



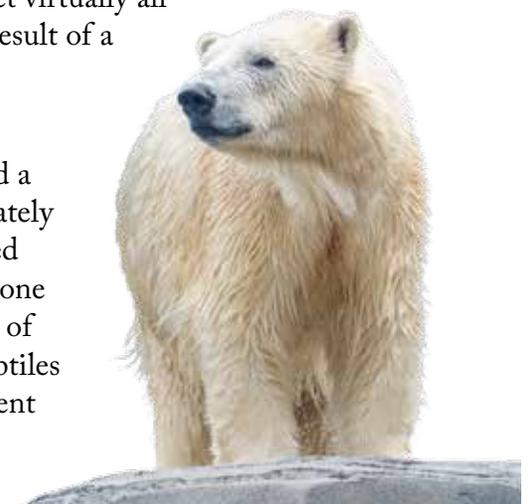
A Message from the Saint Louis Zoo

Today. Tomorrow. Together. Animals Always!

With some help from El Niño, 2015 finished out its run as the hottest year on record. In thinking about the year, I recall all the news coverage about the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Paris where hundreds of world leaders worked to hammer out an agreement on carbon reductions to counter climate change. They were concerned about the impact of climate change on people and their ecosystems. I was as concerned about the impact on wildlife and wild places and what we can do at the Zoo to effect change.

In November, I took a Zoo group to Churchill, Manitoba, where every year we find the largest aggregation of polar bears in the world. They come to Churchill because even though the area is actually below the Arctic Circle, sea ice forms here before it forms anywhere else in Hudson Bay. For several years, the sea ice at Churchill has been forming later in the year and breaking up earlier. This means polar bears spend less and less time out on the ice, where they get virtually all of their real nutrition. This change is a direct result of a warming climate.

But polar bears aren't the only ones suffering. The extinction rate for all species has increased a hundred-fold over the last century. Approximately 1,200 bird species, or 12 percent, are considered endangered, threatened, or vulnerable. Nearly one in five of the world's estimated 10,000 species of lizards, snakes, turtles, crocodiles and other reptiles are threatened with extinction. About 40 percent of all amphibian species and 26 percent of all



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Conservation Pledge

We will always be respectful and compassionate towards all living things in the world.

We will be thoughtful in making choices that affect our planet.

We will always appreciate diversity in all species and be a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves.

We will always conserve and care for the Earth's resources.

We will always share our knowledge and encourage the open exchange of ideas for the benefit of all creatures great and small.

And we will always work to ensure animals and people alike continue to thrive, Today. Tomorrow. Together. Animals Always.

**Today.
Tomorrow.
Together.
Animals Always.**

Through conservation actions both at the Zoo and around the world, the Center for Conservation in Punta San Juan, Peru works to ensure that Humboldt penguins and people can survive and thrive together.

Saint Louis Zoo
WildCare Institute



mammals are now threatened with extinction. It may be too late to save some of these species, but others still have a chance if we act now.

Acting now requires increasing public awareness—something we sought to do with a Conservation Pledge (see inset) and a new marketing theme:

Today. Tomorrow. Together.

Animals Always. Through qualitative research, we discovered that people care most about creating a sustainable future for wildlife and people—thus the “together” imagery in all our communication materials showing our staff and conservation partners working with animals in the field. The message is that all of us have an obligation to conserve species, realizing that we depend on each other to survive and thrive.

With species conservation central to all our strategies, a key 2015 planning priority for the Zoo became creating enough space for our Zoo to grow and pursue major conservation breeding programs. I was thrilled when the Busch Family Real Estate Trust came to us many months ago with a request that we consider purchasing Grant's Farm. We worked hard to figure out what it would cost to purchase, upgrade and operate this iconic St. Louis County attraction. We saw that this opportunity would give us space for engaging the public to connect with even more animals, expanding our education and research programs and breeding endangered species.

This is critically important because one of the greatest challenges zoos face is the long-term sustainability of populations of animals that range from the smallest frogs to large carnivores to antelopes. Creating genetically and demographically diverse populations will require a large number of animals and the space to manage and breed them. The goal is to have these species survive for at least the next 100 years.

However, the purchase would be contingent upon the Zoo's ability to generate enough funding through public support to operate Grant's Farm at the high standards the community has come to expect of us.

The sale is now before a probate court judge due to competing offers to buy the nearly 300-acre property. We are letting the judicial process take its course before we take any steps toward building public support for this endeavor.

Whatever happens, we stand ready to do what is best for the community and for the conservation of animals in our care and in the wild. In the meantime, through our master planning, we are defining precisely what we hope to do to respond to our ambitious and comprehensive E3 (Engage, Expand, Explore) Strategic Plan.

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Kali, plus Leaping Lemurs, Cool Cats, Feathered Friends

Okay, now I am back to polar bears because how can I ignore the impact one 850-pound (now almost 1,000-pound) bear has had on the Zoo? In May, Kali, then only 2½, made McDonnell Polar Bear Point his home. The bear was "FedExed" to the Zoo, so I was pleased to welcome FedEx executives and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Associate Director Bob Dreher to the June opening ceremony of this 40,000-square-foot habitat. Since then, Kali has been charming thousands, coming right up to the glass to greet guests. I heard one child tell her dad that she had "run out of smiles" after coming nose-to-nose with Kali.

In addition to Kali, we welcomed a lot of new animals to the Zoo in 2015:

- Reptile hatchings included two Haitian giant galliwasp, six red-bellied short-necked turtles and a Henkel's leaf-tailed gecko.
- A newborn ring-tailed lemur this year joined his family. Sifaka, ring-tailed, ruffed and mongoose lemurs moved into their new outdoor habitats.
- Red Rocks remained baby boom central with the births of several species, including a female lowland nyala, a male Speke's gazelle and a female addra gazelle.
- We now have a female serval for the first time in 40 years. She came to the Zoo from another institution, as did a pair of snow leopards and a jaguar. Go visit them all at their new homes in Big Cat Country.

The Zoo's Bird Department had a feather-filled year. Most significant of the multiple hatchings in the Bird House were two critically endangered horned guan chicks. The horned guan population in the wild is down to only 1,000 to 2,000 individuals in southeastern Mexico and Guatemala because their cloud forest habitat has been destroyed for logging, coffee plantations and other cash crops. The birth of these chicks marked a first for the Zoo and just the second recorded breeding of this species in the United States. One of the two chicks has survived and is thriving.



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Racing Extinction

2015 marked the fourth reintroduction in Missouri for our American burying beetles—Mother Nature's ultimate recyclers. In 2012, this insect became the first endangered species to be re-introduced in the state of Missouri. To date, nearly 1,500 Saint Louis Zoo-bred American burying beetles have been reintroduced.

The year also marked yet another release of endangered Ozark hellbenders. We announced the world's first captive breeding of this species in 2011. Since then, we've worked with the Missouri Department of Conservation to release more than 2,500 of these salamanders in Missouri rivers.

Also this summer, two Zoo bird keepers joined the many others from the Zoo who over the past 21 years have worked in the Mariana Islands. The brown tree snake, introduced to the islands following World War II, has decimated the bird population there. The keepers helped translocate Tinian monarchs and Saipan bridled white-eyes to the snake-free conservation island of Guguan.



Keeper Sydney Oliveira



Keeper Chris Johnson

Why should we care about the loss of birds on a far-away island? Fighting invasive species and saving these birds protects our ecosystem. After all, the first rule of intelligent tinkering is: Save all the pieces.

They're Back!

Now here's a story about saving the pieces and staging a major comeback: In 2015, 30 years after going extinct in the wild, *Partula* snails were returned home to the Papehue Valley in Tahiti. In 1984, three scientists put out a call to save the remaining species by breeding them in zoos. In 1988, we became a leader in creating a breeding plan to save these snails. Last summer we contributed 140 individual snails to the shipment of 243 that went to the London Zoo, where they received health screenings before some were placed on a flight to Tahiti.



In Tahiti, the snails were greeted with fanfare and a ukulele tune as field scientists headed to a reserve, where they were released. We were particularly pleased to learn that of all the snails shipped, our Zoo's snails were the ones that fared best on the journey from London to Tahiti and that researchers are finding baby snails that are offspring of the ones that were reintroduced.

Poo & Stress

Hands down, my favorite story this year was on the front page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The headline read "St. Louis Zoo is serious about poo." Indeed, we are. To quote from the article: "It's a job well dung. Poop scoopers at the Saint Louis Zoo deliver droppings to scientists who study the hormonal health of animals—from fertility to stress levels."

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That about tells the story on conservation research in 2015. We placed Fitbit activity monitors on 36 fennec foxes (10 from the Saint Louis Zoo) to find out which showed the most stress when they were out meeting the public. The idea is to choose the more laid-back foxes for use in zoo programs or exhibits.

Zoo researchers also looked at the relationship between fertility and stress for tree kangaroos—all by checking the hormones in poop.

And then they turned their attention to another animal, humans! Research scientists checked out heart rate variability and visitors' psychological health before, during and after visitors interacted with stingrays at Stingrays at Caribbean Cove presented by Mercy Kids. The findings confirmed people feel better around animals! It's not too much of a stretch to say that this proves reconnecting a visitor with nature creates a happier person.



Behind the Scenes

After all this talk of conservation, you may be wondering about the folks behind the scenes, educating thousands, keeping everything running smoothly and bringing in revenue to help pay the bills. Here's a brief rundown on their 2015 numbers:

- 5,600 Education Department programs for almost 970,000 people generated nearly \$2 million in earned and contributed revenue. Enrollment in fall education classes increased by 45 percent over 2014 numbers.



A Public Broadcasting Show, filmed primarily at the Zoo, aired in May and June on Nine PBS in St. Louis. This segment of the series, called SciGirls, challenges middle school girls to become citizen scientists.

- 2,300 Zoo volunteers helped run events and handle a number of other tasks, contributing over 100,000 hours for a value of more than \$2.3 million. In addition, docents, offering interpretation and connecting with visitors, contributed nearly 21,000 hours valued at more than \$468,000.
- Revenue from visitor spending (food, beverages, purchases at our retail operations, parking and attractions) was up 21 percent over 2014.
- Sales and catering for private events totaled nearly \$2 million—up 11 percent from 2014.

Institute of Conservation Medicine Director Dr. Sharon Deem (right) worked with visitors whose physiological health was assessed as they interacted with stingrays at Stingrays at Caribbean Cove.

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- We hosted special events on 126 days, including a sold out ZOOFARI 2015 presented by Wells Fargo Advisors, which raised a record \$1.1 million and attracted 3,200 guests. U.S. Bank Wild Lights attracted 80,000 guests—33 percent over 2014, and the event generated more than \$900,000—a 58 percent increase over 2014 revenue.
- Zoo staff hosted the inaugural Animals Always Gala in October. Raising nearly \$68,000 to support 13 WildCare Institute conservation centers, the Gala included a great presentation by *National Geographic* photographer Joel Sartore.



The speaker at the WildCare Institute Animals Always Gala was *National Geographic* photographer Joel Sartore, who took photos of a number of Zoo animals while he was in St. Louis.

- At the Gala, the Zoo launched its first online crowdfunding campaign to attract funding for Armenia's first conservation breeding and research center. This facility is dedicated to saving reptile and amphibian species; 100 backers gave over \$7,300.

Then there were the folks who made everything look good or who took good care of the animals.

- Facilities Management completed more than 5,000 work orders, and the Horticulture staff continued to get top marks from our visitors for keeping the flora healthy and beautiful.

- Thanks to Food Service, Housekeeping and Grounds, the Zoo managed to divert 165,000 pounds of waste from the landfill—the equivalent carbon dioxide reduction of 10.8 cars.



The Zoo's veterinary staff works as a team to address animal health.

- The Zoo's veterinary staff recorded nearly 9,300 medical cases, and Zoo vets offered their expertise at workshops and presentations in the U.S., Chile and Mexico.

Thanks to our amazingly generous donors, the Zoo reported a good year for contributions in 2015:

- Gifts and commitments of approximately \$12 million were secured through the Marlin Perkins Society, Partnership Marketing sponsorships and major planned gifts.
- Three notable leadership gifts were \$1 million from Judy and Dennis Jones, which is recognized at the Judy and Dennis Jones Family Cave View at McDonnell Polar Bear Point; a \$1 million unrestricted gift from an anonymous donor; and a \$3 million grant from the Bellwether Foundation to be recognized at the new Grizzly Cave at the Grizzly Ridge habitat.
- The Zoo's endowment continued to grow with assets totaling \$50 million by year-end.
- We had nearly 49,000 members by year-end, up 11 percent over the five-year average.

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Kudu Kudos

The Zoo continued to rack up honors in 2015. Cheryl Asa, Ph.D., our Director of Research and the reproductive physiologist who founded the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Contraception Center 26 years ago, was chosen for the AZA Devra Kleiman Award for her outstanding scientific research contributions.

The Zoo and its conservation partners received the AZA 2015 International Conservation Award for its field work in the Sahelo-Sahara region of Africa. The award was accepted by Assistant General Curator Bill Houston, Director of the Saharan Wildlife Recovery Center of the Zoo's WildCare Institute.

This fall, 13 members of the Zoo staff were chosen for prestigious awards bestowed by the American Association of Zoo Keepers at their 42nd annual conference—held for the first time in St. Louis. The conference attracted more than 300 animal care professionals from across the nation and overseas and was planned by our staff—it was a rousing success.

Finally, the Zoo was ranked among the top three zoos in the nation and among the top 10 in the world by TripAdvisor®. The travel site's Travelers' Choice™ 2015 awards were determined through an analysis of more than 11,000 visitor reviews.

Clearly from this ranking, we can say that the Saint Louis Zoo is the best free zoo both in the United States and in the world.

2016 promises to be a terrific year with the beginning of construction for Grizzly Ridge. This habitat will more than double the space of the 1920s-era grizzly bear area and will offer visitors an opportunity to view grizzly bears from a large glass viewing area. Also in 2016, guests can look forward to the arrival of a pair of Tasmanian devils in a new habitat at Emerson Children's Zoo.

The year will mark the Silver Anniversary 25th year for the Marlin Perkins Society, formed in honor of one of our Zoo's great directors as a way to recognize those who generously support the Zoo with an annual gift of \$1,000 or more. The Society began with 48 members. Today, we have almost 1,100 members, and the Society has generated more than \$21 million for the Zoo. In 2016, we will be leveraging this milestone with a \$250,000 Silver Anniversary Challenge.

All of this is only possible because of the support of our wonderful philanthropic community; the taxpayers of St. Louis city and county; visitors, public officials and community leaders from across the region and state; our past Subdistrict Chairman Holmes Lamoreux; our newly named Subdistrict Chairman Jerry Kent; our Association Board President Matt Geekie; board members, commissioners, volunteers, staff and each of you.

Let me close by saying that this is my New Year's Resolution: I will work even harder to always be respectful and compassionate towards all living things in the world—and to remember that amazing things happen when we work together. Thank you for all you do to make the Zoo a great place.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey P. Bonner, Ph.D.
Dana Brown President & CEO