



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## PHOENIX ZOO TO OPEN “BIG CATS OF ARIZONA” HABITAT THIS WEEK

**PHOENIX** (April 3, 2025) - The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC)/Phoenix Zoo is thrilled to announce the grand opening of its Big Cats of Arizona this week. This new habitat is a state-of-the-art space dedicated to showcasing and caring for some of Arizona’s most elusive native predators – mountain lion and jaguars.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, nearly \$5.4 million was raised to bring this expansive habitat to life, providing more than double the increase in space for the Zoo’s two jaguars, Caipora and Saban, participants in the Species Survival Plan (SSP), which ensures the sustainability of zoo-managed populations. Additionally, the Zoo’s mountain lion Mystic, will move into a space five times larger than her former home, offering ample room to explore, play and thrive. Mystic’s sister, Sierra, unfortunately passed recently due to renal failure before the move to the habitat took place but we are happy to report Mystic is thriving in her new home.

The new habitat is designed to improve visibility for guests, featuring multiple viewing angles and windows that will allow guests to observe these majestic cats like never before. The habitat also boasts the Zoo’s first-ever “catwalk,” allowing guests to walk directly below the big cats as they move overhead throughout the space. The area will include educational messaging about the historical ranges of these species and a water feature to encourage natural behavior and enrichment.

Construction of Big Cats of Arizona habitat began in November of 2023 and was completed in March of 2025. The big cats all received wellness exams and have been moved into the new habitat over the past two weeks. They have spent time acclimating to their new surroundings and are doing well. Mystic, more timid and less bold than her sister was, took several days until she was ready to enter the habitat but has done so with ease. Caipora and Saban both explored quickly and are often seen on the catwalk enjoying their birds-eye view of the area.

**Member Preview: Friday, April 4, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. & Saturday, April 5, 9 a.m. – noon**  
Phoenix Zoo members are welcome to wind their way through this impressive experience and will enjoy members-only activity stations, raffles and more. Activities from 9 – noon.

**Grand Opening to the Public: Saturday, April 5, at 12:30 p.m.**

MEDIA MATERIAL: Video is available via this Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/xvcgs8zwplz713mav0nx0/AMlj5S3xrQtg178GSA5An9l?rlkey=zp3ok4vglzx8y3sl6x8qf0vdl&st=c0jkyvcy&dl=0>

Credit: Phoenix Zoo

**About the Arizona Center for Nature Conservation**

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation operates the Phoenix Zoo. The ACNC 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.

The Phoenix Zoo is the only zoo in the Valley accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is a non-profit zoological park, serving 1.4 million guests annually. The Zoo is home to more than 3,000 animals, many of which are endangered and threatened species. For information on upcoming events, exhibits and activities at the Phoenix Zoo, visit

[www.phoenixzoo.org](http://www.phoenixzoo.org).