

# ZOO & YOU

Fall 2023 | Member Magazine  
Reid Park Zoological Society





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#### Reid Park Zoological Society

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Tucson, AZ 85716

#### ZOO HOURS:

June-September 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

October-May 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.



## Newly Hatched Animal Ambassadors

Next time you visit the Zoo, pop by the Conservation Learning Center and say "congratulations!" to the Zoo's newest mom: the bearded dragon.

In the wild, bearded dragon moms are long gone when their eggs hatch. Here at the Zoo, the hatchlings (pictured above at about one week old), are living behind-the-scenes while they grow big and strong. Eventually, they will become Ambassador Animals at other AZA accredited Zoos and Aquariums, helping to educate people about their species.

Bearded dragons are quickly becoming popular pets to own, but we recommend doing your research before deciding to have one for yourself. These animals require a special diet, a suitably sized tank, heat lamps, special substrate, and many more things to consider. It is also important to seek out a bearded dragon breeder that does not take these animals from the wild.

Reid Park Zoo is very excited to contribute to the sustainable population of bearded dragons in AZA zoos.

# THE ZOO BY YOU

Here's a look at the Zoo through your eyes! Tag us on social media to enter your own photos for the next issue of Zoo & You!



Photos by Tricia Jean Photography





## Fighting Against Plastic Dependence

One of the most impactful conservation actions we can all take is to reduce our use of plastic. From skipping using a straw to using reusable grocery bags to using a reusable water bottle, every small change has a big impact.

This July, for the fifth year, the Zoo formed a team to challenge ourselves to reduce the use of plastic through the Plastic Free EcoChallenge. Reid Park Zoo's team was made up of staff members, volunteers, and community members. This challenge showed that the Zoo community remains committed to protecting wild animals and wild places by once again ranking within the top 10 teams in the country. This year the Zoo's team ranked 8th out of 224 teams.

### Why it's important:

Plastic is made from oil and usually needs to be

transported long distances before reaching store shelves. By reducing our use of plastic, we can reduce the burning of fossil fuels (such as oil) used to make and transport plastic, and in turn, reduce our carbon footprint.

Additionally, plastic trash is found **everywhere**, on land and in the sea. A recent report by the International Rhino Foundation documented visible plastic pieces in rhino dung, meaning the rhinos had inadvertently eaten it as they were foraging in the forest in Nepal! Animals in our local habitats can be affected too. Plastic can cause gastrointestinal obstructions and poison animals that eat it so reducing our plastic use will help all animals.

*By making small changes in our daily lives to reduce our use of plastic, we can all help protect wild animals and wild places.*



### Steps to Reduce Plastic Use

**Refuse** to use plastic, especially single-use plastic.

**Reduce** - look for ways to reduce the amount of plastic you use or buy.

**Recycle** - recycle any plastic that is accepted by your local recycling service - in general plastics labeled #1 and #2 are widely recycled, but best to check to make sure you are recycling correctly.

**Plastic diversion programs** - Your last step for any plastic that you cannot refuse or recycle is to contribute to a plastic diversion program. These programs take non-recyclable plastic and repurpose it for other uses, like building blocks. Tucson has begun a program and you can find out more at [byfusion.com](http://byfusion.com).



## Introducing the Blue Duikers

If you've stopped by to visit the ring-tailed lemurs recently, you may have noticed they have two new companions sharing their habitat!

Marigold and Viazi are a pair of blue duikers (pronounced dye-kers), a tiny antelope native to the forests of central, western, and southern Africa! They are the first of their species to live at Reid Park Zoo, and have arrived as part of a breeding recommendation from their Species Survival Plan.

Fully grown, duikers reach only about a foot tall and weigh seven to ten pounds. They spend most of their day foraging for fruits and are known to scavenge food dropped from birds and primates they follow. In fact, their diet is so rich in moisture they are one of the few species that can survive without water.





## Gwen, the Linné's Two-Toed Sloth is Hanging Out in the Zoo's South America Loop

He's here! Gwen, the Linné's Two-Toed Sloth, is the newest addition to Reid Park Zoo's South America loop.

Sloths are solitary animals in the wild who only come together for breeding. Here at the Zoo, Gwen has his new home all to himself.

While Gwen has enjoyed exploring every inch of his habitat, his favorite activity is snoozing in a cozy dome. This snuggly spot is placed high in the habitat and it's no wonder that it is one of Gwen's favorite places, as sloths spend most of their

time high in the rainforest tree canopy.

Gwen is four years old and comes to Tucson from Audubon Zoo in New Orleans as a part of the Association of Zoos &

Aquariums Sloth Species Survival Plan.

Sloths are herbivores, and Gwen does have a few favorite vegetables. He's an expert at spotting zucchini and sweet potatoes among

### Hang Out with Gwen Online

**If you've already visited Gwen at the Zoo, you may have noticed a television screen displaying a live feed of the sloth habitat. This live feed is also available as a "Zoo Cam" on our website. Follow the QR code to keep up with Gwen from home, and don't forget to check out our other Zoo Cams featuring the elephants, African wild dogs, flamingos, Andean bears, giraffes, lions, and the lemur/duiker habitat.**





lookalike cucumbers and carrots.

When visiting, you might spot an octopus-shaped piece of enrichment hanging near Gwen. This is a puzzle feeder, designed to encourage the foraging behaviors sloths depend on to find food in the wild.

The sloth habitat was constructed just for Gwen, in the formerly empty space between the flamingo and jaguar habitats. The habitat features both indoor and outdoor spaces, both with lots of perching for Gwen.

The habitat also features a beautiful mural (pictured above) by local artist Alejandra Trujillo, depicting a South American dreamscape from a Linné's two-toed sloth's point of view.



## New Projects Made Possible Through Zoo Improvement Fund

The sloth habitat was made possible with the support of Tucson voters in the November 2017 election. With the community's help, the Zoo has already undergone many improvements, from a brand new flamingo habitat at the entrance of the Zoo, to infrastructure improvements throughout the grounds that provide added comfort for animals and guests, as well as better animal viewing.

The Angel Charity World of Play Adventure Zone will be the next Master Plan project to come to fruition, with opening planned for this fall. This incredible new addition will bring an appreciation for biological diversity to the playground, as kids explore an Antarctic ice cave, the heights of the redwood trees, and the thrills of the South American rainforest — all from inside the Zoo!

Then, Reid Park Zoo will begin construction on the much-anticipated Pathway to Asia addition. At this moment, a new parking lot is in progress. Once the parking lot is completed, Edith Ball Adaptive Recreation Center, Zoo, Hi Corbett, and Reid Park visitors will be able to park in the new lot. Construction of Pathway to Asia will then begin in the current ARC and Zoo parking lots. The end result will be a 3.9 acre addition to Reid Park Zoo, bringing Malayan tigers, red pandas, and an incredible reptile house to the Zoo. Construction is anticipated to take two years.





## Seeing Conservation Work in Action

**Reid Park Zoo periodically hosts trips that focus on exploring different ecosystems and connecting travelers in a truly unique way. Visiting other accredited zoos in the US is a great way to see different species and share new ideas. Traveling to a different country to see species in their native habitat can immerse you in a once-in-a-lifetime experience that shows the true power of conservation.**

Botswana, a top safari destination in Africa, is dedicated to conservation



efforts. Over 25% of the country's land is protected for wildlife.

Thanks to these protected lands, roughly 100,000

elephants reside in Botswana, a number that is thought to be a fourth of the total elephants in Africa. It is also home to the Okavango Delta, the largest inland delta on the planet. Here, you can find an abundance of biodiversity. This is why Reid Park Zoo chose Botswana for a recent trip. Jed Dodds, Reid Park Zoo's Development Officer, and his wife Cassie Dodds, the Zoo's

Elephant Supervisor, led a group of 21 adventurers with a love for animals and a passion for conservation on this trip.

In Botswana, June is wintertime, just after the rainy season and leading into the peak visitation season. This is the ideal time to view the most wildlife and animals that Botswana has to offer.

Each location visited had a unique ecosystem with a different story to tell. In Chobe, the group watched 15 lions come across a herd of cape buffalo, witnessing the life and death struggle that animals face every day. In the Okavango Delta, a massive bull elephant



crossed right in front of our canoe, plucking a lily with his trunk and shaking his head before gracefully disappearing into the tall grass.

Every trip has one place that rises above the rest. For this trip, it was Savuti. In Savuti, they were graced with herds of elephants, kudu, impala, helmeted guinea fowl, giraffes, cheetahs, leopards, lions, and so much more. Here, the group also saw African wild dogs — one of the most critically endangered animals on the planet. It was a healthy pack that was coming back from

a kill, blood on their face, to bring food to their young pups.

Botswana is a beacon for how successful conservation can be achieved. Ecotourism is a great way to directly benefit an ecosystem, but visiting the Zoo is just as important. The Zoo is where connections are made, stories are told, and species are saved. It's here where Jed and Cassie tell their stories and share their passion!

**Interested in joining the Zoo on future adventures? Email [Jed@reidparkzoo.org](mailto:Jed@reidparkzoo.org)!**



# BOO! AT THE ZOO



**October 20-22 & 27-29, 2023**

**Timed entry — get your tickets in advance!**

Details at [ReidParkZoo.org](http://ReidParkZoo.org)



# HANG WITH A SLOTH

The Zoo just welcomed a new fuzzy resident, Gwen the Two Toed Sloth! Grab an adult to help you cut out this sloth and see where you and the sloth can hang around!

Tag us on Instagram @ ReidParkZoo

Try hanging on...



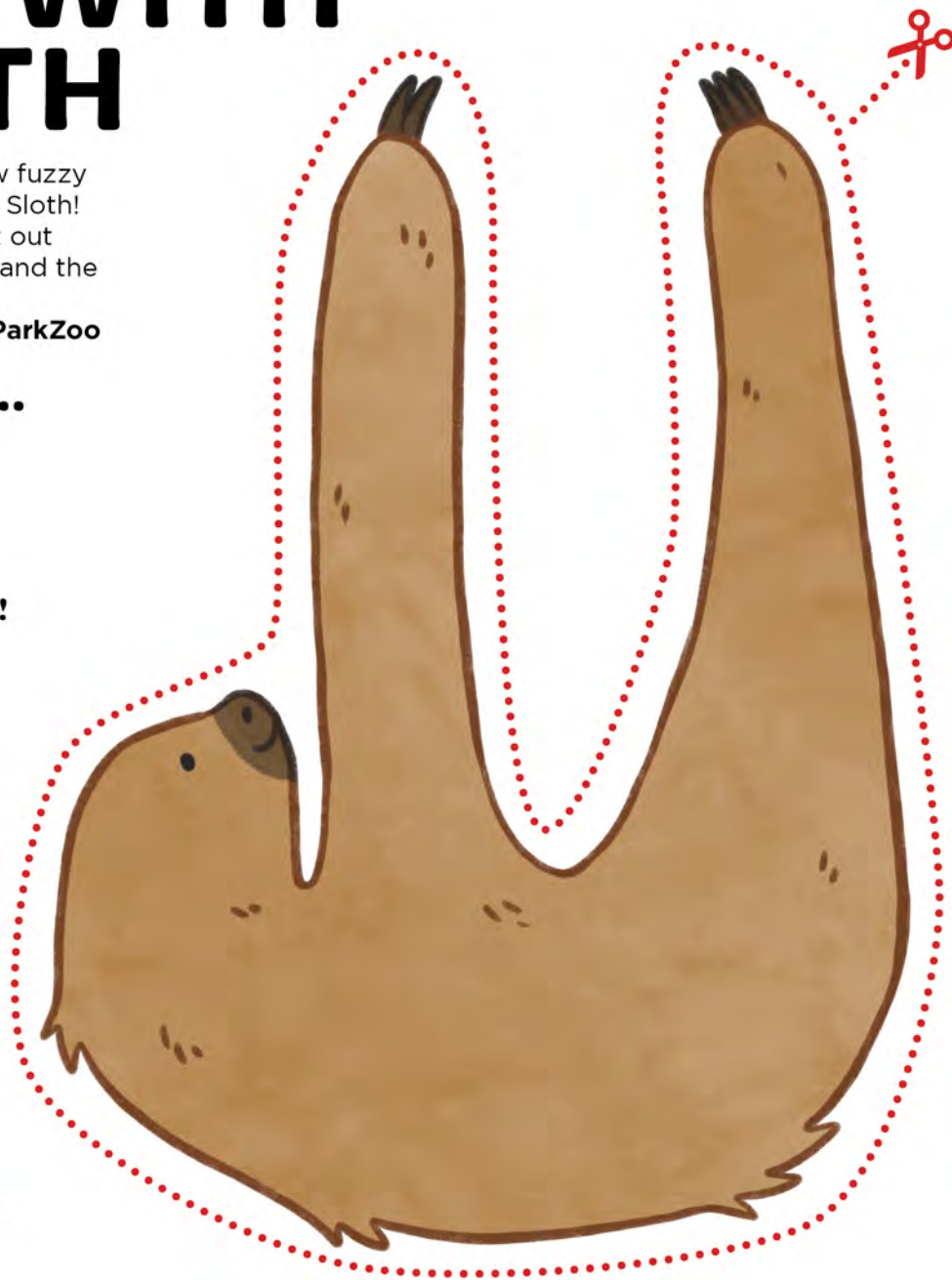
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a book!



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# Upcoming Events

## FIRST RESPONDERS DAY

**Saturday, September 23**

**8 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Reid Park Zoo and the Erik Hite Foundation are partnering to honor our hometown heroes who protect our community. First responders (members of the police, firefighters, ATF, EMT's, correction officers, 911 personnel, and others involved in direct law enforcement) and up to 4 family members will receive \$1 admission to the Zoo with valid identification. Discount is available at the gate only and cannot be combined with any other offers. Special activities for the day will include music, games and crafts for all in the Event Garden.

## BIRDING AT THE ZOO

**Thursday, October 5**

**9:15 a.m.**

Join Reid Park Zoo and Tucson Audubon Society staff members for a guided bird walk through the Zoo grounds. Experience the Zoo in a new way as we observe and identify the native birds we see that call the Zoo home. Binoculars and field guides are recommended. Advance registration required.

**Free with Zoo admission**

## ZOOCON 2023

**Friday, October 6**

**6 - 9 p.m.**

Join Reid Park Zoo for the must-attend social event of the fall, ZOOcon. This year's gala is a 30th Anniversary Celebration and will feature Tucson's favorite restaurants, auctions, animal ambassador presentations, and live music! Enjoy a specialty cocktail as you outbid your friends for a chance to win amazing experiences during the live auction with Call to Auction and Emcee Erin Christiansen. Tickets include food at all restaurant stations and 2 drink tickets. Please note this is a 21 and older event.

**Member tickets start at \$150**

## DIAMOND CHILDREN'S TEDDY BEAR CLINIC

**Saturday, October 14**

**9 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Is your stuffy friend feeling a little under the weather? Bring your plush patient for a check-up by doctors and nurses from Diamond Children's Hospital. Plush bears will be distributed to the first 1,000 kids courtesy of Diamond Children's Hospital.

**Free with Zoo admission**

## BOO AT THE ZOO

**October 20-22, 27-29**

**Timed Tickets Available**

Dig up your zombies, and grab your ghouls! Show off your boo-tiful costumes at Reid Park Zoo for a delightful, not too frightful, family friendly evening at Boo at the Zoo! Please reserve your timed tickets in advance.

**\$12 Members, \$14 General Public**

## SMASH BASH

**Saturday, October 21**

**9 a.m. - Noon**

Watch animals enjoy a festive fall enrichment treat: pumpkins! Some crushing, dunking, rolling, and curious exploration are sure to be in order.

**Free with regular Zoo admission**

## ZOO-WIDE BIOBLITZ

**Sunday, November 5**

**11 a.m.**

Become a community scientist for the day! Learn how you can participate in science by posting your wildlife observations. As a group, we will explore the Zoo and practice powers of observation as we try to find as many local wildlife species as we can! Advance registration required.

**Free with regular Zoo admission**

## Education Programs **Advance registration required**

### LITTLE CRITTERS

**Ages 3-5 year olds**

These interactive programs encourage families to learn about the animal world together. Each program features a different animal theme and includes animal ambassador encounters, movement-based activities, and a simple craft. The activities are based on Arizona's Early Learning Standards to develop motor, social, and cognitive skills. One adult participant included in fee.

**\$12 Members, \$20 General Public**

**Wednesday, September 20:** Night and Day

**Thursday, October 26, 10-11:30 a.m.:** Animal Superpowers

**Wednesday, November 15, 10-11:30 a.m.:** Feasts for the Beasts

**Tuesday, December 12, 10-11:30 a.m.:** Hooray for Teamwork

### DR ZOO

**Ages 6-12**

Learn how Zoo vets use science and math to care for the animals at the Zoo through this hands-on interactive program.

**\$15 Members, \$20 General Public**

**Sunday, October 1, 9-11 a.m.**

**Saturday, November 11, 9-11 a.m.**

### JR ZOO

**Ages 6-12**

Through this interactive, hands-on program your child will experience a snapshot of a day in the life of a Zoo Keeper.

**\$15 Members, \$20 General Public**

**Sunday, September 10, 9-11 a.m.**

**Saturday, October 7, 9-11 a.m.**

**Sunday, November 19, 9-11 a.m.**

### FAMILY BEHIND THE SCENES TOURS

**Ages 5 and up**

Journey Behind the Scenes with your family to find out what it takes to care for over 250 animals every day, why zoos are important, and learn what YOUR Zoo is doing to protect wild animals and wild places. This adventure includes visiting the Zoo's health center, kitchen and rhino behind the scenes areas.

Please note this is a one-hour walking tour on dirt roads.

Advance registration is required. Tours are offered at 10 am and 1:00 pm.

**\$20/Member Participant, \$25/General Public Participant**

**Friday, November 24**

**Saturday, November 25**

**10-11 a.m. or 1-2 p.m.**

### WINTER CAMP

**Save the dates: 12/27-12/29**



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