



Dear friends,

At 132 years old, Zoo Atlanta has seen its fair share of extraordinary times since 1889, both good and bad: abundant times and lean times; superlative times and controversial times; and strides forward and steps back. Our history is not even without moments when the Zoo's very survival was in question. And then, there was 2020, which proved to be in a class all its own.

As opposed to other difficult years in the Zoo's history, 2020 was unprecedented in that the challenges we faced were not only being faced by other organizations around the U.S., but also by organizations around the world – and indeed, by all of humanity.

Despite a very auspicious beginning to the year that gave us every cause for optimism, by March 2020, we were facing a situation that threatened Zoo

Atlanta's long-term viability. At that time, there were so many different outcomes we could see potentially taking shape – all of them daunting, and some very alarming. The one outcome I could not have imagined was the one that actually happened.

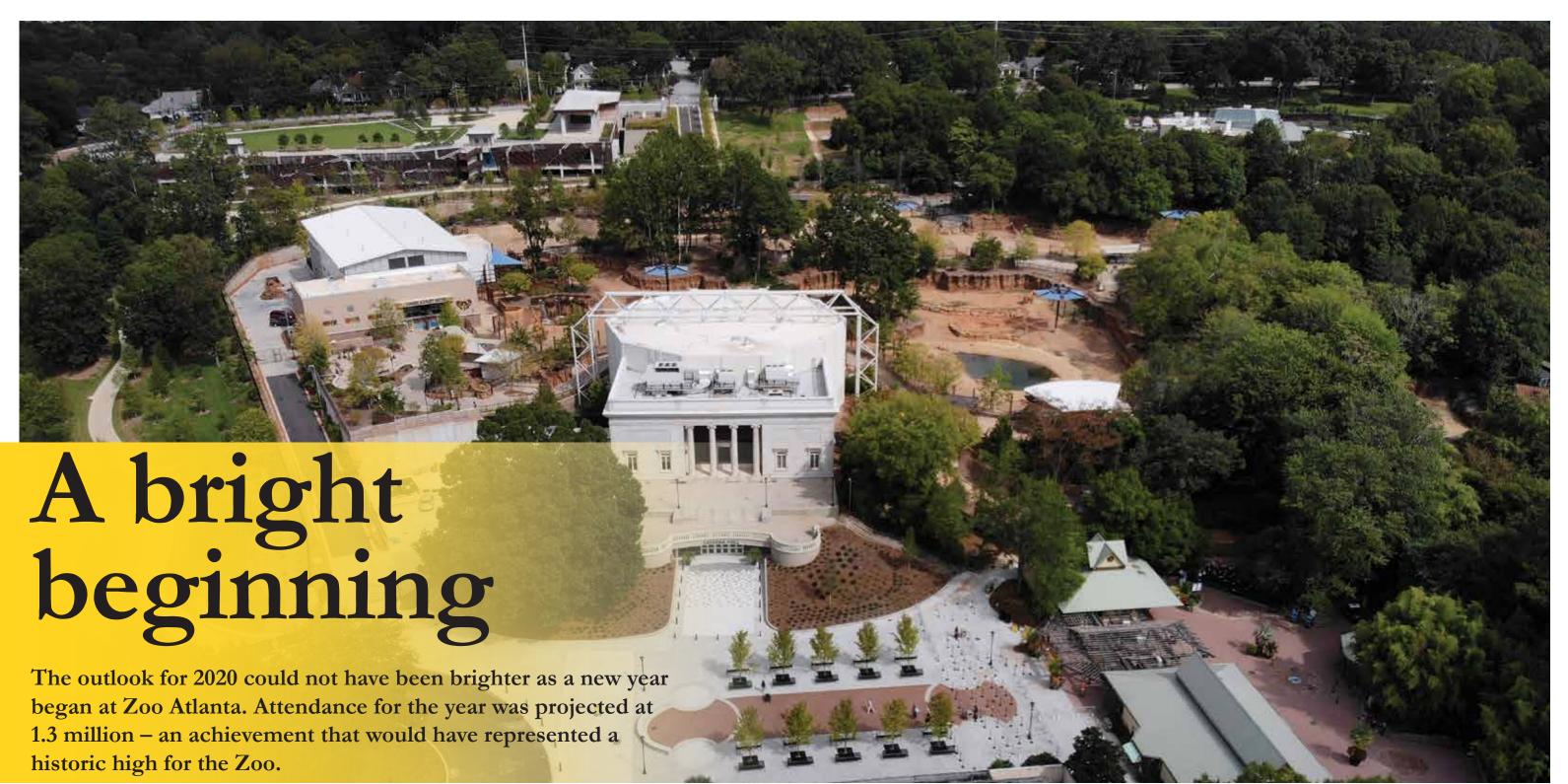
Unlike many of our previous Zoo Atlanta Annual Reports, we have chosen to present the 2020 Annual Report in an almost exclusively narrative form, telling our story as we moved from month to month. It is a story of action, collaboration, and innovation. It is a story of perseverance, unwavering commitment, and inspiring passion. I hope that as you review these pages, you will be proud of your Zoo and its clear and permanent place in the fabric of our city and community. Most of all, I hope you will be personally proud of the role you played by believing in us, supporting us, and uplifting us through a year we never could have imagined – a year that closed not with an end, but with a continuation.

As always, thank you for all you do for the Zoo.

Sincerely,

Raymond B. King President and CEO

Raymond





2020 was to be the first full year of the all-new African Savanna, with its transformative new homes for African elephants, giraffes, zebras, warthogs, ostriches, and meerkats.



Overlooking

the new African Savanna, Savanna Hall—majestic with its architectural grace and sweeping vistas—was just weeks away from opening as Atlanta's newest special events destination.



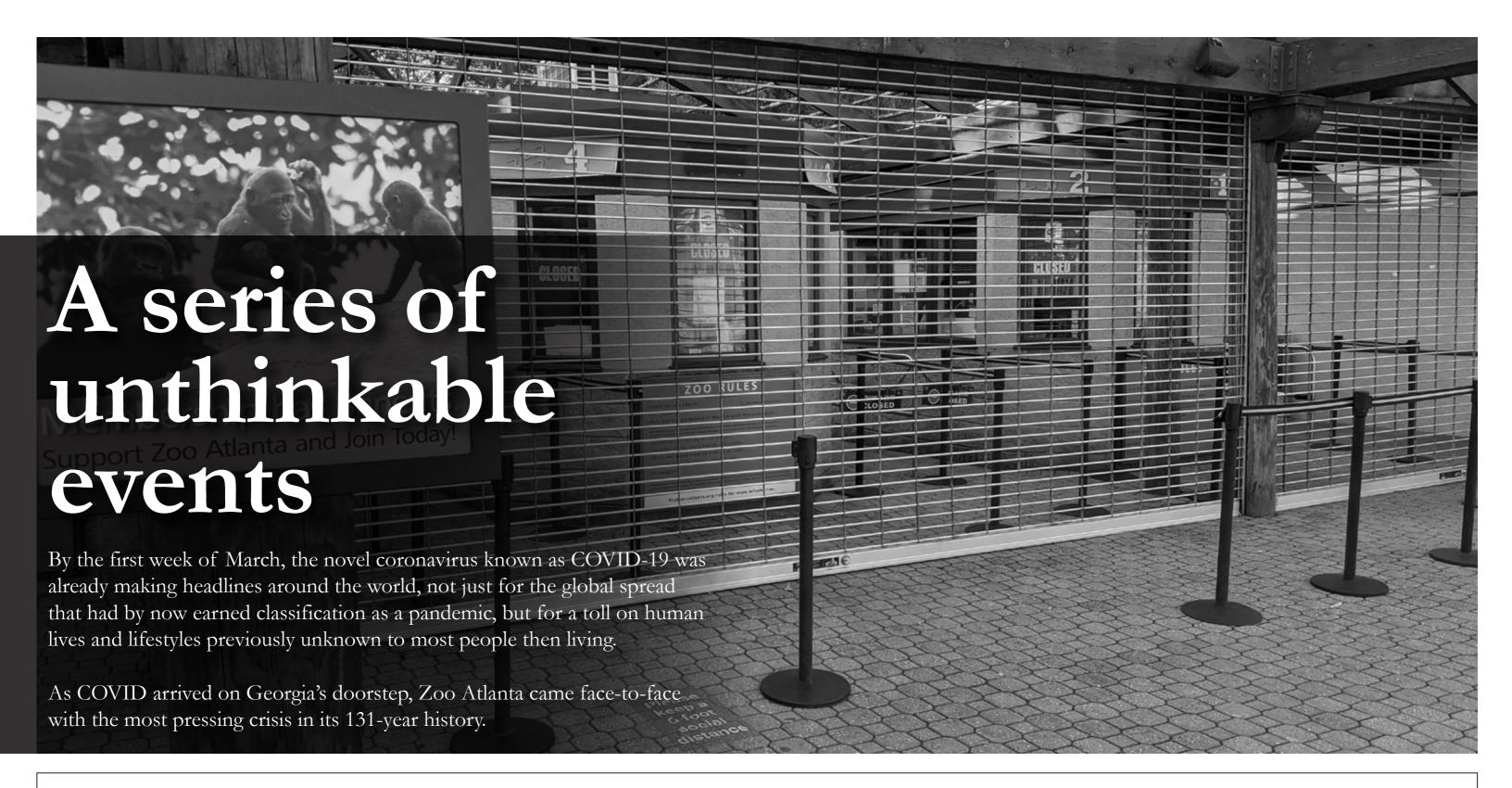




That evening, friends of the Zoo enjoyed for the first time the Michael & Thalia Carlos Ballroom, a two-level space with views over the African Savanna, as well as the Delta Savanna Terrace with panoramic views into Grant Park. Other features seen for the first time included multi-purpose meeting and conference rooms and the Savanna Vista, an intimate venue immersed in the center of the African Savanna.



The venue was poised to take its place as an important new offering in Atlanta's special events community. In addition to its one-of-a-kind views, notable among Savanna Hall's attributes were its two kitchens: one a standard banquet kitchen and the other a specialty kitchen equipped for kosher events. By the end of its first month open, bookings were well underway to a promising year, from Mitzvahs and weddings to high school proms, corporate events, and awards programs.



Zoo Atlanta met these circumstances head-on, and early on, acting proactively and immediately – even though this meant making wrenching decisions, including temporary layoffs or furloughs for more than 200 full-time, part-time, and seasonal team members.

Once federal funds became available, Zoo Atlanta acted quickly to apply for and received a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan of \$2.4 million. The loan enabled the Zoo to reinstate all full-time team members who had been impacted by layoffs and furloughs.

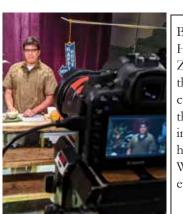




By April, an aggressive fundraising campaign was underway with the launch of Zoo Atlanta's Emergency Support Fund. Emergency fundraising for the year would ultimately total more than \$5 million – a significant statement on the Zoo's longtime place in its city and its value and perceived resilience among the philanthropic community. Thanks to matching challenges from two anonymous friends of the Zoo, our Emergency Support Fund Match Challenge campaign raised more than \$300,000, including nearly \$33,000 raised directly on Facebook.



As widespread shutdowns and quarantines forced a societal shift from in-person experiences to a notable increase in consumption of digital media, teams from around the Zoo showed collaboration and innovation in working together to bring Zoo Atlanta and its animals and resources into the living rooms of people around the city and around the world. With most of the Zoo's in-person education programs canceled, the Education Team presented a suite of new virtual offerings, including but not limited to Animal Tales Storybook Readings, Zoo2You educational videos, and Virtual Field Trips.



Beloved Zoo traditions such as the annual Gorilla Egg Hunts were presented via social media, and although the Zoo remained closed, its social networks took users behind the scenes and into the daily lives of the animals and their care teams. As the year went on, cross-collaborations within the Zoo would also result in new virtual signature events, including Virtual Art Gone Wild, an interactive art class hosted via Zoom in partnership with Sips n Strokes, and the Wild on the Rocks Virtual Happy Hour, an entertaining evening featuring storytelling with a Zoo professional.



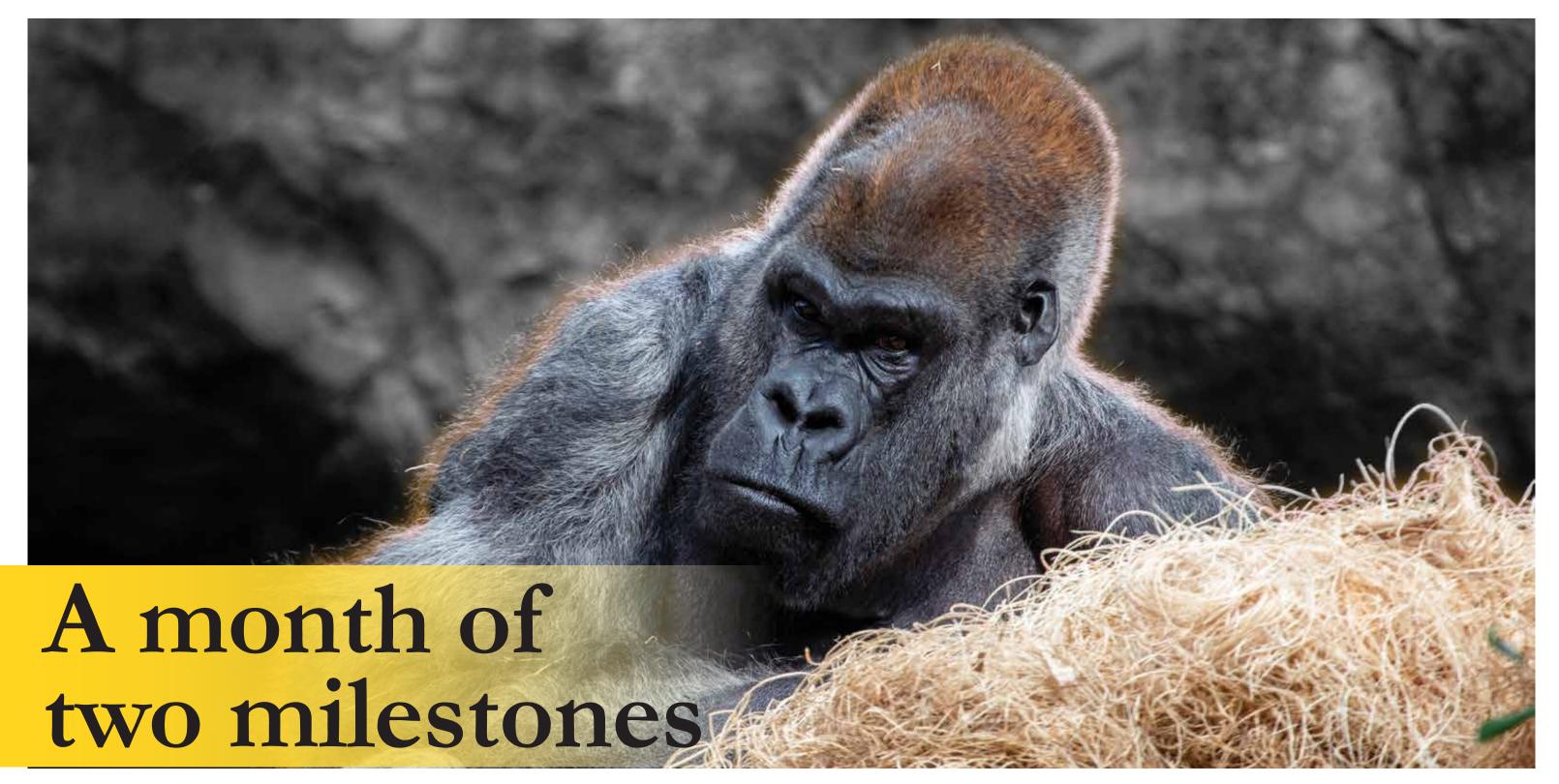


These new policies and procedures included:

- a one-way path through the Zoo;
- installation of more than 70 hand-sanitizer stations;
- signs and other visuals to promote social distancing; and
- viewing boxes denoted at popular animal habitats.



Rising to the occasion, the Zoo Atlanta team affected an all-hands-on-deck approach, with PPE-clad staff members stationed at frequent points throughout the Zoo to assist visitors.

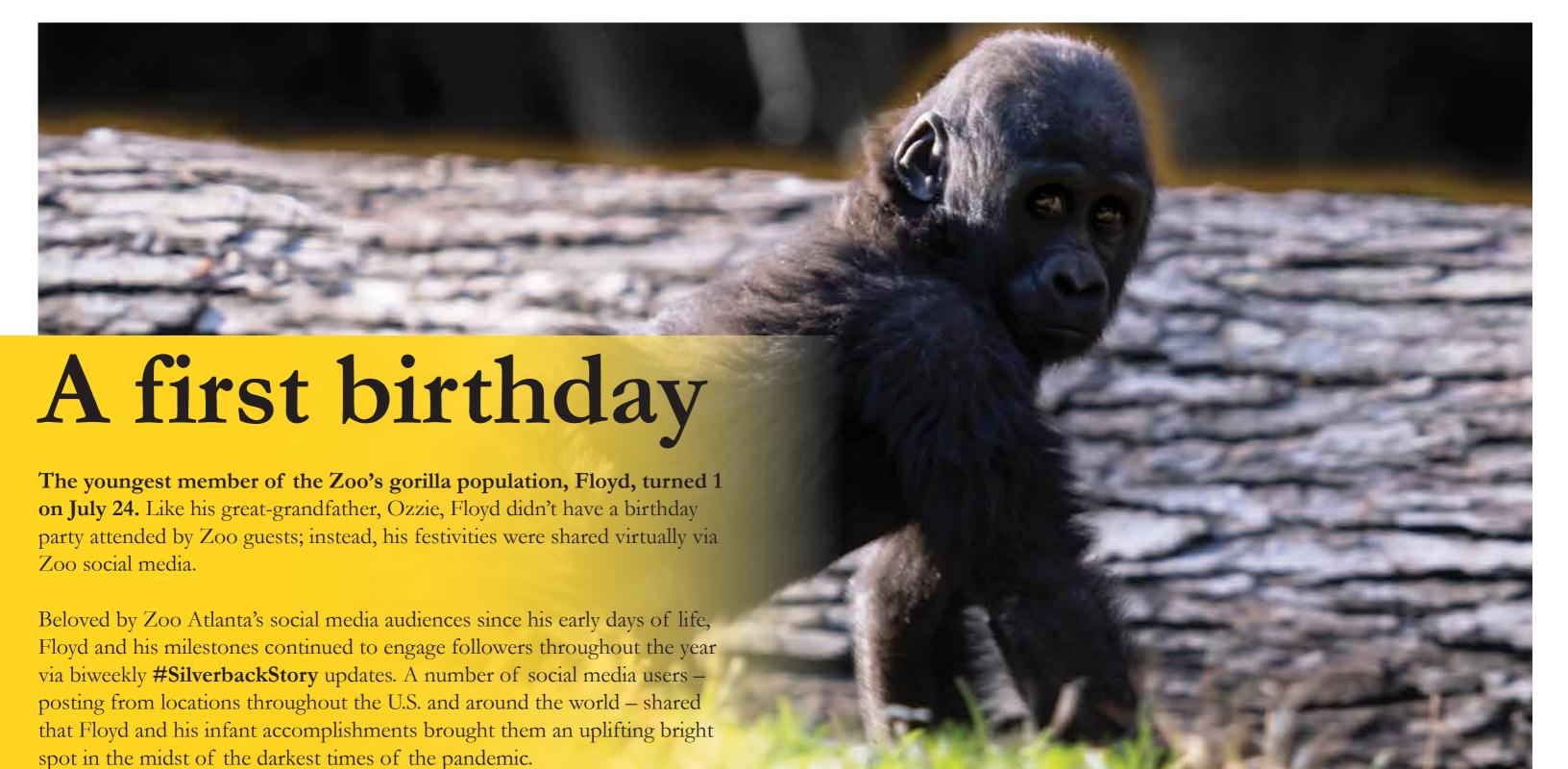


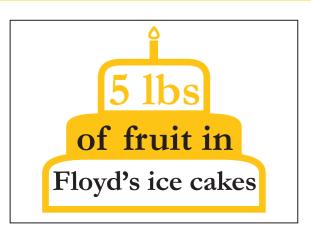


In June, Father's Day, Zoo Atlanta celebrated a 59th birthday for Ozzie, the world's oldest living male gorilla on record. While COVID procedures didn't allow for an in-person opportunity for Ozzie's well-wishers, his birthday enrichment was broadcast virtually – bringing awareness of this irreplaceable patriarch to a worldwide audience.



And in terms of historic events, also in June, Zoo Atlanta marked the completion of The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation Plaza, the third and final component of the Zoo's Grand New View – a project years in the making that also included the African Savanna, opened in 2019, and Savanna Hall, opened in 2020.

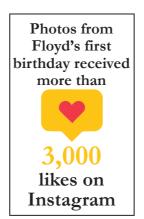


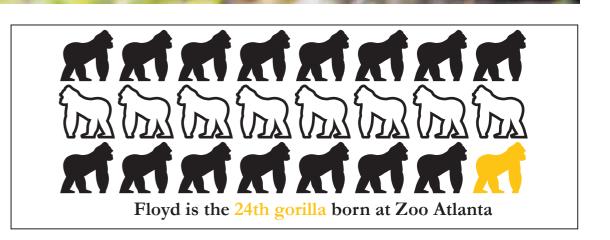


Party favors included wood wool, Floyd's favorite enrichment





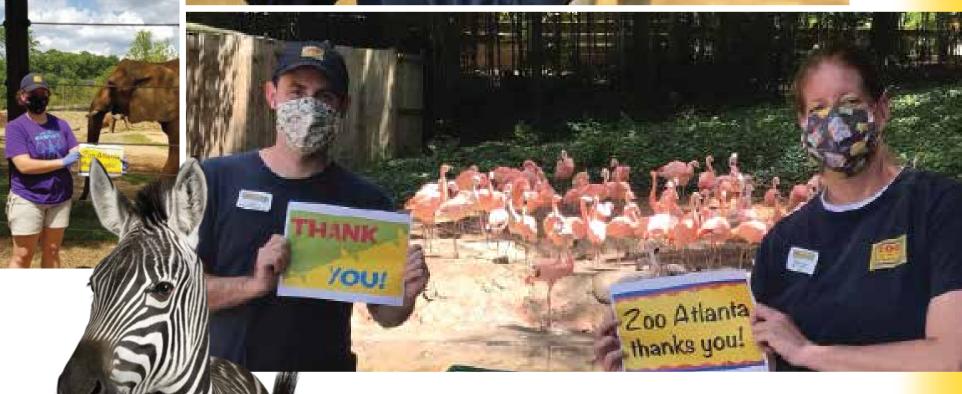


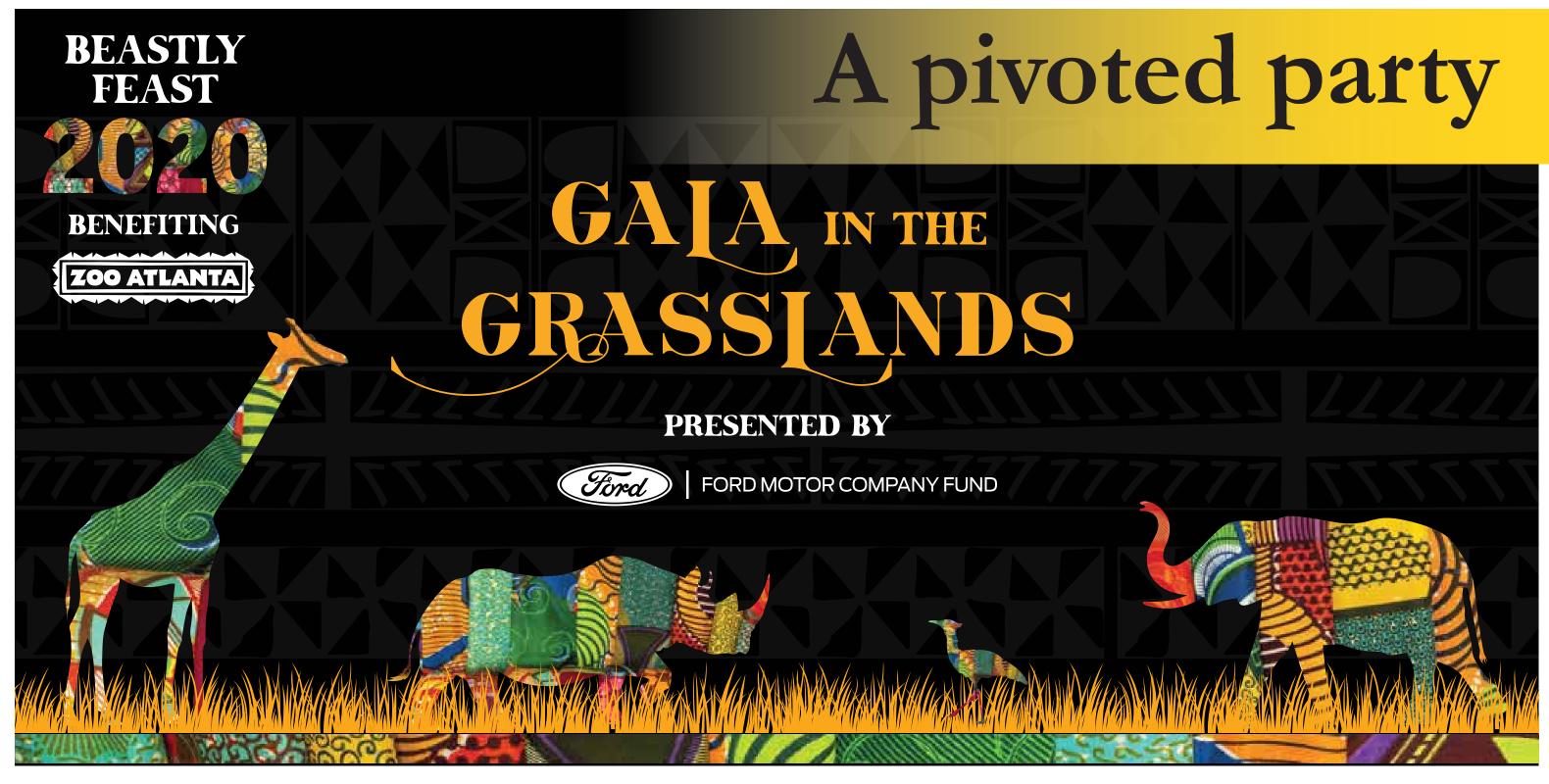


A gift and a testament



In August, Zoo Atlanta received a gift of \$3 million from the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation. This gift – another testament to the enduring place of the Zoo in the fabric of its community – raised Zoo Atlanta's emergency fundraising total to more than \$4 million.





On September 19, Zoo Atlanta hosted its first-ever virtual Beastly Feast gala. Presented by Ford Motor Company Fund in a remarkable 35th year of support for the event, The Beastly Feast raised more than \$800,000.

Snapshots from a WILD virtual celebration

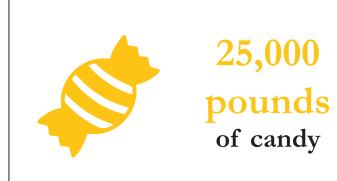






410 spooky volunteers

16,208 Boo at the Zoo attendees

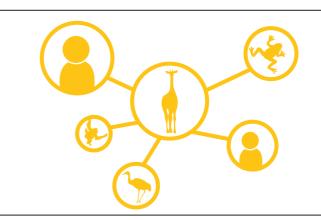








The Zoo was awarded a grant of \$5,000 to begin work as a partner in the Zoo and Aquarium All Hazards Preparedness, Response, and Recovery (ZAHP) Fusion Center, a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and AZA that connects the emergency management public sector with the managed wildlife community.

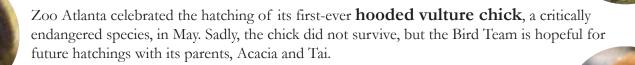


The Zoo will use the awarded funds to develop a state and regional network to comprehensively identify facilities where exotic animals are housed; share data with neighboring facilities and emergency response agencies; and create a roadmap for improved regional contingency planning that can reduce the impact on managed wildlife communities, which can experience setbacks of months

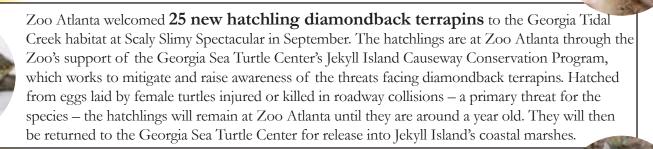
A year of warm welcomes

Baloo, a male binturong, began exploring Complex Carnivores in February. Baloo's female companion, Bramble, joined him in July on a breeding recommendation from the AZA Binturong Species Survival Plan® (SSP).

Mumbles, the first southern white rhino ever to live at Zoo Atlanta, arrived in May on a recommendation from the White Rhino SSP. Mumbles' habitat is a redesign of the former elephant habitat.



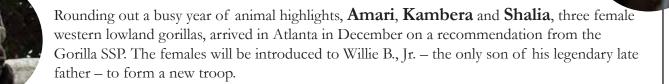
Also in May, the Zoo welcomed the hatching of its first-ever **wattled crane chick**– a success for a species that is challenging to breed in zoological settings.



Hamlet, a male warthog, joined the African Savanna complement of animals in October. He was recommended as a companion for Eleanor, the female warthog at Zoo Atlanta.

Chica and Spot, two female meerkats, arrived in November on a recommendation that they join the African Savanna's four male meerkats, Kingsley, Littlefoot, Petrie, and Spike.

Jackie, a male red panda, began exploring the Zoo's Asian Forest in November on a recommendation from the Red Panda SSP.



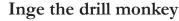
and difficult goodbyes



Marvin the muntjac

January 22, 2020

Considered very geriatric at the age of 21, Marvin had spent his later years living behind the scenes, but his many followers continued to keep up with his birthdays and other special occasions.



January 28, 2020

At the advanced age of 33, Inge was the matriarch of the Zoo's drill population and was the mother of 11 offspring, all born at Zoo Atlanta and many of whom she outlived.



S S

Shirley the warthog

March 2, 2020

Shirley helped christen the Kalahari Connections warthog/meerkat complex in 2007 and was the mother of five litters of piglets over her years at the Zoo.

Dumadi the Sumatran orangutan

March 19, 202

The second adopted son of Madu, Dumadi was a model older brother to Madu's third adopted son, Remy. His unexpected passing at just 13 years old was a blow to the Zoo family and to the Sumatran orangutan population in North America.

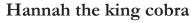




Idgie the red panda

April 2, 2020

A longtime favorite among Zoo Members and guests, Idgie was considered a geriatric animal at the age of nearly 14. She had spent her golden years enjoying a habitat specifically redesigned for senior needs.



May 15, 202

Known for her impressive appearance as well as her shyness, Hannah had been a charismatic member of the Zoo's reptile population since 2009.





Cecil was the oldest male cassowary in North America and had recently celebrated the impressive milestone of his 41st "hatchday."



A mission continued

Even in a year marked by uncertainty, Zoo Atlanta was able to maintain its conservation commitment to its mission of saving wildlife and their habitats.



Conservation South Luangwa

Zoo Atlanta was able to continue its commitment to its partnership with Conservation South Luangwa, a collaboration launched in 2019. Based in Zambia, Conservation South Luangwa works to fight illegal wildlife trafficking and human-wildlife conflict affecting African elephants and many other species. Strategies include anti-poaching patrols; aerial surveillance; and a team of detection dogs specialized in finding ivory, animal skins, ammunition and firearms, and certain species killed for bushmeat.

Zoos Victoria's Bushfire Emergency Wildlife Fund

In response to the devastating Australian wildfires early in 2020, Zoo Atlanta provided emergency support funds for critical care and long-term recovery of animals impacted by the fires.

Mabel Dorn Reeder Conservation Endowment Fund

Zoo Atlanta's Mabel Dorn Reeder Conservation Endowment Fund annually awards grants to projects that enable Zoo Atlanta to expand its conservation actions and contributions. Projects are proposed by Zoo team members and are evaluated by a review committee. Initiatives slated for support for the 2020-2021 program year are as follows:



Timneh parrots: "Urgent Action to Identify and Protect Key Sites for Timneh Parrots in Sierra Leone"



Golden lion tamarins: "Vaccinating and Translocating Golden Lion Tamarins to Prevent Extinction of the Species"



Gorillas: "Addressing New Health and Environmental Risks with Innovative Solutions to Protect Gorillas in the Ndoki Forests"



Panamanian golden frogs: "Reintroduction of the Panamanian Golden Frog: Testing the Efficacy of Mesocosms for Reintroductions in the Species' Natural Range"



Giant armadillos: "Giant Armadillo Conservation Program," conducting research in Brazil to promote conservation measures for key habitats of giant armadillos

Quarters for Conservation

Now in its fifth year, Quarters for Conservation directs 25 cents of every general admission ticket to projects for wildlife. Like the initiatives proposed for support by the Mabel Dorn Reeder Conservation Endowment Fund, projects are championed by Zoo Atlanta team members. Projects supported in the 2020-2021 program year are as follows:



Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation

Maintaining, restoring, and protecting the forests that orangutans and many other animals call home; rehabilitating orangutans to be reintroduced to the wild; and working to educate local communities on ways they can support wildlife.



Save the Giants

Working to advance giant otter conservation in Guyana by involving the local community in population surveys and providing training in sustainable, low-impact ecotourism to create employment opportunities for local people.



Xerces Society of Invertebrate Conservation's Pollinator Conservation Program

Working to restore and expand pollinator habitat by advancing sustainable crop practices and providing region-specific educational resources for communities and individuals.

New partnership: Wildlife Trafficking Alliance

Zoo Atlanta became a partner of the Wildlife Trafficking Alliance (WTA) in 2020. WTA is a coalition of AZA-accredited organizations, nonprofits, and companies dedicated to reducing the illegal sale and purchase of wildlife and illegal animal products.

A curiosity undimmed

While 2020 was an extraordinarily challenging year in so many ways, it proved another impressive year for research – a core aspect of the Zoo's mission – at Zoo Atlanta. Zoo Atlanta and partners published 10 peer-reviewed papers in 2020.

Subject matters explored included the following:

- Clutch size in the black beaded lizard and Guatemalan beaded lizard, with summaries of other species of helodermatids
- Comparative performance of orangutans, gorillas, and drills in an ephemeral foraging task
- Great Ape Heart Project guidelines for the echocardiographic assessment of great apes
- Leukocyte characteristics of the giant panda: morphological, cytochemical and ultrastructural features
- Life history of frogs of the Brazilian semiarid, with emphasis on aestivation
- Long-term memory of a complex foraging task in monitor lizards
- Mitigating memory effects during undulatory locomotion on hysteritic materials
- Side-impact collision: mechanics of obstacle negotiation in sidewinding snakes
- Surprising simplicities and syntheses in self-propelling squamate and synthetic systems in sand
- Ungulates: in Encyclopedia of Animal Cognition and Behavior

The 2020 publications brought Zoo Atlanta's total number of published research papers to 375 since 1978, underscoring the organization's longtime commitment to mission-related scientific research.

AZA Research Award for the Great Ape Heart Project

The Great Ape Heart Project based at Zoo Atlanta received the prestigious 2020 Research Award with Top Honors from AZA. The award recognizes achievements in advancing scientific research among accredited zoos and aquariums throughout the U.S.

Launched in 2010, the Great Ape Heart Project is the world's first coordinated clinical approach targeting cardiovascular disease in all four non-human great ape taxa – gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, and bonobos – living in zoological environments. A four-time recipient of the distinguished National Leadership Grant, including a 2019 award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Great Ape Heart Project represents the future of veterinary research in zoos. Over the past 10 years, the project has produced and continues to populate a central ape-health database that includes more than 90% of the individual great apes in AZA institutions, as well as 10 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.



A voice for the voiceless

Zoo Atlanta's Conservation Strategic Action Plan, formalized in 2017, outlines strategies to guide the Zoo's conservation efforts, both locally and globally, using our unique position and expertise to make an impact. These strategies include advocating for the role of zoos and engaging in and stimulating policy discussions with relevant public constituents.

2020 legislative priorities included but were not limited to:

- COVID economic relief for AZA-accredited facilities
- Legislation to prevent future pandemics
- Increasing membership in the Congressional Zoo and Aquarium Caucus; and
- Advocating for the passing of the Big Cat Public Safety Act (H.R. 1380). The Act, which passed the House of Representatives in late 2020, would revise requirements surrounding the trade of big cats such as lions and tigers and would strengthen restrictions on their possession and display by unaccredited entities. Legislation would also restrict practices which allow direct contact between big cats and members of the public.



By December 2020, Zoo attendance – despite its greatly diminished capacity – was trending in a positive direction, particularly as it related to fall attendance, which came in at nearly 80% of fall attendance numbers in 2019.



At the outset of the pandemic, Zoo Atlanta forecast a deficit of \$7.5 million for the year. The Zoo's situation was vastly improved by the PPP loan, now expected to be forgiven, not to mention over \$5 million raised in emergency fundraising and expense cuts of over \$5 million.



In early 2021, Zoo Atlanta would receive an additional \$500,000 crisis recovery grant – a major statement of support for the Zoo that brought the organization's overall crisis fundraising to \$6 million. Also in early 2021, Zoo Atlanta would apply for and receive a second federal PPP loan of \$2 million.



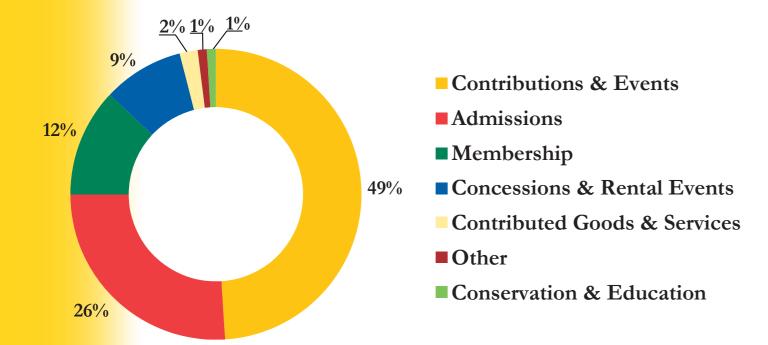
In March 2020, the year that was foreseen was one of almost unimaginable odds for Zoo Atlanta, defined by crippling operating losses and circumstances that seemed nearly impossible to absorb. Instead, thanks to the overwhelming show of support from the philanthropic community and Members and friends of the Zoo and the tremendous grit, determination, and creativity of the Zoo team, Zoo Atlanta managed to end up in the black for the year with an operating surplus of over \$1 million.

The story of 2020 may be just one more story in 132 years of stories in the life of Atlanta's oldest cultural destination, but it may just be our most remarkable story yet. Thanks to you, our story continues.

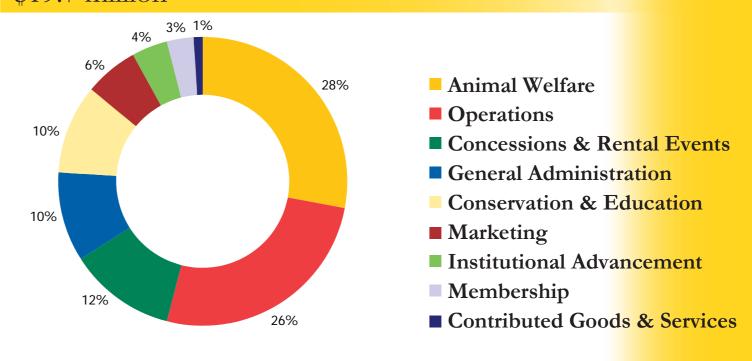
Financial Report



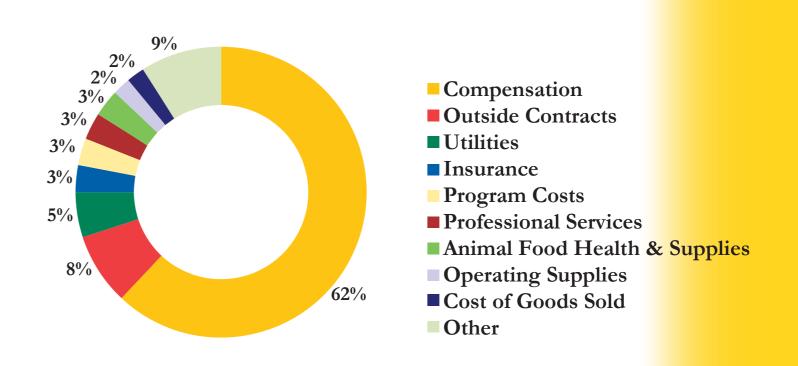
Zoo Atlanta 2020 Operating Revenue \$20.8 million



Zoo Atlanta 2020 Operating Expenses \$19.7 million



Zoo Atlanta 2020 Operating Expenses by Function \$19.7 million



We Applaud Our Donors

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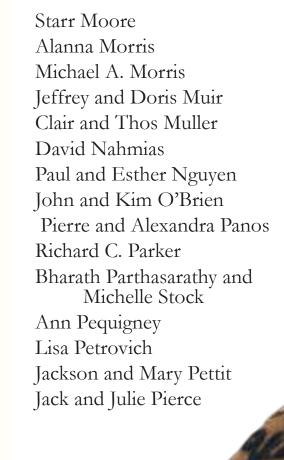
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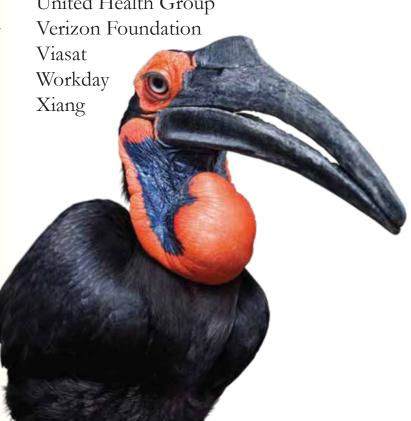
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