

= Phoenix Zoo =

The Phoenix Zoo opened in 1962 and is the largest privately owned , non @-@ profit zoo in the United States . Located in Phoenix , Arizona , the zoo was founded by Robert Maytag , a member of the Maytag family , and operates on 125 acres (51 ha) of land in the Papago Park area of Phoenix . It has been designated as a Phoenix Point of Pride .

The zoo has over 1 @, @ 400 animals on display and contains 2 @. @ 5 miles (4 @. @ 0 km) of walking trails . It is divided into four main themed areas or trails : The Arizona Trail (American Southwest flora and fauna) , the Africa Trail (animals from Africa) , the Tropics Trail (residents of the rain forests) , and the Children 's Trail , which includes a petting zoo .

The zoo has been conservation minded from its inception . Soon after it opened it hosted what was thought to be the last few Arabian oryx , which formed the basis of the world herd created for Operation Oryx and eventually allowed the reintroduction of the species into the wild . It now includes a sanctuary to care for animals that are endangered or unwanted .

= = History = =

The Phoenix Zoo began as a personal project of Robert Maytag , who formed the Arizona Zoological Society with the intention of opening a zoo in Phoenix . Although Maytag died a few months before its opening , the zoo opened on schedule in November 1962 . It was originally named the " Maytag Zoo " , but was renamed the following year to " Phoenix Zoo " to identify it more closely with the community . The zoo has always been a privately owned , non @-@ profit venture .

Although the zoo had some financial struggles in the early 1960s , it grew substantially during the 1970s as it added numerous new exhibits , landscaping features , and visitor amenities . The 1980s saw continued growth , with the addition of African Savanna habitat areas , a children 's zoo , a new entrance complex , and other exhibits . During this time , the zoo also underwent a renovation project to divide it into four themed zones (called " trails ") , featuring different types of exhibits .

The zoo expanded again in 1998 with the opening of Harmony Farms , home to a petting zoo and many domestic farm animals . In 2000 , the zoo opened Desert Lives , and in 2004 it added a new primate walk @-@ through exhibit called Monkey Village . In November 2006 , aquatic species were added to the zoo with the opening of Stingray Bay , . In November 2009 , two Komodo dragons were brought to the zoo as a part of the zoo 's capital campaign . In April 2011 , as a part of the zoo 's capital campaign , Orang @-@ Hutan : People of the Forest , the new orangutan exhibit opened to the public .

= = Areas and attractions = =

The Phoenix Zoo has four major themed areas , or " trails " , where visitors can experience exhibits representing different areas of the world and their native wildlife : the Arizona Trail , the Africa Trail , the Tropics Trail , and the Discovery / Children 's Trail .

= = = Arizona Trail = = =

The Arizona Trail is designed to emulate the wildlife and plant life of the state of Arizona . It features several plants native to the Sonoran Desert including the saguaro cactus , and animals such as the coyote , collared peccary (more commonly known as the javelina) , cougar , bobcat , raven , turkey vulture , coati , thick billed parrot , Sonoran pronghorn , and the Mexican gray wolf .

= = = Africa Trail = = =

The Africa Trail showcases many of the most popular animals in the world , including the African wild dogs , hamadryas baboon , mandrill , ostrich , Mhorr 's gazelle , white rhino , Grévy 's zebras , African lions , cheetahs , and Masai giraffes . The Desert Lives (pronounced like " life ") trail ,

diverts off of the Africa Trail before and after the lion and hyaena exhibits , and features bighorn sheep and Arabian oryx among the natural buttes .

=== Tropics Trail ===

The Tropics Trail has two parts . The inner trail following the lake is home to the Tropical Flights aviary as well as the ring @-@ tailed lemurs , and Bornean orangutans , and Monkey Village . The outer tropics trail passes by the Land of the Dragons exhibit , Asian elephants , jaguar , Galápagos tortoises , Aldabra giant tortoises , iguanas , anteaters , Sumatran tiger , and an assortment of tropical birds . It includes the Forest of Uco , a lush rainforest landscape that surrounds visitors along a 1 @-@ mile walking trail and includes reproductions of a South American mercado and a scientific expedition and ruins , and highlights several tropical animals including the Andean bear .

=== Children 's Trail ===

The Children 's Trail lets children get close to many small mammals from around the world , including emus , an ocelot , a caracal , siamang gibbons , and golden @-@ mantled tamarins .

Next to the Wallaby Walkabout is a rectangular display called " Feel the Difference " , with three vertebrate charts (reptile , fish , and amphibian) , and an invertebrate chart created by Frank Schaffer Publications .

Continuing on the trail will take you through Harmony Farm , featuring many farm animals , a petting zoo , and demonstrations on farming and agriculture oriented toward children .

=== Hunt Bass Hatchery House ===

The Hunt Bass Hatchery Caretaker 's House was built in 1936 and is located in the Phoenix Zoo grounds . Following the Great Depression , Governor Hunt (Arizona 's first elected governor) commissioned a bass fish hatchery to be established in the Papago Park of Arizona during 1932 . The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on January 23 , 2003 , reference : # 02001723 .

=== Other attractions ===

In addition to the trails , the zoo has several specialty attractions .

Stingray Bay was opened in November 2006 , and included more than 30 cownose rays and southern stingrays in a 15 @,@ 000 gallon " touch tank . " The " touch tank " lets visitors to touch the rays , whose barbs have been trimmed for safety . The exhibit is now permanent after installation of equipment to adjust water temperatures in the summer . In October 2007 , bamboo sharks were added to the exhibit .

An endangered species carousel is featured by the Leapin ' Lagoon Splash Pad .

The Safari Train provides a nonstop guided tour of the zoo .

Camel rides .

Giraffe Encounter

=== Programs ===

The zoo has a wide array of youth programs and animal encounters , including field trips , Night Camp , an outreach program which includes a zoomobile for outreach to locations outside the city , a summer camp , and a large volunteer program for teenagers 13 ? 17 , known as the Zooteen program .

=== Conservation efforts ===

Since opening in 1962 , the zoo has focused on animal conservation efforts . Programs at the Phoenix Zoo include captive breeding for reintroduction (for instance the Arabian oryx , black @-@ footed ferret , Mexican wolf , Ramsey Canyon leopard frog , and thick @-@ billed parrot , sanctuary for animals that are no longer breeding (for instance the African wild dogs at the zoo) , and rescue and rehabilitation (for instance lead poisoning treatments for the California condor) .

The Phoenix Zoo participates in the Species Survival Plan (SSP) for 29 species with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums . The goal of the SSP is to engage in animal husbandry and research projects for selected species that are in need of conservation efforts .

= = = Reintroduction = = =

In its first years , the zoo hosted a captive breeding program (" Operation Oryx ") with the specific goal of reintroducing the almost extinct Arabian oryx to the wild . By the early 1990s this program was still one of only two programs (the other being the golden lion tamarin) to have gone through the full wilderness @-@ zoo @-@ wilderness sequence . Nine oryx had been caught or donated for the breeding program . However , two pairs were delayed , so the " World Herd " was started in Phoenix in 1963 with only five animals shipped to the zoo and two born quickly after . The two delayed pairs arrived in 1964 to increase the herd to 11 individuals . The program was very successful , and the zoo celebrated its 225th Arabian oryx birth in 2002 . The Arabian oryx became extinct in the wild in 1972 , and reintroduction efforts were started in 1982 when oryx were released to the wild in the Omani Central Desert and Coastal Hills . Additional captive herds have been discovered and used as the basis for reintroductions , for instance in Saudi Arabia , but there has been some interbreeding even with these herds and most of the Arabian oryx in the wild today have ancestors from the Phoenix Zoo .

= = = Sanctuary = = =

The zoo provides sanctuary to many animals that need a place to live for various reasons . Some (like the Arabian oryx , Bali mynah , rhinoceros hornbill , Mexican gray wolf , and white rhinoceros) participate in captive breeding programs , some (such as the African spotted dogs) have retired from such programs and need a home , some have behavioral problems , and some are being rehabilitated to return to the wild . Animals that are in sanctuary are treated somewhat differently from other animals by the zoo . While normal exhibits balance the needs of the animals with those of visitors (for example , incorporating large viewing areas) , the sanctuary exhibits are almost completely focused on the comfort and well @-@ being of the animals .

After the 1998 death of Ruby , the zoo 's famous painting elephant , the zoo abandoned its elephant breeding program and began to focus on elephant behavior . The zoo is currently home to three Asian elephants that have a variety of behavioral issues , the most common being aggression toward other elephants . One elephant is a former performer at a circus and was subject to mistreatment , while the other two were captured in remote regions where they were never properly socialized .

= = = Rescue and rehabilitation = = =

The zoo provides lead poisoning treatment for California condors from the Grand Canyon area . These birds are one of the most endangered species on the planet , having at one time been reduced to 22 individuals in the wild . In February 2006 , they treated a female (# 149) who had been released in the 1990s and her son (# 304) who survived a very rare birth in the wild . Both birds were captured in the Grand Canyon region and brought back to the zoo to be treated . A California condor (# 133) was still being treated for lead poisoning at the zoo as of March 2010 .

= = Ruby the elephant = =

The Phoenix Zoo garnered worldwide attention for one of its animals , an Asian elephant named Ruby . Ruby came to the zoo in 1973 , just months after being born in Thailand . After noticing Ruby doodling in the sand with sticks , her keeper decided to give her a brush and paint . Ruby quickly became known for her paintings , whose sales raised over US \$ 200 @,@ 000 for the zoo . Art collectors all over the world joined 18 @-@ month waiting lists and paid hundreds of dollars for original prints .

In 1997 , Ruby became pregnant . Near the end of her 22 @-@ month pregnancy , veterinarians discovered that the calf was dead . Ruby 's uterus had ruptured , and the calf had slipped out and into Ruby 's abdomen . Due to complications during the surgery to remove the 320 @-@ pound fetus , Ruby had to be euthanized .

= = Controversies = =

In 1997 , then @-@ zoo director Jeff Williamson merged some departments of the zoo in a business move that was intended to provide a clearer direction for zoo operations . Many of the zoo 's approximately 350 volunteers interpreted the merger as an elimination of volunteer training efforts . As a result , more than half of them left the zoo by 1999 .

In May 2005 , a veterinarian named Kris Nelson filed a series of complaints against the zoo regarding animal care and management . Her complaints were backed by two former zoo employees : a chief veterinarian and an animal nutritionist . The complaints stated that dozens of animals had been harmed or died as a result of poor management , feeding practices , and quarantine procedures . Another veterinarian , 15 @-@ year zoo employee Kathy Orr , discounted many of Nelson 's claims as being either invalid , or having been corrected already .

The following June , an independent committee of zoological experts from other areas of the country cleared the Phoenix Zoo of the charges . In a published report , the committee outlined some minor flaws in the zoo 's operation , but reported no " serious deficiencies " .

= = Fundraising for redesign = =

A Phoenix municipal bond election in March 2006 provided \$ 2 million to the project , marking the first time the zoo has received public funds in its history . On 8 June 2006 , then @-@ zoo director Jeff Williamson announced a major fund @-@ raising drive over the next 10 years to update the zoo 's infrastructure and many of its aging exhibits . The zoo needs to raise \$ 70 million to complete the project . In 2009 , a shorter term goal is to raise \$ 20 million by 2012 to pay for a number of improvements that are already under way .