

The logo consists of the numbers '21' stacked above '16'. The '2' and '1' are connected at the top, and the '1' and '6' are connected at the bottom. The numbers are rendered in a clean, sans-serif font.

*Newsletter*

**2023**  
**Volume 2**

2116

Newsletter

2023  
Volume 2



Coming together. It's a theme we've watched play out in extraordinary ways this year. Exciting ways, like our Savanna Conservation Hub team's new work in the world's largest transnational conservation area spanning five countries in Africa. Heroic ways, like the swift actions of our Pacific Islands Conservation Hub team members who saved critically endangered birds—the last of their species on Earth—from devastating fires in Maui. And in a personal way this month, as our 2116 Advisors come together for a private welcome reception here at the San Diego Zoo. It's coming together that makes us stronger. It's what our Alliance is all about. And it's through our strength, from the quiet moments to the boldest, that we continue to strive for a world where all life thrives.

Together for wildlife,

**Paul A. Baribault**  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance



SAN DIEGO ZOO WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

2116

TWENTY-ONE SIXTEEN ADVISORS

## 2116 ADVISORS WELCOME RECEPTION

*Wednesday, September 20 at the San Diego Zoo*

*— An evening to remember —*



We hope to see you next Wednesday, September 20, to celebrate the inaugural year of San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance 2116 Advisors. Spend a special evening in the company of fellow philanthropists, conservation leaders, and conservation scientists who share a steadfast commitment to wildlife and our vision of a world where all life thrives.

*This event is by invitation only, exclusively for 2116 Advisors and their guest, and is non-transferable.*

### RECEPTION DETAILS

**Wednesday, September 20**

San Diego Zoo

**5:15 p.m. Check-in begins**

**5:30 to 8 p.m. Reception**

Remarks by Paul A. Baribault,  
President and CEO

Enjoy cocktails, heavy hors d'oeuvres,  
and a special wildlife experience.

Cocktail or Business Attire

*Please note that the venue is outside.*

### RSVP

Reserve your spot by contacting  
Melanie Schwenk at (619) 685-3287  
or [mschwenk@sdzwa.org](mailto:mschwenk@sdzwa.org).

### Save the Date 2116 ADVISORS CONSERVATION INSPIRATION EVENT

Sunday, November 5, 2023  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
San Diego Zoo Safari Park  
The Watering Hole at  
Kijamii Overlook

Join us for this invitation-only event in honor of you, our 2116 Advisors, with a day curated exclusively for you. Explore conservation stations, enjoy a plated lunch, get an insider's look at our conservation work through a panel discussion, and enjoy optional tours and behind-the-scenes experiences.

Visit [sdzwa.org/2116event](https://sdzwa.org/2116event)  
for more information  
and to RSVP.



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 Click title to view story

# MEDIA REACH & HIGHLIGHTS IN THE NEWS



This year, we've garnered over **667 million** views across social media and **97.6 billion** views in earned media, representing more than **\$187 million** in media value.

## SAN DIEGO ZOO WILDLIFE ALLIANCE JOURNAL



**September 2023**  
This issue focuses on stem cell therapy for aging condors, updates from the Native Biodiversity Corps summer program for high schoolers, and our One Health approach to conservation.

### Here are some of our latest highlights:

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Researchers Save Desert Tortoise

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See How They Held Off Flames at a Haven for Hawai'i's Endangered Birds

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# ACROSS THE ALLIANCE



## Allies in Conservation

*When wildlife thrives, all life thrives*

### **Two front doors**

As a global conservation organization uniquely positioned with two front doors—the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park—nearly 6 million guests from around the world join us each year to connect with wildlife and the natural world we share. It’s a life-changing experience that stays with each ally long after they leave, with our global reach touching 1 billion people in 150 countries each year through our social media and communication platforms.

### **San Diego Zoo**

**San Diego Zoo  
Safari Park**

### **Eight global hubs**

As a conservation alliance, we partner with allies in eight strategic regions worldwide: our conservation hubs. By pooling our strengths, knowledge, and resources, we have a greater impact as we work together to safeguard the future of the planet, its wildlife, and the natural world we all share. Because when wildlife thrives, all life thrives.

- African Forest**
- Amazonia**
- Asian Rainforest**
- Australian Forest**
- Oceans**
- Pacific Islands**
- Savanna**
- Southwest**

**OUR VALUES**

- Collaborate*
- Innovate*
- Inspire*
- Thrive*

# Collaborate

*Paul and Nadine met with Alliance partners from around the world while in Kenya*



## **SAFEGUARDING THE SAVANNA'S VITAL BIODIVERSITY**

This spring, Paul Baribault and Dr. Nadine Lamberski, our Chief Conservation and Wildlife Health Officer, traveled to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Northern Kenya to meet with its leaders, along with Alliance partners from Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), The Nature Conservancy, and Zurich Zoo, to share updates on current work by each organization. We also outlined individual and collective strategies to ensure the growth of this unique and powerful conservation model to safeguard the biodiversity across our Savanna Conservation Hub.

## **COEXISTENCE IS KEY**

While in Kenya, Paul, Nadine, and other Alliance partners also worked with Frank Pope, president of Save the Elephants, and their team to advance

our collaborative efforts to protect elephants and support harmonious coexistence for the people and communities who live among them.



*Savanna Conservation Hub*



*© Monterey Bay Aquarium*

*Sea nettles at Alliance partner Monterey Bay Aquarium*

## **TIDES THAT LIFT OUR ALLIANCE**

We have a close collaborative relationship with the Monterey Bay Aquarium that has spanned years—one made even deeper thanks to Paul's long-standing friendship with Aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard. Julie is a worldwide leader in ocean research and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium played a pivotal role in Paul's early career path. As an undergrad at Stanford University, Paul spent many weekends at the Aquarium, where he came to recognize the power of places like the Aquarium, the San Diego Zoo, and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park to drive meaningful change in our world.

During a visit earlier this year, Paul and Julie brought several collaborative projects to the table, to help fuel the organizations' shared commitment to inspiring guests to conserve and care for the health of our planet and all its inhabitants—wildlife, people, and the ecosystems we all share.

## Innovate

### GREENER PASTURES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE PRZEWALSKI'S HORSE

We made history this year with the second cloning of a Przewalski's horse whose DNA had been cryopreserved in our Wildlife Biodiversity Bank's Frozen Zoo®. The foal is a genetic twin to Kurt, the first foal, born in August of 2020, from a living cell line frozen from a Przewalski's horse who lived more than 40 years ago. This is the first time cloning has produced a second individual of an endangered species. Birthed at ViaGen Pets & Equine, a partner facility in Texas, in collaboration with Revivie & Restore, this spirited foal has recently joined our herd at the Safari Park.



*History-making Przewalski's horse clone*

### AND THE FOAL'S NAME IS...

Formerly extinct in the wild, the Przewalski's horse has survived for the past 40 years almost entirely in zoos around the world. This critical advancement in conservation science and his birth help support genetic sustainability for Przewalski's horses worldwide.

Such historic efforts would not be possible without the visionary leadership of San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance's Oliver Ryder, Ph.D., Kleberg Endowed Director of Conservation Genetics. Recognized globally as a thought-leader and pioneer in his field, Dr. Ryder has devoted a lifetime to preserving and protecting wildlife

through world-leading conservation science.

In honor of his groundbreaking work, 45-year commitment to the Alliance, and impacts on the future of conservation, we couldn't think of a more fitting name for this foal and the hope he symbolizes. Meet "Ollie."



### DEVELOPING A NEW MEDIUM WITH LARGE-SCALE BENEFITS

While many plants can be micro-propagated under managed conditions in the lab, others have been less successful, including this vital oak. Undaunted, our Plant Conservation team developed an "omni medium"

which, for the first time, has proven to help the coastal sage scrub oak and other endangered plant species' shoots to grow—a vital breakthrough in flora conservation and a milestone for our Southwest Conservation Hub efforts.

*A keystone plant receives  
a new ray of hope*

# Inspire

## EXTINCT IN NATIVE HABITATS, INSPIRING HOPE AT THE SAN DIEGO ZOO SAFARI PARK

Cycads are seed plants with a woody trunk and evergreen crown, with species dating back more than 250 million years. They soldiered on through the largest mass extinctions in the history of our planet—including that of the dinosaurs, who would have eaten their fruit and dispersed their seeds.

This year, the Safari Park's horticulture team put the finishing touches on the second phase of the Cycad Species Stewardship Garden. The new garden includes African *Encephalartos* cycad varieties with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species status ranging from Vulnerable to Extinct in native rangelands. Our goal is to help visitors appreciate that the Safari Park is not only a beautiful place to spend time, but also plays a crucial role in both animal and plant conservation worldwide—inspiring them to be a part of it as allies for wildlife.



*Cycad plants predate the dinosaurs*

## INSPIRING NEW AUDIENCES AS A GROWING WEDDING DESTINATION

Coming off a record-setting year for weddings in 2022, we were excited to be recognized with the WeddingWire Couples' Choice Award® 2023 and The Knot Best of Weddings 2023.

Weddings offer a unique way to attract new audiences, strengthen relationships with our existing allies, and inspire a deeper connection to wildlife across all ages.

Between San Diego's year-round moderate temperatures, our two

extraordinary locations, and the wildlife experiences that will stay with people long after they leave, it's an area we are excited to see continue to grow as we create lifelong connection and fuel conservation worldwide.



# Thrive

*First-time mother Diana nurses her male and female cubs*



## CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY WITH TWO SUMATRAN TIGER BIRTHS

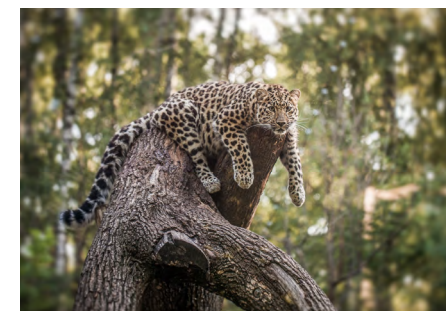
Two Sumatran tiger cubs—a male named Hutan (meaning “forest” in Malay) and female named Puteri (meaning “princess”)—were born at the Safari Park on July 12. The event marked a big day, and with less than 400 of these critically endangered big cats left in native habitats, every new arrival is vital to their global population and the survival of their

species. Their arrival was just in time for Global Tiger Day, with a picture that spoke a thousand words as one of the cubs, not much bigger than its mother’s paw, curled up next to it (see page 45). Diana, a first-time mother, has been extremely attentive and gentle with the cubs, who are strong, nursing frequently, and growing up quickly!



## A PRECIOUS LITTER

The pair of Amur leopard cubs born this spring marks the third litter born at the Zoo as part of the Species Survival Plan program for the world’s rarest cat. Once widespread throughout Russia and from northeast China to South Korea, today there are fewer than 100 believed left in native habitats, making these births crucial to their species’ survival.



## MORE EXCITING AMUR LEOPARD NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Our Asian Rainforest Conservation Hub team has been essential in conserving this critically endangered species. We recently reported positive news, according to Dr. Nadine Lamberski, Chief Conservation and Wildlife Health Officer, who credited the joint efforts of numerous conservation organizations and zoological institutions across our alliance with a population rise of more than 50 percent of Amur leopards in native rangelands.

## FIRST RED PANDA CUB BORN AT THE ZOO IN NEARLY 20 YEARS

This summer, we welcomed the first baby red panda born here since 2006. First-time mom Adira has adjusted well to her new role, and the photos are almost impossibly cute. The breaking news and its tender video took our social media feed by storm with more than 100K likes, and comments like “No words!” and “Baby red panda at, of course, the happiest place on Earth, the San Diego Zoo.”

You can watch Adira and her cub on our Red Panda Cam from anywhere in the world at [sdzwa.org/redpandacam](https://sdzwa.org/redpandacam).



*Red panda cub goes viral online*



# CONSERVATION HUBS

**Eight Global Hubs**  
Our eight conservation hubs around the world represent biodiverse regions where we can best apply our strengths and are currently most invested, with the goal of making the greatest impact for wildlife and ecosystems. With teams on the ground, these hubs also help us build on new and existing alliances.



 AFRICAN FOREST



 AMAZONIA



 SOUTHWEST



 SAVANNA



 ASIAN RAINFOREST



 AUSTRALIAN FOREST



 PACIFIC ISLANDS



 OCEANS

 Click tile to jump to hub



## Great Ape Conservation in Cameroon

*Strengthening international partnerships  
for some of Africa's most vital habitats*



### Convening on great apes

Our African Forest Conservation Hub team recently met with colleagues in the United Kingdom to further our joint efforts in great ape conservation in Cameroon. This included a week-long meeting of the IUCN Primate Specialist Group Section on the Great Apes' task force—an alliance of IUCN conservationists who advocate for avoiding and minimizing negative impacts on apes and their habitat.

### Finding balance in the vitally important Ebo forest

Alliance hub leaders also met with partners at the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI) to help advance sustainable development work related to road maintenance around Ebo forest, an area where we have been working since 2002.

### The last remaining stronghold for several great apes found nowhere else on the continent

Located just north of the Congo Basin rainforest, Ebo forest is one of the last remaining havens for several species found nowhere else in Africa. The area is vitally important for gorillas, endangered chimpanzees,

and one of only two remaining populations of Preuss's red colobus. It is also an important resource for the more than 40 communities surrounding it, making our efforts to support sustainable development all the more critical for coexistence.

### New discoveries in the Ebo forest underscore its significance

Cameroon's Ebo forest itself is a treasure trove, with many jewels yet to be uncovered. In fact, our Alliance partners at the Royal Botanic Gardens

at Kew, UK, have helped record more than 15 new plant species, including several large trees—a remarkable contribution to science, which further underscores the significance of this project. While in the UK, our team met with the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, as well as partners at the Whitley Fund for Nature, to work on local community solutions and conservation efforts across Cameroon. 🌿

*Alliance field research in the Ebo forest*



## AFRICAN FOREST CONSERVATION HUB



## A Giant Leap for the Goliath Frog

*A series of firsts by our African Forest Conservation Hub team could help turn the tide for this 250 million-year-old amphibian*

### **They've outlived the dinosaurs— but for how much longer?**

The goliath frog is the largest frog on the planet, growing to more than a foot long and weighing as much as 7.2 pounds—that's just north of the average weight of a newborn baby boy. This behemoth amphibian is one of the few that inhabited forests even before the dinosaurs, with ancestors dating back more than 250 million years.

*Team member Sedrick Tsekane conducting Ph.D. research on goliath frogs*



Having taken a giant leap onto the endangered species list because of habitat loss, illegal trade, and poaching for food or sport, today they are found only in the rocky streams of the coastal rainforest in southwestern Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea. In fact, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, in the last 15 years alone, their population has declined by more than 70 percent.

### **First-ever observations by our African Forest team offer new hope**

Our African Forest Conservation Hub in Cameroon is out to turn this around. Through a historic first, this year the team has been able to record the mating behavior of adult goliath frogs, which included depositing more than 1,500 eggs within a nest. Parental care has never been fully documented for this species—another first we hope to achieve through continued monitoring of these nests through donor-funded trail cameras. 📷



AMAZONIA CONSERVATION HUB



# Andean Bear Cubs Continue to Thrive

*Making an emotional connection with South America's only bear*

Nine-month-old Ransisku and Suyana, brother and sister Andean bear cubs born in December, are busy exploring their habitat and winning the hearts of all who are lucky enough to visit them, while shining a light on the plights their species face. The cubs will stay with their mother, Alba, until they are more than a year old, giving them plenty of time to continue to steal the show—and more than a few hearts.

**From Peruvian forests to Paddington fame**

The beloved Paddington Bear from children's books popularized since the 1950s was in fact an Andean bear from Peru. While the famous character's books have sold more than 30 million copies worldwide, many people know little about these bears in their native habitat. These two adorable cubs give us a great platform to change that.

The only bear species in South America, they are also sometimes called "spectacled" bears—a name given for the light-colored fur around their eyes that makes them look like they're wearing glasses. Currently there are only about 2,000 Andean bears left in their native habitats across Amazonia. 🐾

*The first Andean bear cub twins born at the Zoo since 1993*



# The Americas' Only Big Cat Gets a Boost

*Bringing more local community solutions to human-jaguar coexistence*

Our Amazonia Conservation Hub team in Peru has been actively developing jaguar conservation workshops in the northeastern Amazon region in partnership with the regional government of Loreto and World Wildlife Fund.

The third largest of all big cats, after tigers and lions—and the only big cat species left in North America and South America—jaguars hunt by stalking and ambushing their prey at night rather than chasing prey like cheetahs or lions. The South American

native word for jaguar, yaguara, means "animal that kills in a single bound."

**Finding common ground**

With jaguars and humans facing increasing challenges for coexistence, in 2022 we collaborated with partners in Peru to develop and implement a National Jaguar Conservation Plan. As an outcome of the most recent meeting, two additional workshops were outlined and will be brought forward later this year, putting community-based solutions into action to share common ground. 🐾

*Workshops focus on human-jaguar coexistence*





# Brighter Future for Sun Bears

*New campaign aims to reduce bear bile demand*



*Alliance partners collaborate to reduce bear bile demand*

### **Working to save the world's smallest bear**

In Southeast Asia, a campaign is underway to help protect sun bears, who have long been targeted for their bile. Bear bile, a fluid produced in the liver and stored in the gall bladder, has long been used in local traditions to treat ailments from bruising to postpartum sickness.

The smallest of all eight bear species worldwide, sun bears are about half the size of black bears, weighing in at only 60-145 pounds—putting them closer in weight to a German shepherd or Great Dane. In fact, “dog-faced bear” is one of their common nicknames. While this helps make them agile climbers, their size also makes them easier prey for poachers and traffickers.

### **Grassroots campaign shifting perceptions**

The six-month campaign is in partnership with Free the Bears and in collaboration with the Cambodian Ministry of Health. Its goal is to encourage a greater adoption of scientifically based medicine instead. Our Hub team is using a grassroots effort to spread the word with posters placed throughout rural communities, in pharmacies, and in local meeting centers. We are also handing out flyers and basic first-aid kits that include campaign messages in a collaborative effort to shift perceptions, and thus reduce and eventually eliminate demand. 📌

# Breaking the Wildlife Trade Chain

*Engaging communities to help end poaching*

### **Focused on a vital forest**

Earlier this year, our Community Engagement team hosted focus group discussions with local communities in and around Pu Mat National Park in north central Vietnam, an ideal habitat for Indian elephants, gibbons, Indochinese tigers and other endangered species who still call it home. Its “spirit forests” are

considered sacred among those who live there.

This vital forest ecosystem is a biodiversity hotspot. Waterfalls cascading from mountainous cliffs into its rivers make the park one of the country’s most important conservation areas. While today it is one of Vietnam’s largest

national parks, it only received this designation in 2001, giving the exotic animal and plant trade a centuries-old leg up on global efforts to curb it.

### **Searching for a two-sided solution**

Finding a sustainable solution to any type of illegal wildlife trade means focusing attention on both ends of the problem—livelihood alternatives on the front end and displacing or curbing demand on the back end.

By engaging with local communities, we will continue to gain insights on alternative livelihoods and behavior change strategies to help celebrate and care for this extraordinary sanctuary, to ensure that all life here can thrive. 📌



*Indochinese tigers are part of the illegal wildlife trade our efforts aim to curb*



## Nearly a Century of Koala Conservation

*Expanding and growing our leadership role*

### **Caring for the largest koala colony outside Australia**

We've had the honor of caring for koalas for nearly a century, since we welcomed the first pair to the Zoo in 1925. It's no wonder they've become one of the most iconic animals guests think of when they visit.

Today, 30 koalas call the San Diego Zoo home. This is the largest colony and the most successful conservation reproduction program outside of Australia—both big wins, and critical for this species, which is listed as Vulnerable to extinction.

### **Worldwide leadership means sharing the knowledge**

Over the years, our leadership role has continued to expand. Today we manage, advise, and guide the cooperative care of koalas in North America, while also working directly with partners through our Australian Forest Conservation Hub.

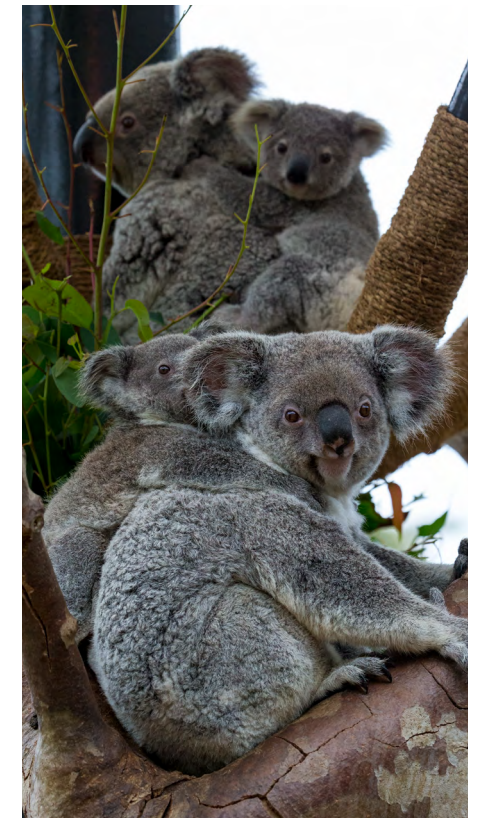
Our koala care specialists work with colleagues across the country to share expertise and knowledge in koala health, nutrition, care, and population sustainability.

### **Just like joeys, our knowledge keeps growing**

Our wildlife care team leads the national koala program across the US. This involves overseeing detailed plans for the domestic travel and conservation reproduction of all koalas to ensure genetic diversity. It also makes us a valuable partner when challenges arise. You may remember the story of Omeo, who was only a little over five months old and still in his mother's pouch when she passed away of cancer in 2020.

Joeys start out about the size and weight of a jelly bean at birth and stay in their mother's pouch until they're six to eight months old. The tremendous insights we gained

hand-rearing Omeo add to the expertise we proudly share as leaders in koala care worldwide. Today, our Wildlife Health team offers customized training programs in koala medical care, connecting zoo veterinary teams with the most current advances in their care. 🦘



*Global leaders in koala care since 1925*

SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION HUB



# Headstarting Tortoise Hatchlings

*Mojave desert tortoise hatchlings preparing for reintroductions next month*

### Hatching a plan to start out strong

Since our desert tortoise conservation program began in 2009, we have developed a hatchling headstarting program in partnership with The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens in Palm Desert, California, to keep hatchlings safe for 1-2 years—the time when they're most vulnerable. Earlier this year, 69 hatchlings spent their first 6 months indoors at The Living Desert before moving to outdoor, predator-proof habitats at Edwards

Air Force Base, where they also began to acclimate to their native desert climate. While that may not sound like a lot, desert tortoise numbers have declined by 80 percent in the last 30 years. In October, these hatchlings are scheduled to be introduced into their native range. They will head into the world with tracking devices to help monitor their movements, reproductive success, and survival—to add to our growing bank of conservation research. 📌

*A successful strategy gives tortoise populations a boost*



# Botanical Congress

*Spotlighting rare tarplants*



# Burrowing Owl Symposium

*North American leaders gather for Alliance-sponsored event*

Earlier this year, we sponsored the 2023 Burrowing Owl Symposium, attended by more than 200 conservationists from the US, Canada, and Mexico. Raptor experts and practitioners were brought together for this two-day collaborative meeting, which included more than 30 presentations on topics ranging from population status updates to genomics to conservation breeding. A new collaboration has already grown from this successful event.

The burrowing owls we're breeding, hatching, and raising at the Safari Park are part of our Burrowing Owl Recovery Program, a conservation breeding and reintroduction program managed in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 📌



*Nest sites are below ground*

Baja California is home to a rare group of plants called tarplants, annual herbs with primarily bright yellow or white flowers. As part of our plant conservation team's ongoing Baja Rare program, we participated in the Mexican National Botanical Congress in Puebla, Mexico, which drew more than 1,000 attendees. Our team presented a research poster with special focus on the Otay tarplant, offering valuable new illustrations to help better identify this federally listed plant, which was thought until recently to be extinct. 📌

## Disease Investigations in KAZA

*At work in the world's largest transnational conservation area*



The Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) is as vast and magnificent as one might imagine. The largest transnational conservation area in the world, it spans 200,000 square miles (more than half a million square kilometers)—making it nearly twice the size of the United Kingdom—and five countries: Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, at



the convergence of the river basins from which it gets its name. It also includes Victoria Falls, one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

### **Africa's ark**

KAZA is home to more than a quarter of a million animals, more than 3,000 plant species, and 44 percent of Africa's elephants, as well as endangered African painted dogs, baboons, giraffes, leopards, lions, rhinoceroses, and more. With an ecosystem this diverse and vital, it is in many ways the ark of this magnificent continent, making the

need to manage any and all disease threats essential.

Our Disease Investigations team spent a week with our partners in Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust doing just that. Their work included exploring pathology reports and visiting vulture colonies affected by a major poisoning event, to further protect this jewel of Africa and its many facets—all to ensure that through collaboration, the wildlife, people, and this vast ecosystem can continue to thrive for generations to come. 🦒

## Living with Leopards

### *Boma studies on coexistence*

The Chui Mamas (“chui” is the Swahili word for leopard) is an inspiring, resourceful community women’s group working toward coexistence with leopards and other large predators in northern Kenya. As part of a multi-year study, we are working with our partners at Uhifadhi wa Chui (Leopard Conservation Program) to

gain new insights from community reports of predation on livestock by leopards. This will help us continue to improve the effectiveness of bomas, livestock corrals designed to help protect herds at night. The Chui Mamas also plan to sell bomas as a business endeavor and sustainable source of commerce. 🦒





PACIFIC ISLANDS CONSERVATION HUB



# Bird Center Narrowly Escapes Fire

*Team members and neighbors come together to stop historic fires*



Click to see coverage in The New York Times

Our hearts continue to be with the people of Maui. We join countless others from around the world offering comfort (ho'onā) to those who've lost loved ones, strength ('ikaika) for those still searching for family, and resilience (ho'omau) to those who are starting anew.

The spirit of aloha is one of hope (mana'olana), and we are committed to supporting the people, wildlife, and vibrant ecosystems of the Hawaiian islands—just as we have together for more than 30 years.

Footage of our team's heroic efforts went viral after a fire came to the doorstep of the Maui Bird Conservation Center



One fire, the Olinda brush fire, came to the doorstep of the Maui Bird Conservation Center (MBCC). We manage the Center as part of a long-standing partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Hawai'i Division of Forestry and Wildlife. The Center is home to some of the most endangered birds on the planet, including some now extinct in the wild.

Footage of the heroic efforts of our team members and neighbors suppressing the fire made international news. It is to their credit that our team and the birds are safe. While they continue to prioritize the immediate needs of the birds in our care and assess the damage, we are very much aware of the rest of the community on Maui who have suffered much greater losses than we have. We encourage those who wish to help to visit [sdzwa.org/maui](http://sdzwa.org/maui).

At right: Bred at the Center since 1996 as part of our conservation breeding program, the 'alalā (Hawaiian crow) has an IUCN status of Extinct in the Wild





## Saving Hawaiian Honeycreepers

*Measures include historic genomic sequencing, plus new federal funding*



*Honeycreepers have been around nearly as long as the islands themselves*

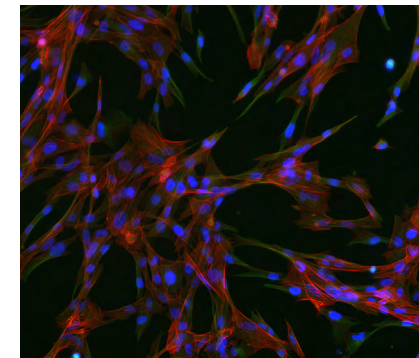
Since our partnership with the Hawaiian Forest Bird Conservation Keystone Initiative began more than 30 years ago, we've worked with urgency to save native bird species found only on the Hawaiian Islands, who range from critically endangered to completely extinct in native forests.

One group making headlines is the Hawaiian honeycreeper, a member of the finch family that evolved in tandem with the islands as they were formed millions of years ago. Of the 58 species of honeycreeper known to have existed, all but a handful are now extinct.

### **A milestone conservation moment**

In 2004, scientists at our Wildlife Biodiversity Bank's Frozen Zoo® established a line of DNA code from the last living po'ouli Hawaiian honeycreeper, now extinct. It was a milestone moment, as this was the first viable material from an extinct species to be cryopreserved. Recently, our team thawed one vial for genomic sequencing in an effort to unlock evolutionary and genetic details to help benefit the remaining Hawaiian songbirds.

Our team used fluorescent imaging for a detailed look at the cells, offering new insights that can be applied to dozens of additional species—and that's even more exciting. Once cryopreserved, these frozen cell lines will lend hope for future genetic rescue efforts.



*Cryopreserved cells from the Po'ouli honeycreeper offer new hope for endangered species*

Our Frozen Zoo® is a global treasure. It is the largest and most diverse collection of its kind in the world, housing 10,000 living cell structures, sperm, and more, representing 1,000 population groups, or taxa. The po'ouli cells were the first extinct species it has housed.

### **\$16 million in Federal funding**

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland recently visited Honolulu, and our conservation centers on Maui and

Hawai'i Island, to announce the Department's commitment of nearly \$16 million as part of the bipartisan Investing in America agenda. The funds are in response to the imminent extinction of Hawaiian forest birds.

The Hawaiian Forest Bird conservation Keystone Initiative includes five key objectives that align with efforts of our Pacific Islands Conservation Hub team, including: protective care, invasive mosquito eradication, establishing new bird populations through translocation, research and monitoring, and native Hawaiian community engagement. 🌿

## San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike

*Training for teams in remote locations*

Teams of our registered veterinary techs traveled to San Clemente Island off the coast of California to bring medical training to wildlife care specialists and volunteers working on our San Clemente loggerhead shrike conservation project.

The work includes a presentation developed specifically for teams working with endangered bird species in remote locations. It covers a variety of medical skills, from routine care and preventative medicine to triage in a medical emergency. Such work enables us to perform optimal medical care for all birds in our care, regardless of location—remote or elsewhere worldwide. 🌿



*A highly endangered songbird*

## OCEANS CONSERVATION HUB



## Sea Ice and Polar Bear Cubs

*Den monitoring in Norway's archipelago frontier*

The high Arctic desert of Norway's Svalbard archipelago is one of the northernmost inhabited parts of the world, located three hours by plane north of Oslo and only 500 miles from the North Pole. It's a place where glaciers stretch as far as the eye can see, and polar bears outnumber people, their populations protected for the past 50 years, with hunting banned in 1973.

### Growing on thin ice

Yet increasingly, these polar bears are finding themselves back on thin ice—literally—with sea ice in Svalbard largely missing again this spring. Sea ice is essential for polar bears, especially for young cubs, who spend the first few months in their maternal den until they are able to follow their moms across the ice.

Polar bears are champion swimmers, but the continued loss of sea ice means they are also having to swim longer distances—much longer, up to a hundred miles—in search of food. For a young cub without enough fat or endurance, this distance can be insurmountable.

### Boots on the frozen ground

Climate change continues to affect polar bears' ability to hunt, which can pose a challenge to human-wildlife coexistence, as the bears venture into more settled areas in search of food. So, for the past six years, our Oceans Conservation Hub team has been monitoring polar bear habitat quality in the area and sharing data and results with Norway's officials.

*Thinning and absent sea ice poses a particularly large threat to cubs*

Earlier this year, we again deployed autonomous cameras to monitor bears at five den sites across three islands in the Svalbard archipelago, to gather new insights and further this research. Our goal is to assess to what extent the loss of sea ice is affecting the timing of polar bear births and the readiness of cubs when they emerge from their dens.

### Out of the Arctic, into the home

Our work to turn the tide on sea ice loss doesn't end in the Arctic Circle. As a conservation organization with one of the most famous zoos in the world, we use our many platforms to bring these messages home online and through events like International Polar Bear Day and Polar Bear Week, connecting our conservation work to millions of people each year in ways that stay with them long after they leave. 🐻

*Monitoring habitat quality*



# MAKING HEADLINES

## *Work around the world*

The San Diego Zoo and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park make our mission, conservation work, and partnerships possible. In turn, our conservation work around the world demonstrates the importance and impact of saving wildlife, providing powerful stories to share with our audiences at the Zoo, the Safari Park, and across the globe.

Here are some of the top news stories from around the world highlighting the extraordinary work being done in San Diego and in native habitats worldwide by our teams of experts.

## Social Researchers Team up to Save Desert Tortoises from Extreme Heat



Spectrum News / June 5, 2023

## *Featured clips from around the world*

Click to view some of the top segments that were featured in local, regional, and national TV and online media.

## Los Angeles Media Tour Video Highlights



NBC CA Live in-studio visit / April 20, 2023



KTLA in-studio visit / April 21, 2023



CBS8 / April 20, 2023



Access Daily / May 11, 2023

 Click images to watch video

# The New York Times

## See How They Held Off Flames at a Haven for Hawaii's Endangered Birds

A conservationist and a neighbor defended the center, part of an effort to save the state's native birds from extinction, until firefighters arrived.



Fire rages in the trees near the main building of the Maui Bird Conservation Center

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

Jennifer Pribble was asleep when the power line fell in the forest. She heard the generator kick in but didn't think much of it. High winds sometimes led to electricity failures. It was normal enough. Wildfires were not even on her radar.

Ms. Pribble lives at the Maui Bird Conservation Center, where she helps care for some of the most critically endangered birds in the world. Hawaii's native birds have been decimated by disease fueled by climate change and by introduced predators like rats. The center

keeps some 80 birds in enclosures in an effort to prevent their extinction and, one day, hopefully, return them or their descendants to the wild.

On Monday night, Ms. Pribble was the only staff member at the center, one of two in Hawaii managed by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. As she slept, the downed line appears to have started a fire in the pine forest nearby.

Several hours later, at about 3 a.m., Ms. Pribble awoke again, this time to the thud of a large branch hitting the roof. Still

unaware of the fire, she worried it might have damaged the building and went onto the back porch to check.

"The sky was orange and there was smoke in the air, like out in the forest," Ms. Pribble said. She went outside to see what was happening, and saw flames about 150 feet from the edge of the property. She called 911, and was told the Fire Department knew about the blaze and was assessing.

The center houses about 40 'akikiki, a native songbird, and about 40 'alalā,

also known as the Hawaiian crow. 'Alalā are extinct in the wild, and only about five 'akikiki are known to remain there. The only other members of these species live at the center's sister facility on the Big Island, said Emily Senninger, a spokeswoman for the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. The birds are divided between both places to insure against disasters such as this one. But until now, they thought volcanic eruptions and hurricanes were the biggest dangers.

As Ms. Pribble watched the fire in the distance, she felt reassured that it was in the forest, where a bed of thick pine needles seemed to be making it hard for the flames to spread. For a time, they actually reduced in size. But she grew increasingly worried as fire approached grasses closer to a road. If it crossed, she thought, the grasses on the 46 acre property would provide ample fuel.

"It's pretty dry," she said. Rising temperatures appear to be contributing to reduced rain in Hawai'i, climatologists say, and more than a third of Maui County is in moderate or severe drought.

A neighbor came over to see what was going on, and while he was there, the fire started climbing the hillside toward them.

"All of a sudden, basically, the fire jumped the road and it was on our property," she said.

Ms. Pribble ran inside to get two fire extinguishers to douse the flames, but she worried it would happen again. She raced back in for more extinguishers and a garden hose. She texted the forest manager saying she needed assistance.

"We just went out and kept it under control the best that we could, just so it didn't cross back over the road, until the state firefighters could arrive."

She didn't think about how the birds she was protecting were among the last of their kind, she said. She just acted, doing all she could to keep the facility safe.

State firefighters arrived about 40 minutes later — as fast as possible, she said, given the distance involved — and have remained there since.

The forest is still smoldering, and occasionally flames will rekindle. But



Many endangered 'alalā birds, known as the Hawaiian crow, are housed at the Maui Bird Conservation Center

firefighters have it contained, she said. Luckily the smoke mostly blew away from the birds, which were moved to the safest enclosures and appear to have escaped any harm.

"I'm just in shock that all this happened," Ms. Pribble said. "Now that we see the scale of things on the island of Maui, we're very lucky that it wasn't any worse."



Click image to watch video

# AP

## Rat ambassadors show off abilities to help humans, wildlife

SAN DIEGO (AP) — As an ambassador for rats, it's never easy to win over the public. There's that hairless tail after all.

But Runa at the San Diego Zoo is doing her best to counter the bad press. She is one of a handful of such so-called ambassadors showing off the virtues of rats at three U.S. zoos. The rats were provided by a Tanzania-based organization that is training African

giant pouched rats to combat wildlife trafficking, detect diseases and perform other useful tasks.

At least twice the size of the common brown rats found in cities, African giant pouched rats like Runa are best known for ferreting out landmines and other explosive material on old battlefields in Angola, Mozambique and Cambodia, earning them the nickname "hero-rats."

Efforts are underway to expand the use of their keen sense of smell to finding people trapped in collapsed buildings, detecting diseases in laboratory samples and alerting officials to illegal goods at ports and airports.

Six African rats completed their first trial working in the field in March, spending a month at a port in Tanzania where they were tasked with detecting



smuggled goods, including Pangolins. The scaly anteater is coveted by poachers and is among the most trafficked animals in the world. Its meat is considered a delicacy in Vietnam and some parts of China, and its scales are used in traditional Chinese medicine.

Wildlife contraband is concealed among vast numbers of shipping containers that annually leave Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and other African ports.

Runa initially was trained to find landmines, but she often got distracted on the job. She has been excelling, however, as an ambassador, said Cari Inserra, lead wildlife care specialist at the San Diego Zoo.

On a recent day, her trainers hid small vessels of chamomile tea under the dirt in a box. As soon as she was released from her cage, Runa's tiny nose was abuzz with twitching as she set out to work. Within seconds she had found all the vessels, and was racing over to suck on a syringe filled with a pellet-and-banana smoothie.

"One of the most fun things to see is how she changes the perceptions of people," Inserra said.

Nicki Boyd, of the San Diego Zoo and Wildlife Alliance, said rats offer an important tool to combat wildlife trafficking, which the zoo wants to highlight since the illegal animal trade "is very destructive to the species that we are actively trying to save and protect in the wild."

"I do think there is the ability to scale this up," she said.

But rats still have a ways to go in winning over everyone. Last week, New York Mayor Eric Adams introduced Kathleen Corradi, a former elementary school teacher and anti-rat activist, as his new "rat czar" whose job is to battle potentially millions of rats lurking about the city.



Ken Bohn/San Diego Zoo

*The San Diego Zoo is training rats to detect wildlife trafficking, such as pangolins, that are being illegally transported. Tanzania plans on using the rat inspectors soon in the country's ports*

The city's help-wanted ad for the post stated it was seeking applicants who are "bloodthirsty," possess "killer instincts" and could commit to the "wholesale slaughter" of rats. At her first news conference in her job, Corradi, standing next to Adams, stated her hatred of rats and vowed to use "science" to rid the city of them.

Rats can spread disease like leptospirosis, which on rare occasions can lead to meningitis and cause the kidneys and liver to fail.

African giant pouched rats have sniffed out more than 150,000 landmines to date, according to her organization. They've also helped health clinics in Africa diagnose people with tuberculosis, detecting the bacteria in the sputum samples of 25,000 patients.

At their facility in Morogoro, Tanzania, Szott and the other researchers are also working on training the rats to someday aid in the detection of contaminated soil or help rescuers in finding people trapped under the rubble after earthquakes and explosions. The rats, which can be dispatched into hard-to-reach areas, have been outfitted with tiny

vests with a pendant they can pull to send an alert to their handlers when they find a person. So far they have succeeded in alerting their handler when given such a task in a mock disaster setting, Szott said.

And Szott said she believes someday they could be a regular fixture at some ports and airports, offering a cheaper option to drug-and-explosive-sniffing dogs. One of her program's rats has already shown they can sniff out multiple species, she said, adding that they could be used to stop the trafficking of elephant ivory and rhino horn.

New York City's common brown rats share the same traits, but their shorter lifespan makes them unlikely candidates for such trainings, Szott said. African rats can live up to a decade whereas small brown rats only live for a few years.

"We think they make great zoo additions," she said of the African rats, adding that the ambassadors will broaden people's understanding of "just how smart they are and how we can co-exist with them."

[Click to watch video](#)

Published January 28, 2023  
By Alexis Jones

## People

### Critically Endangered Species of Horse Born at San Diego Zoo: ‘A Tremendous Moment’

**Born on Christmas Day, the unnamed female foal is the first of the critically endangered species to be born at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park since 2014**

The San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance (SDZWA) announced on Friday that a critically endangered Przewalski's horse foal was born at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

According to a release from the nonprofit, the colt is the first of its kind to be born at the Safari Park since 2014 — and one of the few born in North America in the past year. The unnamed female foal was born on Christmas Day, according to NBC 7.

“Every birth is a tremendous moment, so we are elated by this new foal,” Kristi Burtis, wildlife care director at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, said. “We’ve had more than 157 Przewalski's horses born at the Zoo and the Safari Park.”

Now considered to be a critically endangered species of wild horse, the Przewalski's horse — sometimes called “the Last Wild Horse” — was previously declared extinct until 1996.

The species has survived for the last 40 years almost exclusively in zoos all over the world, with nearly all living horses related to the 12 Przewalski's horses born in their native habitats. Scientists, though, urge that there needs to be more work done to ensure the future survival of the Przewalski's horse, per the release.

“They are an important wild horse species, and this new foal, along with each individual that was born at our parks, bolsters their fragile population — and represents our deep commitment to



Ken Bohn/San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

conserving them for future generations,” Burtis said per the release.

The foal was born as part of a breeding recommendation through AZA's Przewalski's horse Species Survival Plan, which is a program supervised by conservationists all over the country that “ensures genetic diversity is represented among Przewalski's horse populations,” the release states.

In 2020, the joint efforts of SDZWA's Biodiversity Bank, the animal cloning company ViaGen Pets & Equine and nonprofit Revive & Restore resulted in the first successfully cloned Przewalski's horse, according to the release.

Born to a surrogate domestic quarter female horse, Kurt is the clone of a male

Przewalski's horse whose cells were cryopreserved 43 years ago in the Frozen Zoo of SDZWA's Biodiversity Bank.

“Kurt is significant to his species because he offers the hope of bringing back lost genetic diversity to the population,” Nadine Lamberski, SDZWA's chief conservation and wildlife health officer said in the release. “It is imperative to do everything we can to save this genetic diversity before it disappears.”

Per the release, San Diego Zoo Safari Park-goers can pay the foal and the rest of her herd a visit at the Przewalski's horse habitat, which is next door to the Central Asian savanna habitat where Kurt resides.

Published July 29, 2023  
By Nicholas Rice

## People

### 2 Critically Endangered Sumatran Tiger Cubs — a Boy and a Girl — Born at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park

**The new additions were born on July 12 to first-time mother Diana**

The San Diego Zoo Safari Park's animal family has just expanded by two!

Earlier this month, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance celebrated the birth of two Sumatran tiger cubs, the zoo announced in a press release this week.

Per the establishment, the new additions — a female and a male — were born on July 12 to first-time mother Diana.

The two new tigers, who have yet to be named, “appear strong, and are nursing frequently,” the zoo said, adding that Diana “is an extremely attentive and gentle mother.”

Diana and her cubs are set to remain in her den for several weeks, during a time that the zoo describes as “crucial” to allow them to “bond with and learn from their mother.” Wildlife care specialists

estimate the newborns will be able to leave the den when they are 8 to 10 weeks old.

According to the zoo, Sumatran tigers are listed as Critically Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, with only an estimated 400 to 600 remaining in the world.

The recent births mark the first of the tiger species to be born at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park's Tull Family Tiger Trail habitat in seven years, the zoo said.

The animals, who will celebrate Global Tiger Day on July 29, were birthed as a result of a breeding recommendation through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Sumatran Tiger Species Survival Plan (SSP), the establishment added.

“We are elated about the birth of these tiger cubs,” Lisa Peterson, the executive director of the San Diego Zoo Safari Park, said. “It has been years since we’ve had cubs at Tiger Trail, and we can’t wait to share them with the community.”

Added Peterson: “These births are so important to the conservation of this species. Our hope is these cubs will provide an opportunity for our guests to gain a greater appreciation for tigers and the important need to conserve them in their native habitats.”



San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance / Tiger Den

Published February 23, 2023  
By Gary Warth

## The San Diego Union-Tribune

### Got ivory? Time to toss the tusk, says San Diego Zoo Safari Park

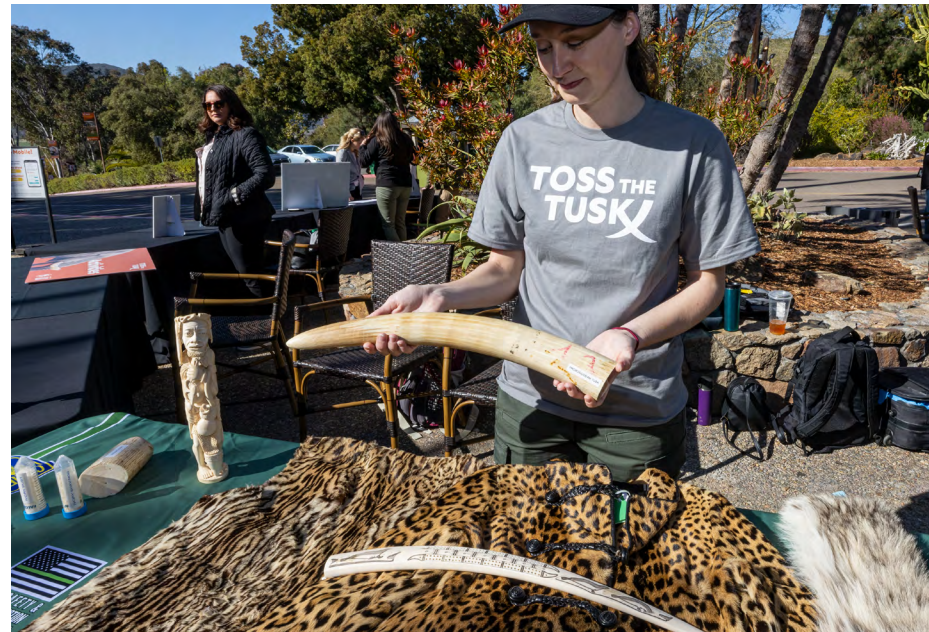
ESCONDIDO — Visitors to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park can play a role in elephant conservation next week by bringing any personal items made of ivory to the park and surrendering them in an effort to decrease their demand and reduce poaching.

The Toss the Tusk event will be 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 3 and is one of three organized this year by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, AZA's Wildlife Trafficking Alliance and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help save elephants from wildlife trafficking.

Possessing elephant ivory is not illegal, but surrendering it is intended to ensure its availability will not drive demand for the product. People are asked to bring elephant ivory items such as jewelry, household items and art pieces to the park that day. Ivory has been used for napkin rings, ashtrays, cutlery handles, combs, figurines, weapon hands and piano keys or inlays.

The global demand for ivory has resulted in thousands of elephants killed each year. The African elephant population alone has fallen from an estimated 12 million a century ago to around 415,000 as of 2016.

"Worldwide demand for ivory is decimating elephant populations and supporting international criminal syndicates around the globe," said Dan Ashe, president and CEO of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. "In a very real way, consumers hold the key to ending the scourge of wildlife trafficking.



By putting our actions in line with our values, we can work together to protect this treasured species today and for future generations."

Global conservation efforts have resulted in poaching rates declining slightly but steadily over the past few years across Africa, but the loss of elephants is occurring faster than they can reproduce.

International commercial trade in elephant ivory is prohibited under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and elephants in the United States are protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The African Elephant Conservation Act and

other laws further restrict the ivory trade, and a near-total ban on the commercial trade of African elephant ivory went into effect in the United States in 2016.

The regulations do not restrict the personal possession of ivory, but U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams encourages people to discard the items.

"By participating in Toss the Tusk events, members of the public can take an active role in combating wildlife trafficking while ensuring that elephants, and other at-risk species, are protected and conserved for future generations," she said.

Published March 29, 2023  
By Natalie Neysa Alund



### Twin Amur leopards, the world's most endangered big cat species, born at San Diego Zoo



The San Diego Zoo on Tuesday announced the birth of twin Amur leopard cubs, the world's most endangered species of big cat.

According to a Facebook post, the twins' mother, Satka, gave birth to the cubs—the third set of Amur leopard twins to be born at the zoo.

"Satka is fur-miliar with her motherly duties," the post reads. "When she's not in the den grooming and nursing the cubs, she is keeping a watchful eye as they begin to explore the habitat outside."

The zoo did not say whether the cubs have been named.

#### AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

Their births increase the cat's slim estimated population. Amur leopards are thought to be the world's rarest big cat, with only about 120 left in the wild in Russia and China, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

The animals have thick, luscious, black-ringed coats and a huge furry tails they can wrap around themselves to keep warm.



*The Amur leopard is nocturnal and lives and hunts alone, mainly in the forests of Russia and China*

*During winter, the hairs of that unique coat can grow as long as 3 inches*





## Matschie's Tree Kangaroo Born at San Diego Zoo Safari Park



The San Diego Zoo Safari Park is celebrating a conservation milestone with the birth of an endangered Matschie's tree kangaroo. The female joey, named Kikori, was born to mother Arona and father Bek, at the end of August 2022 at the Safari Park's Walkabout Australia. The baby Matschie's tree kangaroo is only emerging now, however as they are about the size of a jellybean at birth, after a 45-day gestation period, then the joey crawls into its mother's pouch, where it

attaches to a nipple and begins to develop as it gains nourishment. The joey remains in the pouch until around 6 months of age, when it becomes considerably more active—and movement is often seen outside the pouch. Arona's joey is now 9 months old, and recently started climbing out of the pouch. She will wean her joey when the youngster is about a year old, but the joey will stay close to mum for about a year and a half. Matschie's tree kangaroos are native

to one tiny part of the world—Papua New Guinea and the Huon Peninsula—and they are sometimes found in the rainforests of Australia. They are listed as Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. It is estimated that there are fewer than 2,500 adult Matschie's tree kangaroos are left in their native habitats.



## Endangered Andean Bear Twins Born in California Zoo for First Time in 30 Years

The endangered Andean bear population just got a little bit bigger. Two bear cubs, now three months old, were born in the San Diego Zoo, marking the first twin birth at the park in 30 years.

Alba, a second-time mama bear, proudly watched her cubs toddle out of their private den for the first time this weekend. According to the San Diego Wildlife Alliance, the mama bear, along with sire Turbo, brought the twins into the world back in December 2022.

Since their birth, wildlife specialists have kept a close eye on both Alma and her cubs through the use of video cameras and a "baby monitor" for audio.

They always watched from afar, however, to avoid disrupting the endangered Andean bears' precious bonding time in the early days of life. Like other newborn bears, Andean bear cubs are wholly dependent on their mothers in the first few months of life. The zoo gave the bears their privacy during this time, keeping them out of public view.

As of now, the twins' names remain unknown. Alba, however, is now a proud mother of three. The twins' older brother, Alba's firstborn, is named Agapito and was born in 2020. Agapito's birth marked a particularly special occasion for the San Diego Zoo. He was their first Andean bear cub in 30 years.

The twins' birth was yet another momentous occasion, though, as the last

time the zoo saw a twin birth was in 1993. That year, Alba's grandmother, Houdini, gave birth to twins Sombra and Quixote.

"We couldn't be more thrilled about the birth of Alba's twin cubs," said Tammy Batson, lead wildlife care specialist at the San Diego Zoo, per NBC4. "We witnessed Alba transition beautifully into motherhood with her first cub a couple of years ago."

"And now as a second-time mother with twins, she continues to impress us with her attentiveness," Batson continued. "She's a proven mom, who now has both hands full."

Endangered Andean bears first arrived at the San Diego Zoo in 1938. Since that time, the zoo has welcomed 11 cubs. A

female bear typically gives birth to 1-2 cubs, and, on the rare occasion, three.

Listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, Andean bears are the last remaining relative of the extinct giant short-faced bear. Additionally, they're the only bear species native to South America. The main threats to the species include habitat loss, climate change, and poaching, with populations dropping between 2-4% annually.

The exact number of endangered Andean bears remains unknown. Experts estimate, however, that anywhere from 2,500 to 10,000 adults remain in their natural habitat.





*Thank you for your support in making  
everything we do possible.*

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance 2116 Advisors is  
an exclusive group of philanthropists, conservation leaders,  
and conservation scientists providing counsel and support to  
help us fulfill our vision of a world where all life thrives.