

WILD THINGS

NOV/DEC
2020



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Gift a Zoo Pass



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08 *Virtual Education*



Sponsor the Snow Leopard Cub **04**



WILD ORNAMENT



Instead of boughs of holly, deck your halls with animal beauty. Each year the Zoological Society of Milwaukee offers unique animal-themed ornaments. To celebrate the birth of snow leopard Milja, this year's design shows a cub with her mom. The ornament is designed by local artist Andy Schumann and is made of pewter.

This is the Zoological Society's 29th animal ornament. You can order this year's ornament or any of the previous 28. The cost of each ornament is \$15, which includes postage, mailing materials and WI sales tax. Save money on the entire collection and pay \$377 (a \$58 savings). Proceeds assist the Zoological Society in providing support to the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Visit zoosociety.org/Ornaments

To learn more about Milja and the years of work and planning that went into her birth, check out the fall issue of *Alive*.



Recycle: When your publications arrive in the plastic bag, please recycle it at your local grocery store.

This publication is printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

MEMBERANDA

Zoological Society office hours through

April: Weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Weekends, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Zoo hours through February: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. Zoo admission gates close 45 minutes prior to the Zoo's posted closing time.

Holiday hours: The Zoo and the Zoological Society offices will be closed on Nov. 26 for Thanksgiving, Dec. 25 and Jan. 1.

The Zoological Society office will remain open from 9:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 24 and 31. Visit us online at zoopass.com anytime.

Payment information at Zoo admission

gates: The Milwaukee County Zoo staff does not accept checks for Zoo Pass purchases or renewal payments at the Zoo's admission gates. Please contact our office at 414-258-2333 if you would like to schedule a time to pick up or purchase a Zoo Pass or Sponsor an Animal gift package.

Tax-deductible portions for the Zoo Pass

categories are: Individual (Basic: \$65, Plus: \$76); Individual +1 or Couple (Basic: \$80, Plus: \$90); Individual +2, Family and Single Adult Family (Basic: \$85, Plus: \$105); Family +1 (Basic: \$104, Plus: \$114); Family +2 (Basic: \$111, Plus: \$123); Family +3 (Basic: \$127, Plus: \$136); Affiliate (Basic: \$159, Plus: \$162); Benefactor (Basic: \$223, Plus: \$225).

Reciprocal zoos and aquariums:

We update our list of zoos and aquariums that offer reduced or free admission to our members with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums each year. We only reciprocate with AZA-accredited facilities and reserve the right to not reciprocate with zoos and aquariums located in close proximity of the Milwaukee County Zoo. Please be sure to contact our offices prior to your travels at 414-258-2333, or visit zoosociety.org/Membership/Reciprocal.php, if you have any questions.

Moving?

Please call us when you change your address or name. The call saves us money because when the post office returns your mail with a forwarding address, we pay twice for mailing: to the old address and the new. If you've changed your address on your identification, replacement cards may be purchased with the new information for \$5.



WILD THINGS

Issue No. 150, Nov.-Dec. 2020

Wild Things is a membership newsletter published by the Zoological Society of Milwaukee five times a year.

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10001 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53226

Phone: 414-256-5412 **Web:** milwaukeezoo.org



Cover photos:

Gorilla by Olga Kornienko;

snow leopard cub by Joel Miller



LOCK IN 2020 PRICES

Whether you buy a Zoo Pass for yourself or it's a gift for someone else, now is the time to renew or purchase. Prices will be increasing next year, but you can act now and lock in the 2020 pricing. This does not change your expiration date and you will not lose any time. If you have several months left on the pass and you renew now, those months will still be added on. There are also options to buy two- or three-year Zoo Passes for additional savings.

A Zoo Pass includes free regular Milwaukee County Zoo admission plus digital attraction coupons for the North Shore Bank Safari Train, Penzeys Carousel, Meijer Zoomobile or admission to the Zoo's 2021 special summer exhibit.

Zoo Pass members can also use their pass for free or discounted admission to 150 zoos and aquariums in North America.

If you're buying the Zoo Pass as a gift for the first time, we will include an adorable plush-toy red panda – while supplies last.

You can buy a Zoo Pass by going to zoosociety.org, calling 414-258-2333 or, if you're already at the Zoo, stopping by our office inside the U.S. Bank Gathering Place. Zoo Pass gift purchases are tax deductible. Guaranteed delivery by Christmas if ordered before Dec. 16, 2020.

The Zoological Society of Milwaukee is a nonprofit organization that helps support the Milwaukee County Zoo. The Society sells Zoo Passes as a way to raise funds for both organizations; 50% of your Zoo Pass contribution goes directly to the Zoo in cash support. Your Zoo Pass may be tax deductible.



Photo by Garrett Hopkins

SNOWY HOLIDAYS



Cuteness alert!
Photo provided by the Milwaukee County Zoo

This holiday season, celebrate a different kind of snow – a snow leopard. Female snow leopard Milja was born in May, and this winter you can sponsor her.

When you sponsor Milja, your \$50 package includes:

- An adorable plush-toy snow leopard
- A certificate of sponsorship
- A colorful fact sheet about snow leopards
- An invitation to a behind-the-scenes event for animal sponsors held in August
- A felt critter from the Snow Leopard Trust
- And more!



This animal sponsorship makes a great gift for any occasion. And, it lasts all year long! To guarantee delivery by Christmas, we must receive your order by Dec. 16.

Sponsor today by visiting zoosociety.org/SponsorAnimal or call 414-258-2333.



Stock photo

Did you know?

- Snow leopards are found in the mountains of Central Asia.
- Their tail not only gives them balance on rocky terrain, it acts as a scarf to keep them warm.
- Large paws with a thick cushion of hair act like snowshoes.

Shipping and handling are included. The tax-deductible portion of this sponsorship is \$39. Plush-toy offer is good while supplies last.

ANIMALS & REAL ESTATE

At the Zoological Society, we often say that an animal sponsorship makes a great gift. One local realtor is taking that to a whole new level. Alan Frankeberger buys an animal sponsorship for clients that sold or bought a home through him. "It gets a lot of attention at the closing," says Frankeberger. "It's been a huge success."

Frankeberger bought his wife a few animal sponsorships as Christmas gifts around 2016. Her reaction and appreciation helped spark the idea to include a sponsorship as part of his gift package to clients. His gift baskets also include personalized mugs painted by his wife and other goodies. "I really wanted something unique and personal." The idea of adding an animal sponsorship really took off around 2017.

Frankeberger buys the limited-time offers that include a plush toy. It's not only an adorable gift, it's a great marketing tool for his company,

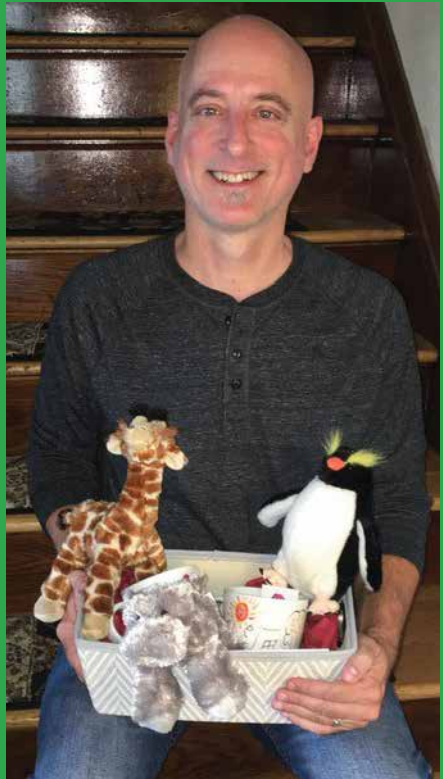
7th House Realty. He renews the animal sponsorship for the client four times, meaning they are an animal sponsor for five years. "It's a great way to stay in touch with clients each year," says Frankeberger. The other bonus to buying the limited-time offers is for his repeat customers. The Society changes the limited-time offer every few months so the client will most likely get a different animal with a different plush toy.

In 2019, Frankeberger bought or renewed about 60 animal sponsorships. These sponsorships not only help his business, they are helping the Zoological Society raise money to fulfill its mission and help support the Milwaukee County Zoo.

Gift purchases are partially to completely tax deductible. To see how you can sponsor an animal or the different animals available for sponsorship, visit zoosociety.org/SponsorAnimal.



Photo by Garrett Hopkins



Alan Frankeberger with 7th House Realty includes animal sponsorships in his gift baskets to clients.





AWARD WINNER

A heartfelt congratulations to the Milwaukee County Zoo for its hard work in heart health. The Zoo is a partner in the Great Ape Heart Project based at Zoo Atlanta. In September, the Association of Zoos & Aquariums awarded the Great Ape Heart Project with its inaugural Research Award. This project is the first coordinated clinical approach targeting cardiovascular disease in gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans and bonobos in human care. The award recognizes achievements in advancing scientific research among accredited zoos and aquariums throughout the U.S.

Heart disease is the primary cause of mortality among great apes in zoos. This project includes heart monitoring to better diagnose and treat great apes. The Milwaukee County Zoo was the first zoo to train bonobos for echocardiograms while awake. These annual exams determine if medication is needed or if the animal's medication is working. The Zoo's bonobos are also trained to use a finger cuff to monitor their heart.

The Zoological Society of Milwaukee is proud to support the Zoo in this groundbreaking work. For more information on the Great Ape Heart Project, [go to greatapeheartproject.org](http://greatapeheartproject.org).



The Milwaukee County Zoo was one of the first zoos to use a finger cuff heart monitor on an awake bonobo.

Photos by Mark Scheuber

Sonographers use an ultrasound machine on an awake bonobo while keeper Stacy Whitaker rewards the great ape with fruit.



SMALL SIZE **BIG FRIGHT**



You would think an animal weighing more than 8,000 pounds wouldn't be afraid of many things. But Belle the African elephant showed keepers she can still be startled by small things.

During a recent training session with Belle, a baby peafowl jumped around the demonstration yard. Belle ran away from the peachick and even tried to throw a stick at it to keep it away. Keepers were able to get the peachick out of the yard and back with her mom. Elephant care coordinator Erin Dowgwillo says she has not noticed if Belle is also bothered by adult peafowl. "I think sometimes it depends on what they are doing when they see it. It might have just startled her while in the training session," explains Dowgwillo.

"Each elephant has its own personality, and that means that some things are more startling than others." Brittany and Ruth have also been known to be startled by animals that make their way into the exhibit.

Herd update: During introductions with Belle it appears that Belle will be the herd's dominant elephant. However, Brittany will still be dominant over Ruth. One of the signs Dowgwillo witnessed is Brittany allowing Belle to place her trunk in Brittany's mouth. This is a sign of subordination and a positive sign of their relationship progressing. You can expect to see the three elephants together the next time you visit the Zoo.





BRINGING EDUCATION **TO YOU**

The Zoological Society is thrilled to offer online education for the first time. In an effort to keep you connected to the Zoo, we created ZooConnect. ZooConnect provides a suite of options for families and educators looking to expand knowledge and foster empathy for animals and the natural world.

Teachers and their students start with a Zoo Class Explore. This is a 30-minute class with a blend of live experiences and videos about science, biology and conservation. These virtual, standards-based school programs are available for grades K-8.

Here are some examples:

November:

Show Some Backbone! | Grades K-2
Children learn about the body coverings of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and amphibians.

Decoding Biodiversity | Grades 6-8
Discover how endangered species are classified and how you can help them from the comfort of your own home.

We know parents and guardians are eager to get their children back into Zoo Classes, sponsored by The Corners of Brookfield. The Conservation Education Department is offering 30-minute experiences that include live interactions and videos about science, biology and conservation or live questions and answers with an educator. Here are a couple of the classes available in November:

November:

Food Chains: Link by Link | Ages 8-10
Every ecosystem has a chain of events that ensures each living creature has the food it needs to survive. Follow the path that energy takes and find out who's eating whom!

Zoo Class Live | Ages 3-14
This option includes an animal and a dialogue with an educator. Have your children engage with the educator and get their questions answered.

The Education Department continues to add experiences. For the most up-to-date offerings, go to our website, zoosociety.org/education.



ZooConnect includes live and filmed segments.



VIRTUAL THEATER

Kohl's Wild Theater is coming to you online, seven days a week. Monday through Friday, KWT will offer live, virtual performances. Saturday and Sunday, you can request a recorded performance by the theater group.

Kohl's Wild Theater offers performances free of charge thanks to a partnership with Kohl's. This professional theater group performs educational shows about conservation and wildlife. It's a great way for children to relate to the messaging. For the months of November and December, the theme is "Conservation Scientists." Behind each incredible conservation project is a real person just like you! Audiences will join brave scientists big and small, real and imaginary, as they explore the depths of the Atlantic Ocean, plant trees at the foot of Mt. Kenya and experience the behind-the-scenes magic of a zoo.

Schools or community groups can book a virtual live performance that also includes a Q&A segment after the show.

Weekend or evening performances are recorded and do not offer a live Q&A segment. Being able to provide this content online is a bonus for schools or community groups that don't usually have a large enough space to host Kohl's Wild Theater or are considered too far away.

Choose from one of these two shows:

Welcome to the Zoo! Solitary student Skylar Schultz is on a school trip to the Zoo. After a mysterious encounter with a wise river turtle, Skylar is transformed into a Humboldt penguin, a zebra and a river otter. The lessons learned from these animals allow Skylar to overcome their fear of interacting with others.

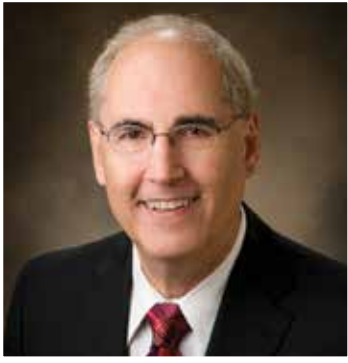
Leona Lionheart Saves the World Ten-year-old Leona Lionheart is home sick on the day of her school's big river cleanup. With the help of a special storybook and a nudge from her wise grandmother, Leona explores the trials and triumphs of conservation's most famous women and establishes herself as her very own conservation legend.

Schools or organizations need to register for a performance at wildtheater.org.



Welcome to the Zoo! performance
Photo by Paul Ruffolo

WHY JOIN THE SIMBA CIRCLE?



The Simba Circle recognizes individuals who have named the Zoological Society of Milwaukee in their wills or other estate plans. Estate planning can be an intense topic and we know many of you may have questions on why you should consider joining the Simba Circle or how to start the planning process. We asked **Mike Arnov**, a Simba Circle member, Simba Circle Committee member and the senior director of financial planning for SJA Financial Advisory, for his thoughts.

What should people consider when deciding to join the Simba Circle?

If you believe that wildlife conservation and education are important for the next generation, then including the Zoological Society in your estate plan is the best way to show your support.

Sure, there are tax-saving opportunities, invitations to special events and community recognition, if these are motivators to you. There are several reasons to lend your support, but it depends on what's important to you now and what you'd like to imagine for the future.

What are the most common ways people make a planned gift to a charitable organization?

Every case is unique, and the best method considers many factors, such as family dynamics, a pattern of past charitable contributions and tax issues.

Sometimes we see a specified dollar amount and sometimes a percentage. The gift is usually a portion of a retirement account or life insurance policy.

Does someone need a financial planner or attorney's help to become a Simba Circle member?

Your CPA, attorney or financial advisor can help, but we suggest starting with some free advice from the Zoological Society office.

In your opinion as an estate planner, what is the best time to think about including the Society in your plans?

I'll answer that with a question: Do you know how much you need to save to have a comfortable retirement, or, if retired, do you know how much you can spend and not run out of money in your lifetime? If the answer is "no," then you need a comprehensive financial plan before you should think about a planned gift.

If the answer is "yes" then we ask, "Do you make annual charitable contributions to the Zoological Society? If yes, then it's time to think about what your gift means to our community and to future generations. That means it's time to consider your legacy and membership in Simba Circle.

Why are planned gifts vital to a charitable organization?

It's a sad reality that the cost of attendance for most charitable organizations only covers a fraction of operating costs, and that's why charitable donations are important.

But what happens when you're not there to write a check? It takes more than generosity. It takes someone who cares about the next generation and cares about others in the community not as fortunate who simply are not able to make a financial commitment.



For more information about becoming a member of the Simba Circle, contact Mary Albrecht at marya@zoosociety.org or 414-918-6151 or visit zoosociety.planmylegacy.org.

GORILLA HOME RENOVATION

It's amazing to see what a difference three feet makes. Inside the gorilla habitat, the height of the walls went from 12 feet to 15. The reason behind that three feet might surprise you. By adding the extra height, the Milwaukee County Zoo is following the official recommendations from the Species Survival Plan®. Meaning, those three feet could help the Zoo get a new gorilla family in the future.

The indoor gorilla home was built in 1992. At that time, knowing what they knew about gorillas, the Zoo followed the SSP and Association of Zoos & Aquariums recommendations with a 12-foot wall. Years later, as zookeepers, zoologists and experts in the field compiled their information, they decided zoos should consider raising the height to 15 feet to ensure no gorilla, in any zoo, can climb over a wall. After planning and consulting, the construction work started in April. Curator Trish Khan says every angle of the wall is 15 feet high, even at the low spots of the exhibit. "There was absolutely no concern about Maji escaping, but you never know what to expect when you get new animals," says Khan. "We want to get rid of any barriers that would prevent us from getting a new group of gorillas."

During the process, a member of the SSP walked the area and gave recommendations. Khan also decided

to change some of the flooring for the gorillas. That turned into a large undertaking. "There was an extensive planter pocket that took up about a third of the exhibit. It had nice flowers and trees but it wasn't usable," explains Khan. Zoo staff took on the challenge to try and safely work during the health pandemic while also fulfilling their other job duties. It took months for workers to dig up the area, reroute the barrier wires for the gorillas and then fill in the ground with new material. Khan picked bark mulch and says it's a nice soft surface for gorillas to live on. The gorillas will also have plenty of bedding to enjoy.

The Zoo currently has two male gorillas, Maji and Hodari. It is hoping to get a new family of gorillas in the future.



Contractors added three feet to the wall.

Photo by Trish Khan



The planter area was removed to give the gorillas more space to move around.

Photo by Trish Khan

A HEAD START



For almost 20 years, Dawn Fleuchaus, the supervisor of North American animals at the Milwaukee County Zoo, has traveled to Jamaica annually to help conserve the critically endangered Jamaican iguana. Most of Dawn's work has been in the field monitoring nest sites and processing hatchlings (newly hatched iguanas), but this year she had a different experience, as she describes below:

For the first time in over 15 years, I participated in the Jamaican iguana health screenings at the Hope Zoo in Kingston, Jamaica. The zoo takes in up to 100 newly hatched iguanas each fall that are too small to survive the onslaught of invasive predators that threaten their species. At the Hope Zoo, they are fed a highly nutritious diet

and kept safe and healthy until they are large enough to fend off mongooses, cats, pigs, dogs and other threats. The health screenings are an important part of the process because it is the final step before the young iguanas are returned to their native habitat in the Hellshire Hills of Jamaica.

During the screenings, about 100 iguanas were identified, weighed, measured and given a veterinary exam. Once blood samples are processed, these animals will be returned to the nest sites where they were collected three to five years earlier. The health screening process took over a week and required a dedicated team of local and international conservation partners.



FOR IGUANAS



During my trip I was able to spend quality time at the Hope Zoo, working with their awesome zookeeper staff. I shared information on positive reinforcement training, quarantine procedures, enrichment, records keeping and more. Working with the lion keepers, we were able to weigh the male lion for the first time ever!

Believed to be extinct until their rediscovery in 1993, Jamaican iguanas are making a recovery thanks to the Jamaican Iguana Recovery Project. Conservationists continue to monitor the iguanas once they are repatriated in the wild. Non-native predators are removed from the core iguana habitat throughout the year. Nesting females are monitored in the spring, and hatchlings are processed and selected for the head-start

program when they hatch about three months later.

I was planning to return to Jamaica in fall to assist with hatchling processing but couldn't because of international travel restrictions. Still, nature keeps moving. Female iguanas still nested, and iguanas began to hatch in mid-August. Thanks to the Jamaican Iguana Recovery Project, this species continues to increase in numbers!

Photos provided by Dawn Fleuchaus



Top row, left to right

1. The Jamaican iguana was thought to be extinct for several decades until a handful were discovered in 1993.
2. Dawn Fleuchaus peers out from the mesh of a researchers' blind while monitoring Jamaican iguana egg-laying.
3. Dawn Fleuchaus and a volunteer measure one of the "head-start" iguanas at Hope Zoo. The iguana is probably 2 or 3 years old.



Bottom row, left to right

4. A baby iguana is captured, measured and tagged, then released.
5. Fleuchaus also helped the Hope Zoo keepers learn new skills, including positive reinforcement training of the lion and other animals.

SHOPPING FOR THE ANIMALS

If you're looking for someone easy to shop for, consider buying a gift for the Zoo's animals. There is a wishlist of items for your favorite animal in the Zoo. Guests can come to the Zoo and pull a paper ornament off the Giving Tree in the U.S. Bank Gathering Place. Each ornament has an item for one of the animals. It could be a box of shredded wheat for an orangutan or cologne for a big cat. Most of the items will help the zookeepers provide enrichment for the animals. Enrichment means encouraging the animals to use their natural senses including problem-solving or reacting. Other items, like a blender, may help the keepers provide meals for the animals.



Some enrichment items provided to the animals through the Giving Tree



North American area supervisor Dawn Fleuchaus wants you to see how much the animals enjoyed past gifts. Snow Lilly the polar bear received a hard plastic floatation ball for her pool. If you have ever seen her play with that ball, it is a great example of enrichment.

Many animals also get bubbles as part of their enrichment. When the animals see the bubbles they "investigate" what they are and pop them. The seals and penguins particularly like bubbles. Other animals like the primates and big cats like to play in bubble baths – another item on the list.

The Giving Tree will be up in the month of December. You can also check the Zoo's website, milwaukeezoo.org, in December for a list of gift ideas.

FROSTY FREE WEEK

The Zoo is offering free admission to everyone from Dec. 26 to Dec. 31. Parking fees not included unless you have a Zoo Pass Plus or Platypus Circle Membership.

To continue proper social distancing and attendance control ALL guests must reserve a spot. If you want to come to the Zoo that week, please go to

milwaukeezoo.org and reserve your spot.

CREATIVE KIDS

COVID-19 led to the cancellation of many events and activities around the area. Luckily, it didn't stand in the way of some creative kids. The Zoological Society was able to continue its annual Green Art Contest with a virtual twist. Parents and children were excited to participate, and they made it hard on the judges.

Children 17 and under were tasked with creating art out of recycled material. This year's theme was "Under the Sea," and everyone did an amazing job capturing life in the ocean along with conservation messages. **Here are the winners for each age group:**

1. *I Can Be a Tidal Wave of Change*
Scarlett B., 4 & Under
2. *Adventures of Mini Muffin, the Octopus*
Jack S., 5 & 6
3. *The Coral Reef*
Reeve W., 7 & 8
4. *Overfishing is Destroying our Oceans*
Niamh Lyla M., 9 & 10
5. *The Invisible Noose of the Sea*
Gavin B., 11 & 12
6. *The Coral Reef*
Kaitlyn B., 13 & 14
7. *Turtle Love*
Maxwell E., 15-17





Zoological Society of Milwaukee
10005 W. Bluemound Rd.
Milwaukee, WI 53226-4383

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Give an animal a gift

Photo by Garrett Hopkins

WHAT'S HAPPENING 

Due to the health crisis this year, the Zoo and Zoological Society have had to make changes to events and also days and hours of operation. Take note of these changes:

Nov. 7

Family Free Day, sponsored by North Shore Bank, media sponsor: WITI FOX 6 (Parking fees still apply)*†

Nov. 26

Thanksgiving Day, the Zoo will be closed.

Dec. 5

Family Free Day, sponsored by North Shore Bank, media sponsor: WITI FOX 6 (Parking fees still apply)*†

Dec. 25

Christmas Day, the Zoo will be closed.

Dec. 26-31

Frosty Free Week. All Zoo Pass members and non-members must make an online reservation at milwakeezoo.org.

Jan. 1

New Year's Day, the Zoo will be closed.

* To maintain controlled attendance, this event will be by online reservation only. Zoo Pass members and non-members will need to reserve a ticket online through the Zoo's website, milwakeezoo.org.

† Zoo Pass members get free regular Zoo admission with their Zoo Pass. Those with Zoo Pass Plus also get free parking for one vehicle per membership per day. Platypus Circle members receive free admission and parking with their card.



Photo by Garrett Hopkins

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 Milwaukee Zoo Pass App



The Zoological Society is proud to bear Charity Navigator's highest rating of four stars.



The Zoological Society of Milwaukee is recognized for our transparency with GuideStar's Gold Seal.