





Dear friends,

2023 seemed to fly by in a flash, and thanks to your support, as quickly as the year flew, it did so with flying colors at Zoo Atlanta.

The theme of our 2023 Annual Report, In with the New, sums up all that the year meant to our team, to you as part of our extended Zoo family, to the animals in our care, and to their wild counterparts in places around the world. From a notable number of high-profile births, to fresh experiences to help us grow, to scientific achievements, conservation commitments, and more, "new" is the word that comes to mind when we reflect on 2023.

The word "new," however, means so much more to us than newly born, freshly minted, sparkling, shiny, or different. When we consider our mission, our dedication to the animals in our care, and our investments in our facilities and in the talents and excellence of the people who make the Zoo Atlanta team what it is, the word also means a path newly trod, a commitment newly visited, and a future newly forged.

I hope you will agree as you review these highlights from a memorable year. As always, thanks for all you do for the Zoo!

Sincerely,

Raymond B. King President and CEO



## Forward-thinking **SCIENCE**

A key commitment outlined in the Zoo Atlanta Strategic Plan, scientific research is one of the many attributes that show the world where Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) zoos fit into the big picture of science and conservation.



## 420 **PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS SINCE 1978**

What we learn improves a global body of knowledge in animal biology and behavior; conservation; and professional animal care. Since 1978, Zoo Atlanta team members and academic partners have been responsible for more than 420 peer-reviewed publications, often appearing in some of the world's most prestigious scientific journals.

The 10 studies published in 2023 explored environmental enrichment (examining the gorillas' use of a new forage feeder); species biology (elephant trunk mechanics); animals' use of space (sidewinder rattlesnakes); native wildlife (behavior of foxes in urban areas vs. rural areas); and more.

10 Studies **PUBLISHED IN 2023** 



## A Visible PLEDGE

Opened in the first week of April, the Zoo Atlanta Explorer Store tells the story of Zoo Atlanta's commitment to leading by example in preserving our natural resources.

The shopping experience is managed by the Zoo's retail partner Event Network, which is committed to featuring eco-friendly and sustainable gifts that support environmental sustainability, provide opportunities for local artisans, and benefit conservation organizations.

A notable centerpiece of the store is Big Tim, a "tusker" African elephant made entirely of recycled flip-flops by Ocean Sole Africa.



Riders on the Norfolk Southern Zoo Train did so with a cleaner environmental footprint with a new green train engine that was installed in 2023. The engine was made possible by a gift in memory of longtime Zoo Atlanta Docent and volunteer train engineer Ernest D. Key Jr.

The train engine replacement was one of numerous capital investments undertaken throughout the Zoo during the year, not just in terms of sustainability and guest experience, but notably in terms of animal area upgrades. These included but were not limited to new climbing structures in the giant panda dayrooms; improvements to ambassador animal housing areas: upgrades to the Patagonian mara habitat; and replacement of the skylights in the gorilla building.



A "TUSKER" AFRICAN ELEPHANT MADE ENTIRELY **OF RECYCLED** FLIP-FLOPS BY OCEAN **SOLE AFRICA.** 



## Celebrating a LEGACY

Zoo Atlanta commemorated the birth of Willie B. III and the uniquely Atlanta legacy of his grandfather, Willie B., at Willie B. Day on June 18. Throughout the summer, fans were encouraged to share their memories of the late icon, who figured prominently in the childhoods of generations of Atlantans. 2023 marked the 35th anniversary of Willie B.'s first entrance into the naturalistic Ford African Rain Forest on May 13, 1988, after 27 years in an indoor environment. Over the years until his passing in

2000, he became a symbol of the transformation

## An Innovative **TREK**

of Zoo Atlanta.

As guests enjoyed sightings of the newest member of the Zoo Atlanta gorilla population, Memorial Day weekend brought a new opportunity to observe gorillas in the wildwithout ever leaving a seat at the Zoo-when Gorilla Trek: A 360° Ride Film opened in partnership with Immotion.

Narrated by Tara Stoinski, PhD, President and CEO and Chief Scientific Officer of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, the virtual reality experience uses VR goggles and moving seats to simulate a 10,000-foot trek into the jungle of Rwanda to observe a troop of elusive mountain gorillas.



## **2023 MARKED THE** 35<sup>TH</sup> **ANNIVERSARY**

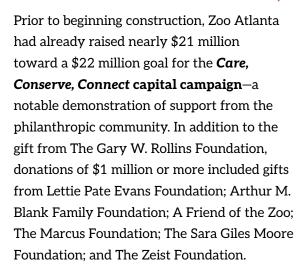
**OF WILLIE B.'S FIRST** ENTRANCE INTO THE FORD AFRICAN RAIN FOREST



## **Breaking** Ground for the **FUTURE**

On July 27, Zoo Atlanta announced construction of The Rollins Animal Health Center.

Named in recognition of The Gary W. Rollins Foundation's generous investment of \$3 million in the project and long history of support, the new veterinary complex will redefine standards of excellence in zoo animal medicine, state-of-the-art technology, research, and academic partnerships. The ceremonial groundbreaking featured special remarks from Honorary Capital Campaign Chair Mayor Andre Dickens.



The Rollins Animal Health Center is slated to be completed for occupancy by the Veterinary Team in summer 2024.







**ZOO ATLANTA RAISED** \$21 Million

FOR THE CARE, **CONSERVE, CONNECT** CAPITAL CAMPAIGN





## Farewell to a **FOUNDER**

Just as 2023 was a year highlighted by a host of happy births and new arrivals, the natural cycle of life in the animal population also brought sad goodbyes with the passing of Biji the Sumatran orangutan on August 10. The oldest great ape at Zoo Atlanta at 52, Biji arrived at the Zoo in 1988 as part of an original group of orangutans from the **Emory National Primate Research Center.** 



Biji ARRIVED AT THE **ZOO IN** 1988







# Professional Development for **EXCELLENCE** in animal care

The Zoo Atlanta Animal Care and Veterinary Teams are renowned for consistently going above and beyond for the well-being of the animals in their stewardship. In September, the Zoo was pleased to host the world's preeminent experts in hoof care, the Zoo Hoofstock Trim Program, for a three-day workshop for animal care professionals working with the Zoo's hoofed species.

Team members learned about anatomy; hoof growth; preventative care; and hoof maintenance; and participated in a practical application in hoof trimming. Ongoing positive reinforcement training efforts allow animals to voluntarily engage in maintenance procedures that enable them to participate in their own comprehensive care.





## An impact on four CONTINENTS

Zoo Atlanta's mission. We save wildlife and their habitats through conservation, research, education, and engaging experiences, has an impact far beyond the borders of the Zoo. Species on four continents benefited from conservation programs and partnerships supported by Zoo Atlanta in 2023.

In addition to two significant signature partnerships with Conservation South Luangwa, based in Zambia, and the Golden Lion Tamarin Association in Brazil. Zoo Atlanta provided direct support for conservation programs in Africa, Asia, South America, and at home in North America.

The Zoo's Quarters for Conservation initiative benefited the Chinchilla Conservation Project (Chile); the Sloth Conservation Project (Costa Rica); and the AZA North American Songbird SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) Program.

The Mabel Dorn Reeder Conservation Endowment **Fund.** which allows Zoo Atlanta to further broaden its impact on reversing species decline, supported five efforts in 2023: the Red Panda Network (Nepal); the Wildlife Alliance (focused on clouded leopards in Cambodia); Florida International University (focused on west African slender-snouted crocodiles); the Pan African Sanctuary Alliance (focused on drill monkeys in Cameroon); and the Goualougo Triangle Ape Project (focused on western lowland gorillas and central chimpanzees in the Congo Basin).







## **SPECIES ON** Four Continents

BENEFITED FROM **ZOO ATLANTA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS IN 2023** 



Inspiring our next

**GENERATION** 

Just as it is vital to be able to continually broaden access to all the resources the Zoo has to offer. Zoo Atlanta also seeks to educate and inspire young people, especially those representing diverse communities, toward pathways to zoological and wildlife-related careers.

Joined by Drs. Vernard Hodges and Terrence Ferguson, stars of the series "Critter Fixers: Country Vets," Zoo Atlanta hosted its first Vet for a Day on September 30.

With the help of the Zoo Atlanta Veterinary Team, schoolchildren from several locations in metro Atlanta had the opportunity to learn more about veterinary procedures, observe the Zoo team in action, and discuss academic paths to animal professions.



**ZOO ATLANTA HOSTED ITS FIRST** Vet for a Day **ON SEPTEMBER 30** 



## REMEMBERING

## Dr. Jennifer Mickelberg

Zoo Atlanta was devastated by the tragic passing of **Jennifer** Mickelberg, PhD, Vice President of Collections and Conservation. on October 31. Jennifer's legacy is felt and missed in countless ways, both personally and professionally, within the Zoo Atlanta family and well beyond in the broader zoological community. Her most permanent legacy, however, will be left in the field of conservation. She devoted her career to the conservation of golden lion tamarins, an endangered species endemic to the Atlantic Coastal Forest of Brazil—a true success story of a species brought back from the brink of extinction.

The Golden Lion Tamarin Association, a conservation partner of Zoo Atlanta and an organization devoted to Jennifer and her work, pledged an especially meaningful memorial for her that will benefit the viability and long-term sustainability of this species with the creation of "Jennifer's Forest Corridor," a tract of restored forest which will connect fragmented tamarin populations and, when mature, will provide connected habitat for more than 3,000 golden lion tamarins.





**JENNIFER'S FOREST CORRIDOR WILL PROVIDE** CONNECTED HABITAT **FOR MORE THAN** 3,000 Golden **Lion Tamarins** 



## A Zoo for ALL

Zoo Atlanta's commitment to being "a Zoo for All" is a key aspect of our mission to ensure that the Zoo is an **inclusive, welcoming, and accessible** environment for all members of our community. 2023 brought a new event and the return of an important educational opportunity.



Zoo Atlanta made 42 scholarships available for Summer Safari Camp with another year of the **Safari Camp Scholarship Program.** Funded by Cox Enterprises, the scholarships provided a week of Safari Camp for children ages 5 to 11 from Title One Schools in metro Atlanta.



The Zoo hosted its first **Family Pride Day** in fall 2023. The event invited guests to explore the rainbow of diversity and the many types of animal families found in the natural world with activity stations, a special themed Zoo Seekers program, and storybook readings.

# First Family Pride Day HOSTED FALL 2023

#### Imara LATE DECEMBER



## Beyond the **CLASSROOM**

Zoo Atlanta is a **respected** resource for education not just for thousands of Georgia students each year, but also for the families and individuals who are annually introduced to the Zoo experience, often for the first time.

In a new addition to its slate of education programs for people of all ages, Zoo Atlanta introduced Rise and Dine with the Animals, a morning opportunity to enjoy breakfast and speak with animal care professionals at select habitats around the Zoo, in 2023.

## **MORE THAN** 95,000 K-12 STUDENTS

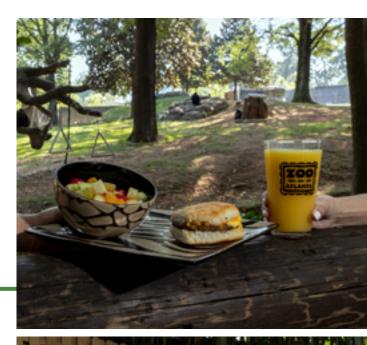
visited the Zoo or participated in classroom programming in 2023. In the same year,

### **NEARLY 12,000 PARTICIPANTS**

benefited from family, individual, and educator-focused programs, and

### **MORE THAN** 880,000 GUESTS

were exposed to public programs on Zoo grounds.





#### **Rhino Calf DECEMBER 24**



Christmas Eve brought holiday joy with the birth of a female calf to southern white rhino Kiazi on December 24.

The calf, named Zuri in a public Rhino Naming Madness bracket challenge in March 2024, is the first southern white rhino ever born at Zoo Atlanta and is one of only two rhinos born in the Zoo's more than 130-year history.

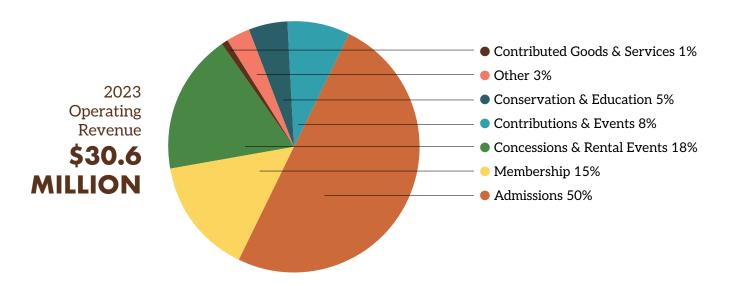
Now named the Delta Air Lines Rhino Habitat, the rhino complex is better equipped than ever for exciting developments within the Zoo's herd, thanks to a \$1 million gift from The Delta Air Lines Foundation.

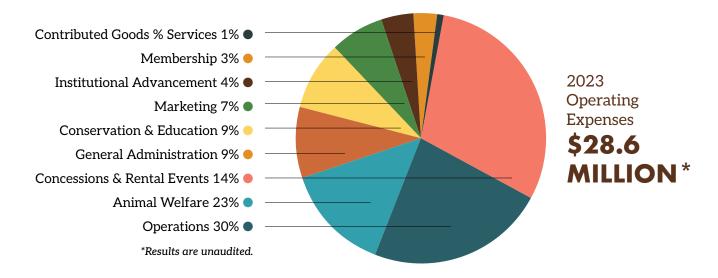


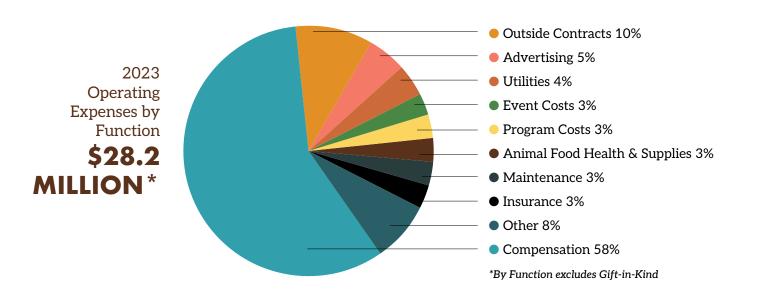
## Thank You for Being Part of Our **JOURNEY**

We appreciate your part in Zoo Atlanta's continuing story. With the mission we share, and thanks to your support, the future is bright—and the best is yet to be!

## **FINANCIALS**







## We Applaud OUR DONORS

Zoo Atlanta would like to express gratitude to the following donors for their generous gifts given between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023, or given for 2023.

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OrderUp Design Professional Orgainizing LLC

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Pixorium

The Po'Boy Shop and Basement Bar

Polished Nail Spa Brookhaven

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Proof of the Pudding by MGR

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The Ritz-Carlton

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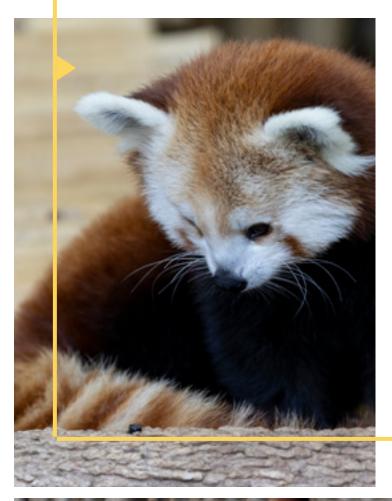
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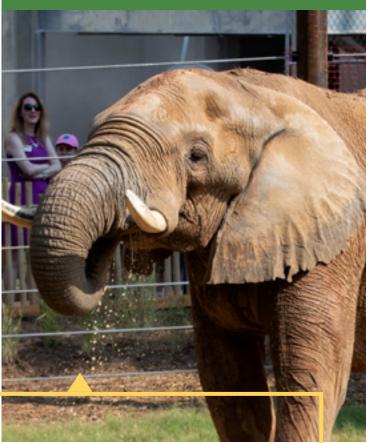
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