



2023

ANNUAL REPORT





OUR MISSION

Fresno Chaffee Zoo inspires people to care for animals, create connections, build community, and save wildlife.

OUR VISION

A just future that begins with us and makes possible a world where people and wildlife thrive together.



Blue and gold macaws



Emerald tree boa



Red wolves

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ACCREDITED BY THE
**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to Fresno Chaffee Zoo's 2023 Annual Report.

2023 was the year Fresno Chaffee Zoo continued to build on the public support of Measure Z by opening exciting, transformative exhibits. It's also the year our expertise in science and husbandry made real, direct impacts on saving wildlife.

Fresno Chaffee Zoo reached a milestone in our new Conservation Science program this year, breaking ground on our Conservation Action Center, the home of our game-changing efforts to save the endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard, a species endemic to the Central Valley and one whose population is in crisis. Working together with the US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and Fresno State University, scientists and curators on staff at Fresno Chaffee Zoo intervened to rescue a dwindling and isolated population of lizards on Fresno County's Panoche Plateau in order to apply our expertise in husbandry and field science to the captive propagation of this species. The efforts of this partnership brought in the seven remaining adults of this population and in our first two seasons successfully hatched 69 adults—and in a moment I won't forget—re-introduced the first 17 animals from this program back into the wild! The new Conservation Action Center will allow us to continue this work at an even more effective level while giving our guests here at the Zoo a chance to witness the work behind the scenes and learn the story of this conservation action.

2023 also saw the opening of our beautiful new exhibit experience, Kingdoms of Asia. This three-and-a-half acre exhibit showcases the long history and interdependence of the wildlife and human cultures of Southeast Asia, and features Malayan tigers, a crocodilian species called the Sunda gharial, Asian small-clawed otters, sloth bears, siamangs, orangutans, Komodo dragons, and more. All of these animals are endangered or critically endangered throughout their range. Kingdoms of Asia gives us the opportunity to share their beauty, behaviors, and the challenges they face in the wild in a close-up and immersive setting that transports our guests to these beautiful habitats and into the stories of the peoples whose traditions, myths, and legends reflect their historically close relationship with the wildlife and wilderness that has shaped their cultures. Many leaders of the Southeast Asian community here in Fresno and the Valley served on our Advisory Council, guiding the design of the buildings and their iconography that makes up a dramatic backdrop for the

exhibits. These groups—including the Hmong, Khmer, Thai, Vietnamese, and Laotians—also have powerful narratives of their own survival and migration. We were honored to include the stories of our neighbors, and their thriving communities here in the Central Valley, as one of the most important features of this exciting new experience.

From the tropics of Southeast Asia to the tropics of Central America, Fresno Chaffee Zoo looks to create inspiring encounters with wildlife. This year we were proud to bring the beauty of butterflies to Fresno with our new Butterfly Garden. Our outdoor pollinator garden attracts local species and allows our guests to make the connection between insects, including butterflies, pollination, and agriculture here in the Valley. Further, our guests learn what they can do in their own backyards to create habitat and support this critical function. The outdoor gardens in turn lead guests into an enclosure where they can move through a hothouse filled with hundreds of butterflies from around the world. This indoor garden is an enchanting opportunity to get close-up to these delicate, shimmering jewels while learning about their life cycles and conservation status.

Our Butterfly Garden is another example of Fresno Chaffee Zoo's commitment to innovation and meaningful experiences. We are honored by the support we are given every day by the people and communities of Fresno and beyond, and we pledge to be tireless in our efforts to create a great zoo, a great community, and a better world. Whether it's tigers or tiger swallowtails, we work to inspire people to care for animals, create connections, build community, and save wildlife around the world and right here at home.



JON FORREST DOHLIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
& ZOO DIRECTOR

Blunt-nosed leopard lizard released at Panoche Plateau

ANIMAL COLLECTION



INVERTEBRATES

Species 10
Individuals 1370



CARTILAGINOUS FISH (Chondrichthyes)

Species 4
Individuals 35



BONY FISH (Osteichthyes)

Species 18
Individuals 3,527



AMPHIBIANS

Species 15
Individuals 100



REPTILES

Species 61
Individuals 212



BIRDS

Species 63
Individuals 200



MAMMALS

Species 44
Individuals 137

TOTALS

SPECIES
215

INDIVIDUALS
5581

BIRTHS & HATCHINGS

Herps & Invertebrates

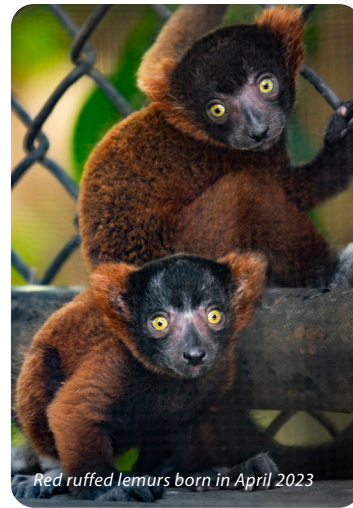
24.18.2 Blunt-nosed leopard lizard
0.0.1 Prehensile-tailed skink
0.0.3 Roti snake-necked turtle

Mammals

1.0 Masai giraffe
0.2 Red ruffed lemur

Birds

2.1.1 Boat-billed heron



Red ruffed lemurs born in April 2023

ANIMAL ACQUISITIONS

Herps & Invertebrates

1.0 Banded rock rattlesnake
0.0.1 Black tree monitor
2.1 Blunt-nosed leopard lizard
0.0.9517 Butterflies & moths (VARIOUS SPECIES)
0.1 Fiji banded iguana
0.0.10 Giant African millipede
1.0 Gila monster
1.1 Roti snake-necked turtle
2.0 Yellow-headed gecko

Fish

0.0.1200 Harlequin rasbora
0.0.419 Siamese fighting fish
0.0.1300 Three-lined scissortail rasbora
0.0.600 Tricolor sharkminnow

Birds

2.0 Beautiful fruit dove
2.3 Crested oropendola
0.2 Green-naped pheasant-pigeon
1.0 Inca tern
0.3 King vulture
1.0 Nicobar pigeon
1.0 Red-billed leiothrix
1.0 Rhinoceros hornbill
1.0 Turkey vulture

Mammals

2.0 Degu
4.0 Domestic goat
1.0 Greater kudu
7.0 LaMancha goat
1.1 Malayan tiger
4.0 Nigerian dwarf goat
1.0 Prehensile-tailed porcupine
0.2 Reindeer
1.0 Six-banded armadillo
1.1 Sloth bear
2.0 Striped skunk
2.0 Tammar wallaby
0.1 Virginia opossum
1.0 Warthog

1.0 Male
0.1 Female
0.0.1 Unknown sex

ANIMAL SPOTLIGHT: MUHIMU

Giraffes are unique from the tip of their tongue to the tip of their tail. Whether it is their iconic long neck for reaching new tree growth no other antelope can reach, or their iconic spots that help with thermoregulation and camouflage, they certainly stand out in the animal world. Although they are unique, one thing they have in common with all living creatures is the first few sleepless nights that come with having a newborn. When Siku, one of our Masai giraffes, delivered her first calf in May 2023, those first few nights would not be any different.

When Muhimu was born, he was small and had trouble standing. For a giraffe this can be extra challenging as they need to nurse from their mother in the first few hours of life to get the immunoglobulins that help protect them until their own immune system can take over at a few weeks old. Without this immediate immunity from his mother, Muhimu would have been at a high risk for most diseases. Although his mother was attentive and gentle with her newborn, nothing she could do could get him to stand and have the strength to nurse. The giraffe care specialists and veterinary teams were on hand to help Muhimu learn to stand and eventually to walk, and after a long sleepless night everyone was hopeful that would do the trick. Unfortunately, too much time had passed and nursing from mom was not possible.

This began the year-long journey of bottle raising this young giraffe while keeping him in the barn with the herd to learn to be a giraffe. The giraffe care specialists and veterinary teams had to adjust to constant feeding schedules (more sleepless nights) and the nutrition team spent time running around town looking for 20-30 liters of just the right milk for his bottles. The giraffe herd also had to give up their preferred stall to this new herd member and learn to wait patiently for him to shift on and off savanna each day.

Now more than a year later, everyone gets to enjoy watching Muhimu (which means "important" or "significant" in Swahili) act like one of the herd out on the African Adventure savanna. The only sign left of those first few sleepless nights spent in the barn is when Muhimu starts to drool as he sees one of the giraffe specialists come his way with a bucket. The bucket has changed from bottles to lettuce, but he gets excited just the same.



MICHELE GREEN
ZOO ANIMAL MANAGER: TWIGA



Muhimu joining the giraffe herd in African Adventure

OPENING KINGDOMS OF ASIA

On September 24, 2020, Fresno Chaffee Zoo broke ground on Kingdoms of Asia. Transforming three acres of land in the heart of the Zoo into an immersive cultural experience was no small feat. It would require years of planning and coordination long before the first shovelful of dirt. Decades-old utilities needed updating, infrastructure needed to be built, and individual animals would need to move to new homes at other AZA-accredited zoos to prepare the site for demolition and construction.

Design for Kingdoms of Asia started in 2017. This process included constructing scaled models of the entire exhibit with detailed replicas of all the rockwork. This work was hand-sculpted and hand-painted by a team of talented artists working diligently to recreate the incredible art and natural features found in Cambodia and throughout Southeast Asia.

All construction can be complicated but building spaces that house animals as strong and curious as an orangutan or as agile and small as an otter added multiple layers of complexity. Every detail was carefully thought through down to the type and placement of a single screw.

In the end, it was about seeing the vision come to life. Years of blueprints, framing, and concrete came together, and on June 3rd, 2023, the space was reborn. The Zoo overcame many hurdles throughout the construction process but maintained its vision to bring Kingdoms of Asia to life for thousands of visitors and the animals that call it home to enjoy.



Rhinoceros Hornbill



Kingdoms of Asia groundbreaking ceremony



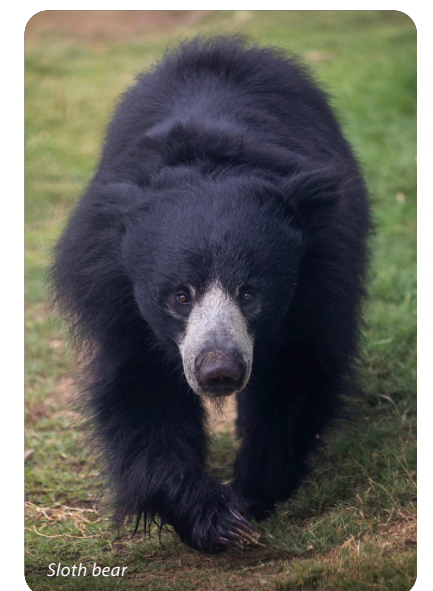
Sunda Gharial



Ceremonial blessing of Kingdoms of Asia



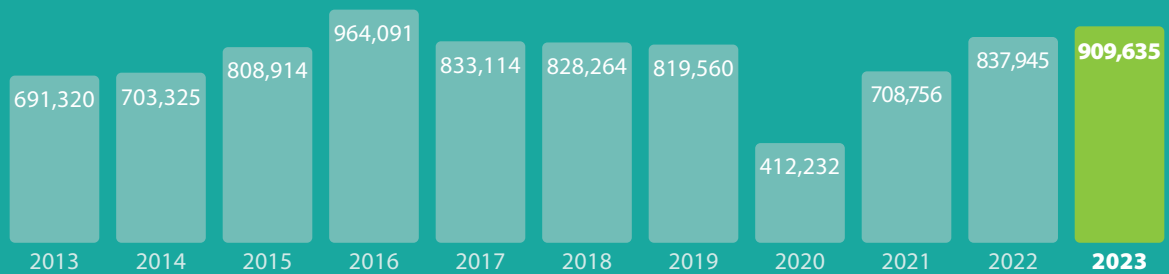
Malayan tiger animal chat



Sloth bear

ATTENDANCE

909,635 Guests



20,173 Member Households



FINANCIAL REPORT

Income

Admissions	\$7,814,713
Membership	\$2,098,631
Merchandise, food, and beverage	\$2,709,357
Special events	\$341,880
Education	\$1,664,910
Other	\$220,150
Total Revenue	\$14,849,641

Expenses

Program services	\$27,879,984
Management and general	\$3,371,479
Fundraising	\$1,054,419
Total Expenses	\$32,305,882

Change in net assets
\$10,563,056

Measure Z – Operations	\$7,599,738
Measure Z – Capital	\$13,784,067
Contributions – Unrestricted	\$2,105,754
Contributions – Restricted	\$1,905,508
Total Support	\$25,395,067
Investment Gains and Other Income	\$ (2,624,230)
Total Revenue, Support, and Gains	\$42,868,938

EDUCATION

In 2023, the Education Programs Team continued to expand its impact with the addition of a new Madera Unified School District (MUSD) partnership along with the return of our Overnight at the Zoo program and our popular Group Behind the Scenes tours. We brought back our young childhood program, re-titled as Roo and You, and our partnership with Golden Charter Academy grew to include 5th grade. These additions broadened the Education Department's reach to include students from the outlying rural areas of Fresno County, offered more programs for younger children, and programs for older students interested in STEM careers. The Education Program Team delivered 1,163 programs for 33,261 learners of all ages in 2023. Our Behind-the-Scenes programs reached an additional 2,307 guests.

Our Conservation Interpretation (CI) Team participated in the opening of two new exhibits in 2023. CIs supported learning in the Tonlé Classroom and Bonner Station in the Kingdoms of Asia exhibit. They helped visitors learn about the animals,

the culture of Southeast Asia, and the environmental impact of palm oil production. They also interpreted for the new Butterfly Garden, allowing guests to enjoy the wide variety of butterflies in the habitat while ensuring the safety of the animals. Additionally, we added a reindeer visitor experience to our winter IllumiNature event. These new programs are a testament to the team's ability to collaborate with our animal and guest services departments in creating a seamless guest experience. The Conservation Interpretation team had over 1.1 million guest interactions in 2023. Of those interactions, 14,240 of those were from our Spanish chats.

Our Volunteer Team continued to educate visitors of all ages at the Ask Me Carts and learning stations. In total 19,407 hours were volunteered in 2023. Volunteers supported Zoo summer camp, public events, onsite and offsite programming, and Member's Perks.



BRICKEN SPARACINO
DIRECTOR OF LEARNING



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

MUSD

Our partnership grew this year with MUSD to include an afterschool program for all schools in the district. This innovative two-week science program culminated with students making their own biome diorama. Students learned about the Earth's biomes with our Educators and, once a week, the Animal Ambassadors visited their classes. We were able to provide Spanish language support for those schools with ESL programs. The at-school program was followed up by Madera Family Day at the Zoo, attended by 600 students and families. The families enjoyed learning stations throughout the Zoo that gave the students a chance to show their families what they learned.

Kingdoms of Asia

The team's flexibility and imaginative hands-on learning expertise were highlighted with the opening of Kingdoms of Asia. The Conservation Interpreters were excited to work at the new and improved Bonner station, interpreting at the palm oil station with a grocery store activity. This activity highlights the presence of palm oil in everyday products and helps visitors learn how to make sustainable choices by using the WAZA PalmOil Scan app. Stationed around the exhibit, the team provided animal observations for the Zoological Care Team to ensure the animals were settling into their new homes successfully. The CI Management Team, full-time staff, and Presenter CIs collaborated with the animal department to create new chats for Malayan tiger, sloth bear, and Asian small-clawed otter. These chats provide deeper learning for our visitors, teaching them how the Zoo cares for animals while incorporating our key conservation messages.

Kiwanis East Fresno Foundation

Our Volunteer Team worked with the Kiwanis East Fresno Foundation to bring in the Kiwanis members for a day of volunteering at the Zoo. The Kiwanis volunteers provided material and people power to create three new structures in the Zoo. Kiwanis built a rope and wood fence between the Education Grove and Bird Show to create a private area for campers. They also beautified the fence around the outside summer camp space. Lastly, they built a pergola in the Education Center, so that staff can have a shaded break area. These were all necessary to ensure the success of our summer camp programs and are a wonderful example of volunteering from our Fresno community.



CONSERVATION

In 2023, Fresno Chaffee Zoo invested **\$2,940,287** in local and global field conservation, a 13-fold increase over 2022. Much of this increase resulted from construction of our new \$2.4M Conservation Action Center that opens in 2024. This state-of-the-art, bio-secure facility will house captive-breeding programs for rewilding threatened and endangered species, such as the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. The facility has three large climate-controlled spaces for rearing animals, each with windows facing a guest path so that the public can observe the work happening inside.

HIGHLIGHTS

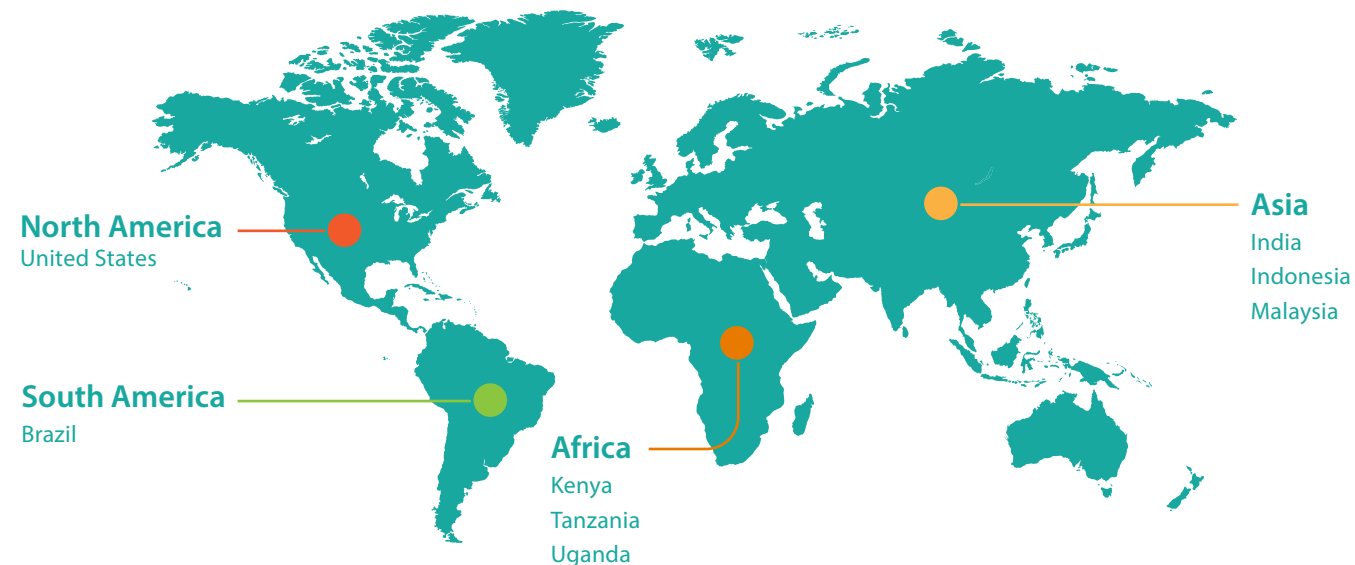
Fresno Chaffee Zoo created a new Conservation Science Department in 2023 with three full-time staff including our new Director of Conservation Science, Dr. Rory Telemeco.

We awarded \$158,065 in grants across 26 organizations working to conserve a diversity of species including African elephants, orangutans, California condors, Malayan tigers, leatherback sea turtles and many more.

Finally, we invested \$380,000 in our ongoing work to restore endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizards to San Joaquin Desert habitat in the Central Valley. Much of these funds supported staff caring for the captive colony and monitoring wild lizards in the field. This included paid conservation internships for four undergraduate students from Fresno State and Fresno City College.

Grand Total \$538,065

The Zoo granted **\$158,065** towards conservation projects in **8 countries** during 2023



BLUNT-NOSED LEOPARD LIZARD REPORT

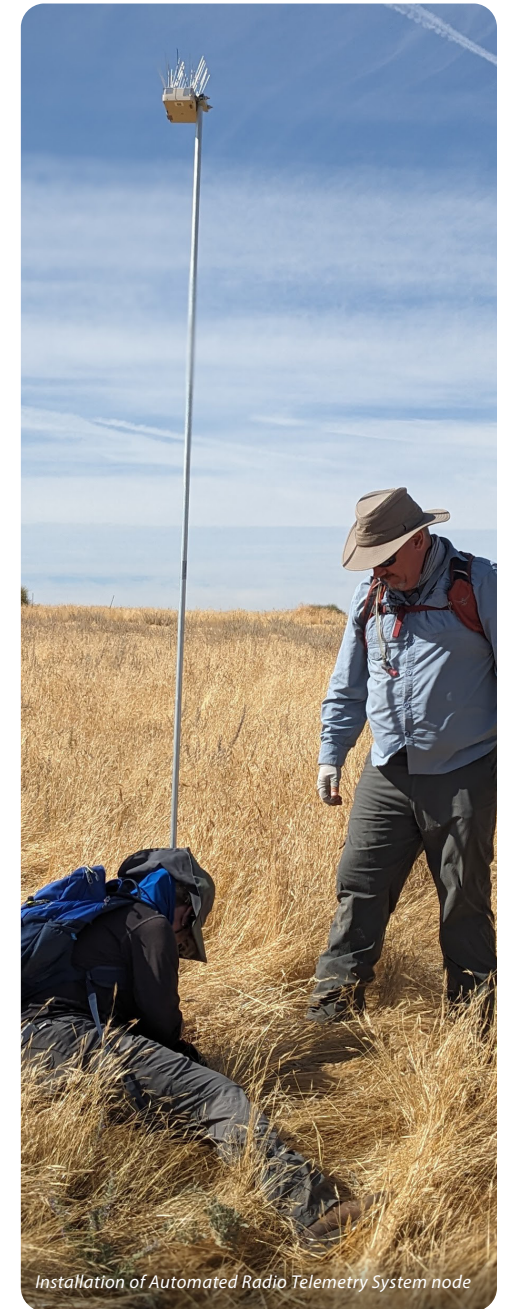
In May 2023, our blunt-nosed leopard lizard conservation program marked an important milestone when we released 17 young lizards back to their native landscape on Panoche Plateau. This was a first for the species and marked an important capstone of “firsts” for our program, which is the first to maintain, reproduce, and rear the species within human care.

We radio-monitored the released lizards for 10 weeks, which is most of their active season. Although survival was high, these animals did not move or reproduce as expected. Regardless, our scientists learned a great deal and will adjust their procedures in future years.

We anticipate releasing an additional 30 animals in 2024 and will continue to produce, release, and monitor animals annually until the population recovers and is self-sufficient. Instrumental to this work is a large Automated Radio Telemetry System (ARTS) which we broke ground on in 2023 (expected completion in 2024). This system will be composed of over 400 remote “nodes” arrayed across our field site which will listen for tagged animals and report back to a central tower. Scientists can then access data from the tower via the internet. When fully operational, this system will allow us to remotely monitor tagged animals in real time, providing an unprecedented window into their movement, habitat use, and survival. In the future, we can use this system to monitor other San Joaquin Desert species that call Panoche Plateau home.



RORY TELEMECO
DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION SCIENCE



Installation of Automated Radio Telemetry System node



Blunt-nosed leopard lizard release



CAC groundbreaking ceremony

EVENTS REPORT

EVENT	ATTENDANCE
IllumiNature 2023/2024 season	81,639
IllumiNature Lunar New Year	3,436
Roar and Pour	439
Producers Ice Cream Zoofari	1,069
Safari Night	595
Zoo Boo (9 nights)	15,350
122 birthday parties	
60 private events	



Safari Night



IllumiNature Lunar New Year



IllumiNature



Zoo Boo



Producers Ice Cream Zoofari



Zoo Boo



Roar and Pour



Roar and Pour

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This year marked the first full year for the Community Partnerships and Government Affairs Department at Fresno Chaffee Zoo. This new team was created to help fulfill the Zoo's mission to inspire people to care for animals, create connections, build community, and save wildlife. To care about and tell the animal story, you must care about and tell the human story. It requires a genuine and intentional connection to community. This year, our department expanded our presence in the communities of the Central Valley, highlighted cultures that shape our region, built stronger relationships with community partners and our government representatives, sought the guidance of Cultural Advisors, and inspired the community to appreciate and care for the world around them.

The department built on previous progress and in 2023 hosted a full year of Community Events including Lunar New Year, Black History Month, Rainbow Family Day, and Día de los Muertos. For all of our events, we leaned on our staff and community partners to ensure that we celebrated and welcomed all members from these communities. We also worked with local organizations to provide specialized resources to make the event impactful for all guests. Our community support for these events was overwhelming

both from our partner organizations and the public. We were honored to host thousands of guests throughout the year at our Community Events including our highest attended event, Día de los Muertos, which welcomed over 5,500 visitors.

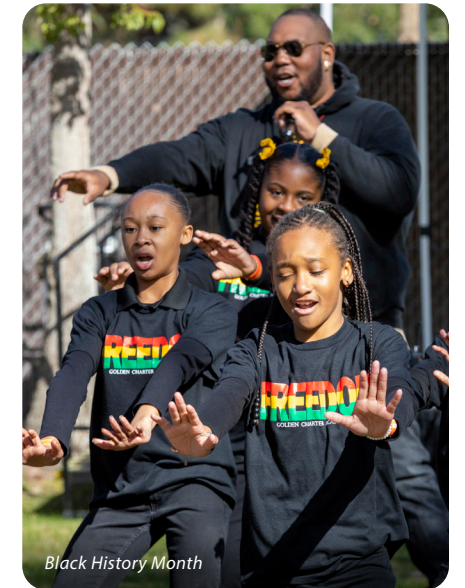
The team also made great strides in developing stronger relationships with our government representatives. In March of 2023, staff attended AZA's Capitol Hill Advocacy Day in Washington, DC. It was a great opportunity to be a part of the collective voice of AZA, to work alongside our colleagues from other institutions, and to engage our elected government officials about the Zoo's commitment to conservation. This year, our department also welcomed several government officials for personal tours to see our work in action first-hand. We look forward to expanding our reach with local officials to garner more support for the Zoo and its mission.



AMY AVERY
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



Black History Month



Black History Month



Lunar New Year



Rainbow Family Day



Día de los Muertos



Día de los Muertos

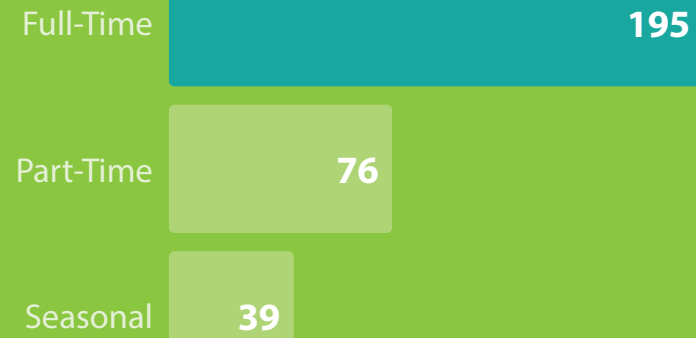


Rainbow Family Day

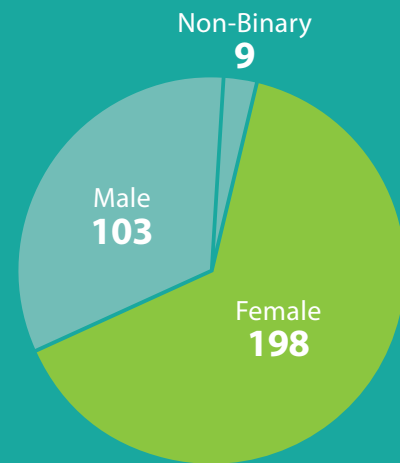
STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS

310 Employees

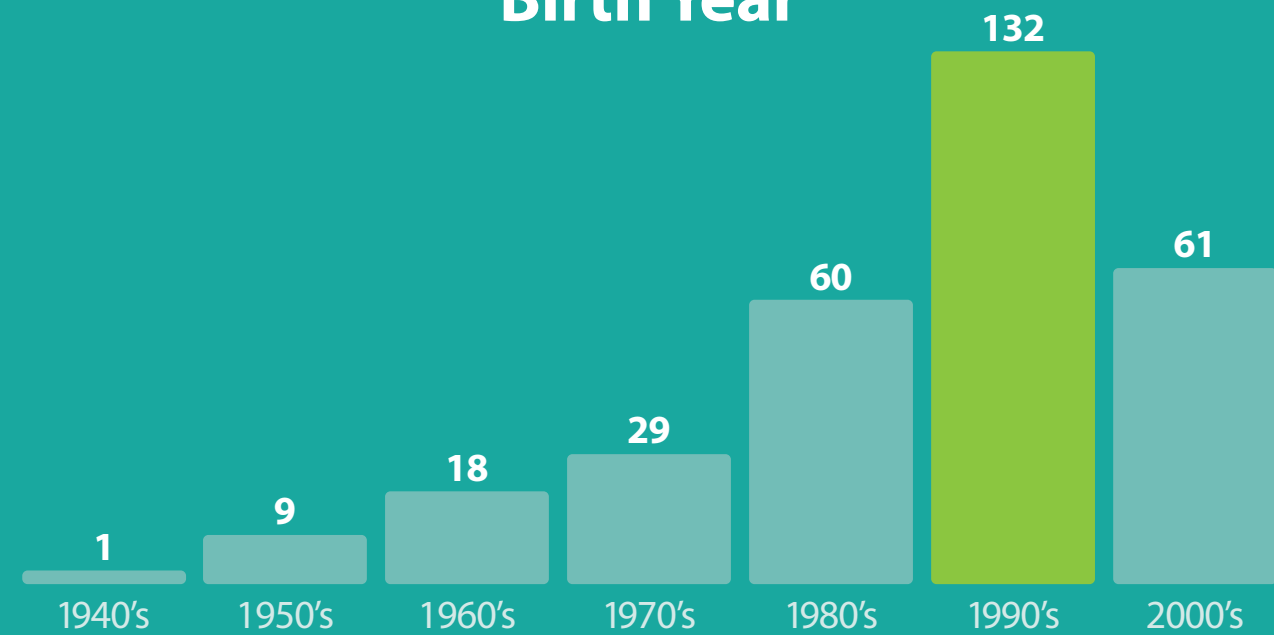
Status



Gender



Birth Year



THANK YOU

On behalf of all of us at Fresno Chaffee Zoo, we gratefully thank those who donated \$1,000 or more in 2023.

Agrimar LLC
Alliant Insurance Services, Inc.
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Lynn & Peter Baldwin
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First 5 Fresno County
Fishman Larsen & Calister Law Corporation
Fowler Packing
Fresno County Department of Public Health

Fresno Economic Opportunities Commission
Fresno Grizzlies
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Mendy Laval & Khaled Alkotob
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Lyles Foundation Donor Advised Fund
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One Fresno Foundation
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Nancy Whitmore
Ian & Allie Wieland
Christopher & Kelly Woods
Michael & Susan Woods
Xobee Networks, LLC
Pao Yang & Mao Lee

Thank you to our Young Fresno Chaffee Zoo Society members of 2023

Fotini Alfieri
Asheline Beeson
Austin Bushree & Vanessa Ceballos
Xavier Calderon
Jesse & Jennifer Craycraft
Britney & Frank Daniel
Eric & April Dejong
Joseph Diaz
Nicole & Scott Ellis
Taylor & Blake Ellsworth
Kristina Garabedian

Suzzette Garcia
Linda Garcia
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Hillary Neal
Sabrina & Phillip Noradian
Lori Ong
Luis Parrales
Ruby Rebensdorf & Aaron Herndon

Jessica Nicole Rodriguez
Anthony & Larissa Rojas
Albee Sanchez
Steven Sanchez Jr.
Ryan Seely
Keith and Libby Teague
Clarissa Uribe
Gunner & Allyson White
Jenny & Brian Wright
Landon Yale

2023 CONSTRUCTION

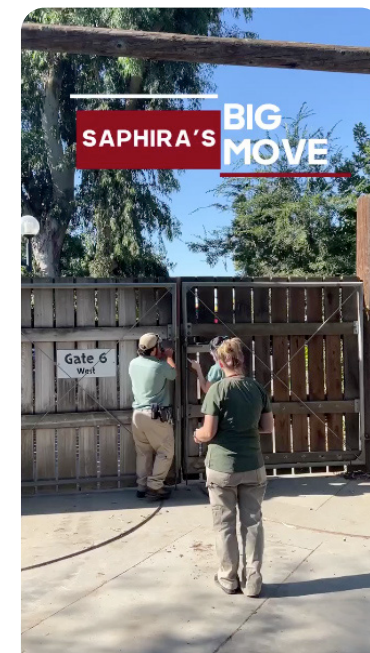
Several years of planning and construction came to fruition in 2023 with the grand opening of Kingdoms of Asia. This awe-inspiring experience brought record attendance, with intricate architecture and amazing animal experiences around every corner.

In addition to the updates guests are able to see and experience during their visit, the Zoo is also focused on finding ways to increase our sustainability. Like any wise energy consumer, when considering our overall energy practices our objective is not just to utilize green energy sources, whenever possible, but to also reduce our overall consumption. In pursuit of this goal, the Zoo began a \$1.4 million Energy Efficiency Upgrade project in the summer of 2022.

This project was designed to identify and replace old, outdated equipment with energy-efficient equipment. Over the 18-month project, we replaced approximately 15 transformers and 15 HVAC units across the Zoo's campus. In addition, we updated many of our control systems to programmable smart-networked thermostats and switched out inefficient interior and exterior lighting with LED fixtures. The overall goal of this project was to reduce our energy consumption across the facility, which will save us approximately \$2.4 million in energy costs over the estimated useful life of the equipment.



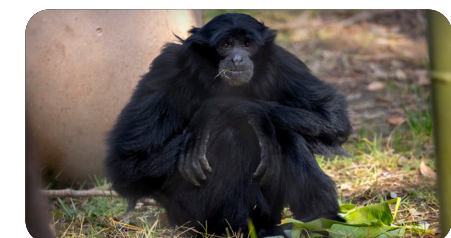
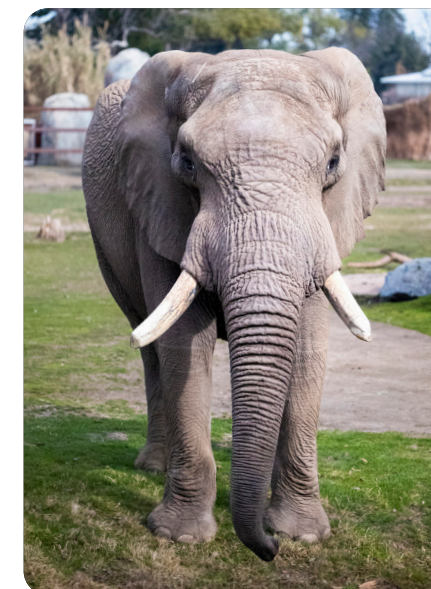
Check out our year in review video from 2023



Take a look at one of our top posts from 2023

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Our Mission

To inspire people to care for animals, create connections, build community, and save wildlife.

Your Opportunity

Zoo memberships, donations, and sponsorships ensure that we continue fulfilling our mission now and for future generations.

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