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Wild Side Gallery to Host the Thomas D. Mangelsen “A Life in the Wild Tour” Renowned Nature Photographer to Showcase Work at the Phoenix Zoo in 2026

PHOENIX (September 12, 2024) – The Phoenix Zoo is excited to announce they will welcome the stunning photographs of Thomas D. Mangelsen to the Zoo’s Wild Side Gallery for a stunning exhibition debuting in January of 2026. The exhibition titled; Thomas D. Mangelsen, A Life in the Wild Tour, will run from January 29, 2026 through May 31, 2026. Forty classic photographs taken and personally selected by Mangelsen are referred to as his “legacy photographs.”

Among photographs which members of the public will certainly be familiar with are “Polar Dance” from 1989 of polar bears appearing to dance, “Mountain Outlaw,” from 2014 of a grizzly bear charging head on through the snow, and from 1988, “Catch of the Day” which captures the exact moment that a spawning salmon, trying to leap over a waterfall along Alaska’s Brooks River, soars right into the waiting jaws of a massive brown bear. About “Catch of the Day,” Todd Wilkinson (author, The Last Great Wild Places: Forty Years of Wildlife Photography by Thomas D. Mangelsen), has written that it is not only one of the most widely circulated wildlife photographs in history, but also a monumental achievement in photography because it occurred before the advent of digital cameras and involves no digital manipulation. But not all photographs in the exhibit, some of which measure 10 feet across, are of bears. Far from it.

Exhibition subjects include American bison, Arctic fox, bald eagle, Bengal tiger, black bear, bobcat, bohemian & cedar waxwings, brown bear, coyote, elephant, flowers including poppies and lupine, giraffe, great gray owl, grizzly bear, landscapes such as Alaska’s Denali range and the Great Smoky Mountains, leopard, lilac breasted roller, moose, mountain lion, polar bear, groves of trees including redwood and aspen and western tanager – and many more!

One of the most prolific nature photographers of our time, Thomas Mangelsen has been described as a spiritual descendant of pioneering American nature photographers Ansel Adams, Eliot Porter, and Edward Weston. In addition, Thomas Mangelsen is as much a conservationist as he is an artist.

Mangelsen was named the 2011 Conservation Photographer of the Year by Nature’s Best Photography, placing his work in the permanent collection at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. He was named one of the 40 Most Influential Nature Photographers by Outdoor Photography, and one of the 100 Most Important People in Photography by American Photo magazine. The North American Nature Photography Association has named him Outstanding Nature Photographer of the Year; while the British Broadcasting Corporation gave him its coveted, prestigious award, Wildlife Photographer of the Year.

As part of the Zoo's [Art on the Wild Side program](#), the Wild Side and Savanna Galleries at the Zoo both feature approximately four rotating art exhibits per year. Dedicated to inspiration, celebration and conservation through art, exhibitions and artists are selected who share their unique vision of wildlife and conservation via photography, paint and mixed media, allowing new ways for guests to engage in the Zoo's mission to care for the natural world while being inspired by nature and animals.

"Thomas D. Mangelsen's breathtaking work captures the spirit of wildlife and aligns perfectly with our mission to inspire conservation through art," says Jean Bingham, Trustee and member of the Zoo's Arts Committee. "Mangelsen's legacy as both an artist and conservationist will offer guests a rare opportunity to connect with nature on a deeper level. His 'A Life in the Wild Tour' represents the pinnacle of wildlife photography, and we are thrilled to showcase it here at the Phoenix Zoo."

Mangelsen has traveled to the wildest corners of North America, Africa and beyond, for more than 40 years, observing and photographing the Earth's last great wild places.

The Thomas D. Mangelsen - A Life In The Wild Tour is produced by David J. Wagner, L.L.C. (davidjwagnerllc.com) in partnership with Thomas D. Mangelsen, Inc. (mangelsen.com).

<http://mangelsen.com/exhibition>

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.