



news release

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2017 Report Highlights AZA Member Facilities' Important Contributions to Global Conservation and Science

Silver Spring, Maryland (September 5, 2018) – In 2017, aquariums, zoos, and other organizations accredited and certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) funded a record-breaking \$220 million in field conservation, led 2,800 education programs, and contributed to 170 peer-reviewed publications. These numbers were produced as a result of AZA's [Annual Report on Conservation and Science \(ARCS\)](#) and demonstrate the commitment of these organizations to animals both in the wild and in their care.

ARCS and the accompanying [Highlights document](#) celebrate the accomplishments of AZA member facilities each year in the areas of field conservation, education programming, green business practices and mission-focused research.

"AZA and its member facilities are committed to a mission of conserving wildlife and wild places," said AZA's President and CEO Dan Ashe. "The AZA community is consistently increasing its efforts to save species from extinction through AZA SAFE and other local and international projects. I am proud to announce AZA facilities are well on the way to meeting and exceeding our ambitious goal to invest \$1 billion in conservation within the next five years."

In 2017 alone, AZA members supported wildlife conservation programs in 128 countries, benefiting 863 species and subspecies, of which more than 280 were listed as endangered or threatened under the US Endangered Species Act. AZA members reported spending more than \$15.7 million on collaborative conservation as part of [AZA SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction](#), a program that prioritizes strategic planning for field conservation within the AZA community and builds on existing recovery plans for the world's most threatened species, including sea turtles, gorillas, whooping cranes, sharks and rays, and more.

"Members of AZA are serving critical roles to save species all around the world," said Michael Mace, Director of Animal Collections and Strategy at San Diego Zoo Global and co-recipient of AZA's 2017 North American Conservation Award. "The knowledge AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums have developed to manage the animals in our care is now being directly applied to species in the wild. The conservation area is constantly changing while AZA and our partners continue to develop expertise to save species."

Other highlights from the 2017 ARCS report include...

- **Education**: AZA-accredited and certified facilities reported carrying out 2,800 education programs that helped raise awareness about conservation issues and inspired visitors to protect nature. These programs reached over 70 million individuals at and outside of their facilities.
- **Green Practices**: AZA members engaged in sustainable business practices such as recycling, composting, growing the food they sell on-site or sourcing it locally, and purchasing or producing renewable energy. In 2017, AZA facilities recycled more than 88,000 tons of materials and generated or purchased more than 39 million kilowatt hours of renewable energy- enough to power 3,600 homes for a year.
- **Research**: The AZA community spent \$25 million on research in 2017, conducting 1,280 research projects and advancing scientific knowledge of 485 species and subspecies. The majority of research projects (68%) focused on animal care, health, welfare, and species and habitat conservation.

The 2017 ARCS data, 2017 *Highlights* publication and ARCS reports from past years are available at <https://www.aza.org/annual-report-on-conservation-and-science/>.

About AZA

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. AZA is the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and eight other countries. Look for the AZA accreditation logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in saving species and your link to helping animals all over the world. To learn more, visit www.aza.org.