

Caring For The Animals In The World's Zoos And Aquariums

(NAPS)—Did you know that more people visit zoos and aquariums each year than attend all sporting events combined? This seemingly surprising statistic shows what we've all known for millennia...that we have a remarkably deep emotional connection with the animals who share our world.

And yet that connection is in danger of disappearing. In the face of what scientists are calling a "Sixth Extinction" with species disappearing at a rate 8–100 times higher than expected since 1900, today's zoos and aquariums are playing an increasingly important role in preserving the vital web of life on Earth. Serving as arks of hope for endangered animals and powerful ambassadors for conservation, these institutions are cultivating new generations who care about the future of these creatures. Through zoos and aquariums, people are becoming increasingly aware of and invested in the fate of the world's animals. At the same time, they are also rightly demanding that the millions of creatures who live in human care at zoos, aquariums and conservation centers be afforded good treatment and welfare.

To help achieve this, American Humane Association, which has been leading the compassion movement for 140 years and is the largest certifier of the humane treatment of animals, developed the first-ever independent, science-based, third-party humane certification program focusing solely on the well-being of the animals living in zoos and aquariums. This new Humane Conservation™ program is based on comprehensive standards created by an independent Scientific Advisory Committee consisting of the most well-respected, iconic names in animal welfare, animal ethics, and the conservation community. The standards cover everything from good health to good housing, good feeding, good management,



From the dolphins in the seas to the giraffes reaching into the trees, the magnificent creatures that share our world can be seen, saved and appreciated at zoos and aquariums.

and appropriate behaviors, and their implementation is verified through rigorous audits by a completely independent third party.

"People won't protect what they don't love, and they can't love what they don't know," said Dr. Robin Ganzert, American Humane Association president and CEO. "Zoos and aquariums fill an important, lifesaving role in the quest to save the magnificent creatures who share our world, but at the same time it is important that these facilities treat their animals humanely. When consumers visit a zoo, aquarium or conservation park they want to know that the institution is committed to the welfare and well-being of its animals. This new Humane Conservation certification program will help ensure that, elevating institutions that do it right from those that need to improve their standards or close their doors. In this way, we may all do our part to help preserve disappearing species, while continuing to enjoy and introduce our children and grandchildren to the magnificent creatures with whom we share the Earth."

To learn more about American Humane Association's Humane Conservation program and to find a zoo, aquarium, or conservation park near you that has undergone the rigorous audit process, please visit www.HumaneConservation.org.