AZA-Accredited Zoos and Aquariums Generate $160 Million Annually for Wildlife Conservation

AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums help animal species in their natural range by contributing $160 million a year to wildlife conservation projects worldwide.

Silver Spring, MD (PRWEB) April 02, 2013 -- The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) today announced that AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums contribute $160 million a year to wildlife conservation, supporting more than 2,650 conservation projects in 130 countries.

“AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are global leaders in wildlife conservation,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. “While AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums provide great care to animals in their facilities, they are also working around the world to make a positive impact for many imperiled species.”

AZA’s latest Annual Report on Conservation Science shows that AZA-accredited zoos and aquarium funded an extensive range of projects, including support for anti-poaching teams in range country national parks, population assessments, research on marine mammal strandings as indicators of ocean health, support for local communities to resolve human-animal conflict, habitat restoration, campaigns against illegal bush meat hunting, training for field veterinarians, and both rearing and rehabilitating species for reintroduction into their natural habitats.

The projects focused on the conservation of 692 species representing mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates and flora, most of which are listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as having an endangered, vulnerable or near threatened status in the wild. Species supported by these conservation initiatives include Asian and African elephants, chimpanzees, snow leopards, polar bears, Humboldt penguins, whooping cranes, California condors, loggerhead and green turtles, Komodo dragons, hellbenders, Panamanian golden frogs, Oregon spotted frogs, whale sharks, Karner blue butterflies and many others.

“Zoos of the AZA have provided crucial support for monitoring and protecting the Amur tiger and other denizens of the Russian Far East,” said Dr. Dale Miquelle, Wildlife Conservation Society Russia Country Program Director and Tiger Coordinator for WCS’s Tiger Program. “Zoos and aquariums make vital contributions to field conservation while simultaneously raising awareness and inspiring people by forging meaningful connections between people and wildlife.”

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting an institution dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, including a list of the 221 AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums, please visit www.aza.org
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