

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### OVERVIEW

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is home to more than 11,000 animals representing nearly 600 species from around the globe. The Zoo complex is a recreational and education destination that includes the 22-acre Zoombezi Bay water park and the 18-hole Safari Golf Club. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium also operates *the Wilds*, a 10,000-acre conservation center and safari park located in southeastern Ohio. The Zoo is a regional attraction with global impact, annually contributing \$4 million of privately raised funds to support conservation projects worldwide. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Columbus Zoo has earned Charity Navigator's prestigious 4-star rating.

### MISSION

Lead and inspire by connecting people and wildlife.

### VISION

The sustainable co-existence of all living things.

### SIZE

The Zoo complex spans 588 acres, more than 200 of which have been developed as animal habitats and public spaces. The Zoo habitats are organized into six geographic regions: Asia Quest, Australia and the Islands, Congo Expedition, Heart of Africa, North America and Polar Frontier, and Shores. The newest region, Heart of Africa, is designed as a mixed species savanna spanning 23 acres.

### ATTENDANCE

The Zoo serves as one of central Ohio's most popular family attractions and hosts more than two million visitors annually. The Zoo experienced a record-breaking attendance in 2014 with 2.47 million visitors (not including the attendance for Zoombezi Bay, Safari Golf or *the Wilds*).

### ADMISSION AND MEMBERSHIP RATES

*In consideration of the Franklin County taxpayers who provide support for the Zoo, a non-profit organization, the Zoo offers these residents special admission prices and membership rates, weekly promotions, and educational programs for free or a reduced price. (Recipients must show proof of their Franklin County residence.)*

#### **General admission (effective April 1, 2015):**

Children under 3 years old: Free

Youth (ages 3-9 years): \$12.99 (\$9.99 for Franklin County residents)

General (ages 10-59 years): \$17.99 (\$14.99 for Franklin County residents)

Seniors (ages 60+ years): \$12.99 (\$9.99 for Franklin County residents)

Parking is \$8 per vehicle. Admission and parking is free for Columbus Zoo members.  
*Prices are subject to change.*

**Year-round promotions:**

**Franklin County** residents are admitted at half price every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

**Senior citizens** are admitted at half price every Tuesday.

**Military** (active and non-active) personnel receive a \$2 discount on admission for up to six tickets every day of the week. Recipients must show proof of military service.

**Educational group pricing:**

Admission for Franklin County school field trips is \$2 per person. Admission for school groups outside of Franklin County is \$4 per person. Free in-school educational programs are available for all Franklin County schools.

**Membership:**

In 2014, a total of 87,210 households – representing 457,971 individuals – participated in the Zoo’s membership program.

The Zoo offers six types of standard membership packages, with prices ranging from \$49 for an Individual membership (admits one adult) to \$149 for a Family Plus membership (admits two adults, their dependent children or non-adult grandchildren, and two guests). Franklin County residents receive a \$20 discount on Family and Family Plus memberships.

Members get free admission to the Columbus Zoo, as well as free or reduced admission to more than 100 AZA-accredited zoos in Ohio and across the country; free parking; free subscription to the Zoo member magazine and e-newsletter; exclusive invitations to members-only events; priority registration for educational programs; and a 10-percent discount at the Zoo gift shops. Members also get discounts on Zoombezi Bay tickets and on membership packages to *the Wilds*. In addition to these perks, gold members enjoy free rides\* in the Zoo and at Jungle Jack’s Landing as well as admission to Zoombezi Bay when in operation.

\*Excludes camel rides.

Complete pricing details and perks are available on the Zoo’s “Visit” page ([www.columbuszoo.org/visit/membership-rates](http://www.columbuszoo.org/visit/membership-rates)).

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium is open 363 days of the year, closed only on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The hours are as follows:

January: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

February: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

March: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

April: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

May: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (9 a.m. to 7 p.m. beginning May 23)

June: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on June 20 for Zoofari)  
July: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
August: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
September: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sept. 1-7)  
October: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Extended hours during Boo at the Zoo)  
November: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Wildlights Hours: 5-9 p.m. Sun-Thurs; 5-10 p.m. Fri. and Sat.)  
December: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Wildlights Hours: 5-9 p.m. Sun-Thurs; 5-10 p.m. Fri. and Sat.)  
*\*Hours are subject to change.*

## **GOVERNANCE**

The Columbus Zoological Park Association is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit corporation. It has a 125-member Association Board that meets quarterly. The 22-member Board of Directors meets monthly to oversee the operations of the Zoo. The tax levy receipts received by the Zoo are administered by a public Appointed Board that consists of 18 members; six members are designated by the City of Columbus, six by the Franklin County Commissioners and six by the Columbus Zoological Park Association.

## **CONSERVATION**

In 2014, the Columbus Zoo's Conservation Grants Program and Partners in Conservation awarded more than \$2 million of privately raised funds to program support for 70 conservation projects in 30 countries. This money is raised from restricted donations, conservation fundraisers and coins donated by Zoo visitors.

The Zoo participates in a number of conservation programs. One of these programs is the Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership, through which the Zoo has cared for more than 20 manatees. The program offers an exciting second chance for manatees found struggling in the wild to grow strong under human care and be released back into Florida waters.

The Zoo also participates in Species Survival Plans (SSP) for various species, one of which is for the western lowland gorilla. Through the SSP, the Zoo strives to maintain a sustainable population of these endangered great apes in North America. After famously raising the world's first gorilla to be born in human care, Colo, the Zoo has become internationally recognized for caring for gorillas in social groups. The Zoo has also become a leader in the gorilla surrogacy program, successfully finding families for young gorillas that were abandoned by their birth mothers.

## **EDUCATION AND OUTREACH**

The Columbus Zoo Education Department offers fun and engaging programs for all ages. In 2014, the Zoo's education team offered more than 2,000 programs to more than 300,000 participants. Such programs include preschool classes, field trips, summer camps, overnight outings, scout and teen programs, adult and teacher workshops and more. Because accessibility plays an important role in the Zoo's mission to inspire, the Zoo offers scholarships

for many of the education programs. These scholarships are made possible through donations submitted directly to the Education Department.

## **STAFF**

The Zoo's staff is comprised of about 260 full-time and 20 year-round part-time team members. The entire park (including Zoombezi Bay) employs about 2,070 seasonal team members.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Various volunteer groups work together to promote the Zoo's education, recreation and conservation missions. Docents, who must be at least 21 years old and who are required to complete a nine-week training program, educate visitors and conduct scheduled tours of the Zoo. Adult volunteers, ages 18 years and older, assist in the Zoo's animal contact areas, including the Kangaroo Walkabout, Touch Pool, Reptile Keeper Lab, My Barn at Habitat Hollow, and the lorikeet and Asia Quest aviaries. The teen volunteer program, ZooAides, focuses on customer service by assisting in the animal contact areas and with educational programs.

## **ANIMAL POPULATION**

The animal care experts at the Zoo care for more than 11,000 animals representing nearly 600 species. Of these species, about 30 are endangered and about a dozen are threatened.

## **RIDES, SHOWS AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS**

*Some attractions require a small additional fee not included in Zoo admission. Zoo-It-All wristbands, which provide unlimited daily access to all but the camel rides, are available for purchase. Rides and shows are seasonal and available weather permitting.*

### **Pirate Island**

Making its debut in 2015, Pirate Island puts a new spin on the popular seasonal boat tour through the Australia and the Islands region. At Pirate Island, the animals are the treasures – and they are in danger of being exploited by a menacing band of “Purple Pillagers.” Fortunately, the green “Pirates of the Planet” have come to the rescue. The experience takes guests through an epic battle involving dozens of realistic animatronic pirates, expertly crafted by The ScareFactory, a Columbus company.

Unlike the Dinosaur Island boat ride attraction, the Pirate Island characters are owned by the Zoo and will serve purposes beyond the boat ride attraction.

Pirate Island is open from 9 a.m. until the Zoo closes, from mid-May to Labor Day and on weekends through October. Admission is \$3 after entry into the Zoo, \$2 for Zoo members and free for Zoo Gold members as well as those with Zoo-It-All wristbands.

## **Playgrounds**

**Stings, Wings N' Play Things Park:** Located between the Congo Expedition region and the Australia and the Islands region and is open from early March through October.

**Polar Frontier Playground:** Located in the North America region and is open from early March through December.

### **Jungle Jack's Landing**

*Open weekends in early May and daily from late-May through October.*

**Stingray Bay:** Where guests can touch and feed a stingray for a small fee.

**Animal Encounters Village:** Where guests can enjoy free, up-close and interactive animal experiences throughout the day.

**Several rides** are available, including the Jungle River Falls log flume, Sea Dragon coaster, Jack's Tea Party spinning cups, Journey to Zanzibar swinging ship, Swingin' Gibbons wave swinger, and many more. (The complete list is available at [ColumbusZoo.org/visit/rides](http://ColumbusZoo.org/visit/rides).)

### **Carousel**

The authentic 1914 Mangel-Ilions carousel, a historic landmark, is comprised of 52 original horses and chariots as well as a band organ. It is open daily from early March through December. Admission is \$1 per rider.

### **Columbus Zoo Train Ride**

The train ride gives guests a unique way to view the North America region. Tours are offered daily from early March through December. Admission is \$1 per rider.

### **Live Entertainment**

**Animals on Safari:** A fast-paced, heart-warming, award-winning show featuring rescued cats and dogs from local shelters as well as trained exotic animals. Performances are on the weekends from May 1-22, daily from May 23-Sept. 7, and again on weekends from Sept. 8 through Boo at the Zoo. Admission is free.

**Animal Encounters Village:** An amazing educational show highlighting the unique abilities of species found around the globe. These experiences are available on the weekends from May 1-22, daily from May 23-Aug. 18, and again on weekends from Aug. 19 through Boo at the Zoo. Admission is free.

### **Animal Rides**

**Dromedary camel rides:** Available daily from early May until early October and during Wildlights. Age restrictions apply; young riders must be accompanied by an adult. Admission is \$7 per rider.

**Pony rides:** Available on weekends in April, daily from May until late August, and on weekends from late August through October. Admission is \$4 per rider.

### **GROUP EVENT VENUES**

The Zoo houses several unique venues and offers special services – from menu planning and catering to animal encounters and behind-the-scenes experiences – to make group events memorable. The variety of indoor and outdoor facilities can suit parties ranging from small

groups to large gatherings of up to 5,000 people. Themed, customizable birthday parties for children or team-building exercises for company meetings can be arranged, as can family reunions, wedding receptions, or other events.

The private facilities include the Water's Edge Events Park, which includes pavilions as well as a stage; the Activity Pavilion; Colo's Cove picnic area; and the Africa Event Center banquet hall. More information about group events can be found on the Zoo's website, under the "Discover" tab, or by calling (614) 724-3785.

## **HISTORY**

1926: The City of Columbus allocates park land for Zoo use.

1927: The Columbus Zoological Park opens with a small collection of donated animals.

1930: *The Columbus Dispatch* and the *Ohio State Journal* found the Columbus Zoological Society.

1937: The City of Columbus establishes the Zoo Commission.

The first membership drive begins, leading to the creation of a planned Zoo.

1940-50: Fundraising campaigns help acquire animals and the construction of major building.

1944: A traveling zoo is established.

1946: The Gooding Amusement Park opens adjacent to the Zoo.

1948: A flood causes the Zoo to close temporarily.

1951: The Zoo obtains 70 acres east of State Route 257 from the Stanberry Estate.

The City of Columbus takes over Zoo operations.

The Columbus Zoo acquires its first three gorillas.

1952: The Zoo celebrates its 25th anniversary.

The City of Columbus establishes a new Zoo master plan.

1954: City of Columbus passes an ordinance to give the City more control to operate the Zoo.

1956: Colo, the world's first zoo-born gorilla, is born at the Columbus Zoo.

1957: The Zoo receives the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA) Edward H. Bean Award for the first successful breeding of a lowland gorilla.

1960s: Franklin County passes the first bond issue for Zoo improvements and commissions a master plan for Zoo development.

1963: The Zoo adopts a new master plan for 73+ acres.

1967: The Reptile Building is completed.

The City of Columbus puts a bond issue for the Zoo on the ballot.

1969: The Zoo receives AAZPA's Edward H. Bean Award for first second-generation lowland gorilla.

1970s: The Zoo establishes its education department.

The Zoo extends its operations to year-round.

1970: Zoo Association takes over operation of the Zoo from the City of Columbus.

1973: The Zoo receives the AAZPA's Edward H. Bean Award for the first successful Jamaican boa breeding program.

1975: The Pachyderm Building opens. (It has since been renovated and is now part of Asia Quest).

1978: Jack Hanna is hired as Zoo Director.

1979: The Herbivore/Carnivore Complex opens. (It has since been renovated and is now part of Asia Quest.)

The first cheetahs are born at the Zoo. Twenty five litters are born over the next 10 years.

1980: The Zoo receives accreditation by the AAZPA. (This American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums is now known as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, or AZA.)

1981: City of Columbus purchases 37 acres from the Zoo Amusement Park, Inc. (which operated as Gooding Amusement Park and later became Wyandot Lake).

1982: The Zoo hosts the AAZPA Regional Conference.

1983: The first gorilla twins to be born in the Western Hemisphere were born at the Columbus Zoo.

1984: The Zoo opens its North America region.

1985: Franklin County voters approve a 0.25 mill levy for the Zoo.

The Zoo hosts the national AAZPA Annual Conference.

1987: The bear habitats open in the North America region.

1988: The golden monkey habitat opens. The attraction was temporary, as the animals were loaned as a gift from China.

The Zoo hosts the first Wildlight Wonderland (now known as Wildlights).

- 1989: The City of Columbus and the Board of Commissioners of Franklin County purchase Riverview Golf Course for the Zoo. The 265.58 acres included a pro shop, café and maintenance facility.

The eagle habitat opens in the North America region.

The Zoo launches its first five-year, \$5-million corporate development campaign.

- 1990: The moose habitat is completed.

Franklin County voters approve a 0.5 mil levy for the Zoo.

The Zoo becomes one of only four zoos in North America to acquire a troop of bonobos.

The Dr. C. Joseph Cross Animal Health Center opens.

- 1991: The Zoo forms its visitor services department and manages all food and gift stands.

The koala habitat opens, making Columbus one of the few zoos in the country to house this unique animal.

The kangaroo, emu and wallaby habitats open.

The wolverine habitat opens in the North America region.

The Columbus Zoo exceeds one million annual visitors.

The Zoo receives the AAZPA Significant Achievement Award for Lake Victoria cichlid breeding.

- 1992: The Sumatran tiger habitat opens.

The Zoo houses two giant pandas from April to October, raising nearly \$730,000 for the conservation of the giant panda and other endangered species; the Zoo reaches 1.4 million visitors.

The Zoo receives the AAZPA Significant Achievement Award for turtle breeding.

Jack Hanna becomes the Director Emeritus of the Zoo, a title he still holds to this day.

Jerry Borin is named the Zoo's Executive Director.

- 1993: The Zoo opens Discovery Reef, a 100,000-gallon saltwater aquarium.

- 1994: Tide Pool touch experience opens in Discovery Reef.

The Wetlands attraction opens in the North America region.

Franklin County voters approve a 0.75 mill Zoo levy.



The Zoo hosts the first “Zoos Committing to Conservation Conference,” which is now a biannual staple of the zoo and aquarium industry.

- 1995: The Zoo begins construction of several regions as part of an aggressive 10-year master plan.

The flamingo and alligator habitats open.

- 1996: The Humboldt penguin habitat opens.

The Zoo hosts a dinosaur attraction for the summer.

The service buildings and hay barn are completed.

- 1997: Battelle Coral Sea Lab opens in Discovery Reef.

The Activity Pavilion is completed.

The songbird aviary opens in the North America region.

In an unprecedented visit, the United States Secretary of Education visits the Columbus Zoo and recognizes all zoos as educational facilities.

- 1998: The City of Columbus and the Board of Commissioners of Franklin County purchase the adjacent Duros property (3.10 acres).

The Zoo expands the Pachyderm Building and outside yards for elephants and rhinos.

The Zoo renovates its Reptile Building.

African Forest (now known as Congo Expedition) Phase I opens, introducing new gorilla and bonobo habitats.

The prairie dog habitats and adjacent concessions open in the North America region.

- 1999: The Franklin County Commissioners and the City of Columbus purchase Askins Farm (129.47 acres), bringing the Zoo’s total acreage up to 536 acres.

The Zoo partners with the United States Fish and Wildlife Manatee Rehabilitation and Recovery program and opens Manatee Coast, becoming one of only three institutions outside of Florida to house and rehabilitate West Indian manatees.

Manatee Coast opens and the Zoo formally changes its name to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.

Congo River Market food court opens.

The business office building is completed.

2000: The City of Columbus and Franklin County Commissioners purchase property adjacent to the Zoo, which includes Gibson farm (25.40 acres), Geiss property (8.39 acres), and Hodges property (14.0 acres).

The Zoo releases its first rehabilitated West Indian manatee back into the wild in Florida.

The Zoo opens the fully restored Mangels-Illions carousel in an all-weather pavilion.

The Zoo opens African Forest – Congo Expedition Phase II, introducing new animal habitats and an aviary.

2001: The Franklin County Commissioners and the City of Columbus purchase adjacent Gibson Residence (1 acre).

The Zoo opens the Stings, Wings N' Play Things Park, a larger-than-life insect-themed children's playground.

Habitat Hollow: My Barn animal contact area opens.

2002: The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium celebrates its 75th year with summer events.

The Zoo enters into a partnership with *the Wilds*, a 10,000-acre wildlife conservation center in Cumberland, Ohio.

Habitat Hollow: My House interpretive center opens to the public on Earth Day.

Sanitary sewer system construction is completed.

2003: The City of Columbus and the Franklin County Commissioners purchase New Hope Reformed Church (7.63 net acres) in exchange for 12 acres for a new church site.

The Zoo opens the Islands of Southeast Asia (now part of the Australia and the Islands) region, which features orangutans, gibbons, Asian small-clawed otters, Komodo dragons and a boat ride.

The Zoo introduces Bob and Evelyn's Roadhouse, an Australian-themed nocturnal building and aviary.

The Zoo begins offering pony rides in the North America region.

The Zoo hosts the national Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Annual Conference for the second time.

2004: Voyage to Australia (now part of the Australia and the Islands region) opens, featuring koalas, kangaroos and a lorikeet aviary.

Franklin County residents pass a 0.75 mill replacement levy to help support the Zoo's growth through 2015.

The first Asian elephant is born at the Zoo.

2005: Worthington Industries Water's Edge Events Park opens.

2006: City of Columbus, Franklin County Board of Commissioners and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) agree to real estate exchanges over next several years to support local growth and the widening and relocation of State Route 750. The first real estate exchange takes place in 2006 for Phase I State Route 750 work.

The Zoo opens Asia Quest: Phase I (on June 1); Asia Quest: Phase II (in the fall); a zoogeographic region that includes habitats for sun bears, Pallas' cats, red pandas, markhors, silvered langurs, Asian elephants, water monitors, Amur tigers and red-crowned and white-naped cranes.

The Zoo reaches an agreement with Wyandot Lake/Six Flags to terminate the lease and purchase assets. The Zoo's Board of Directors approves the plans for Phase I renovation of Wyandot Lake into a new water park.

2007: The Zoo completes major renovations of its parking lot and the Safari Golf Club.

2008: The Zoo opens Zoombezi Bay Waterpark, Jungle Jack's Landing, and Colo's Cove, all adjacent to the Zoo. Zoombezi Bay, a 22.7 acre park, featured three new water slides, a wave pool, an action river, a toddler and family pool area, a lazy river, and an adult-only pool area. Jungle Jack's Landing, a 12-acre park, featured 14 rides and attractions. Colo's Cove was opened as a corporate and family event space, complete with picnic areas, a gazebo and concession areas.

The Zoo unveils its new entrance, which houses admission and membership offices for both the Zoo and Zoombezi Bay.

The Zoo announces that it has contributed \$3.8 million in privately raised funds to conservation projects and programs worldwide since 2003. Of those funds, \$919,677 was contributed to local and global conservation efforts in 2008.

The first freshwater mussels were released back into Ohio waters. This was the largest reintroduction project for a federally endangered species.

Jerry Borin, the Zoo's executive director since 1992, retires.

Jeff Swanagan is hired as the new executive director.

2009: ODOT and the City of Columbus exchange Old Powell Road right-of-way for the relocation of State Route 750. ODOT vacates Old Powell Road and it becomes a private drive for Zoo service and access.

The Zoo opens its Animal Encounters Village, where guests interact with Zoo animals.

The Zoo debuts Animals on Safari, an animal show that features rescued dogs and cats from local shelters.

The water treatment plant and geothermal system are completed.

Jeff Swanagan passes away unexpectedly. Dale Schmidt is named the new executive director.

The Zoo receives a Psychologically Healthy Workplace award from the Ohio Psychological Association.

Thanks to American Electric Power, the Zoo converts its remaining conventional Wildlights lights to LED lights, completing the project that began in 2008.

The Columbus Zoo exceeds two million annual visitors (not including the water park or *the Wilds* attendance).

2010: ODOT completed a real estate exchange by transferring the Wyandot Inn property (0.5 acres) to the City of Columbus.

The Zoo opens Polar Frontier, which features polar bears, brown bears, arctic foxes and the Battelle Ice Bear Outpost interpretive center.

Celebration of Giving Fountain is completed at the Zoo entrance.

The Zoo receives MORPC's Sustainable Growth Award.

2011: Two new waterslides are completed at Zoombezi Bay.

Three kiwi birds hatch in one year at the Columbus Zoo – a first in North America.

The Zoo receives the 2011 AZA Best Exhibit Award for Polar Frontier.

The Zoo receives the 2011 AZA North America Conservation Award.

2012: Stingray Bay opens.

The first release of human-reared hellbenders in Ohio takes place.

2013: Tom Stalf is named President/CEO.

Jack Hanna celebrates his 35th anniversary.

The Zoo's zoological medicine residency program receives accreditation by the American College of Zoological Medicine, making it one of only 23 similar programs worldwide.

Dinosaur Island, a temporary seasonal attraction, becomes part of the Australia and the Islands region boat ride experience. It is featured in 2013 and 2014.

2014: The Heart of Africa – a cutting edge zoo experience that allows guests to view the animals in a mixed species, savanna setting – makes its grand debut. The 43-acre region becomes a home for 24 species of animals, including lions (which were already living at the Zoo), giraffes, zebras, cheetahs, vervet monkeys, camels, ostriches, dama gazelles, wildebeests and more.

Mapori Restaurant, located in the Heart of Africa region, receives green restaurant certification (GRA).

Baboon Lagoon, a multi-level water play structure, opens at Zoombezi Bay.

Colo, the world's first gorilla born in human care and the oldest gorilla on record, turns 58 years old.

The first wombat arrives, making the Columbus Zoo one of only five zoos in North America to care for the Australian marsupial.

The Zoo sets new attendance record: 2,473,319 attendees (not including Zoombezi Bay or Safari Golf Course).

2015: Pirate Island, a temporary seasonal attraction, becomes part of the Australia and the Islands region boat ride experience.

### **GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

For general Zoo information and details about special events, membership, private or corporate events, education programs and more, call (614) 645-3550 or toll free at (800) MONKEYS, or visit [ColumbusZoo.org](http://ColumbusZoo.org).

### **PRESS CONTACT**

For all media inquiries and requests contact Columbus Zoo Community Relations at (614) 645-3411.