Act Employee Retention Credit and $10,600,000 from the Modified Nonaux Operator’s Grant.
LEADERSHIP

ACNC EXECUTIVE TEAM

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President & Chief Executive Officer

Bronwen Barnett
Executive Assistant

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Senior Vice President of Conservation Science, Learning & Engagement

Lorraine Frias
Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement

Linda Hardwick
Vice President of Marketing, Communications & Events

Dave Loncalo
Vice President of Finance & Accounting

Christine Lowery-Nunez
Chief Administrative Officer

Bonnie Mendoza
Chief Operating Officer/Chief Financial Officer

Dr. Gary West, DVM
Senior Vice President of Animal Health and Living Collections

Joe Wilkes
Senior Vice President of Facilities & Construction

Jeremy Bound
Director of Information Technology

Bill Davis
Director of Operations

Carrie Flood
Director of Learning & Engagement

Jennifer Flowers
Director of Guest Services, Member Relations & Retail

Drew Foster
Director of Living Collections

Tara Harris
Director of Conservation & Science

Harry Jones
Director of Project Management & Purchasing

Christopher Ramos
Director of Events & Group Sales

Steve Roberson
Director of Park Services

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TRUSTEES

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Chair Finance and Treasurer

Kris Yamano
Secretary
MISSION STATEMENT

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.