



PITTSBURGH ZOO
& AQUARIUM



2025

ANNUAL REPORT





A Zoo for Everyone

At the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium, 2025 was a year filled with discovery and growth. We brought people and wildlife closer together through unforgettable experiences, meaningful conservation efforts, and a shared commitment to protecting our planet. Every visit, every program, and every conservation effort this year helped strengthen the bond between our community and the animals we work to protect.



In August, the Zoo was accepted as a member of the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums (WAZA), the global alliance of regional associations, national federations, and zoos and aquariums, dedicated to the care and conservation of animals and their habitats around the world.

The Pittsburgh Zoo is one of only two institutions in the world that are members of WAZA, accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the Zoological Association of America (ZAA), the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks, and certified by American Humane (who also reaccredited the Zoo this year).

National Weather Service officials also recognized the Zoo as a StormReady® community. This program helps community leaders and residents better prepare for hazardous weather and flooding and has made a strong commitment to implement the infrastructure and systems needed to protect property and save lives when severe weather strikes.



► This year, the Zoo removed financial barriers by launching the OpporZOOnty Program that provides affordable admission for residents of 10 counties who meet eligibility requirements. This program streamlines the admission process, and participants can be alerted to other discounted Zoo opportunities. The Zoo is offering \$5 per person general daytime admission for groups up to four people who qualify for the OpporZOOnty Program. In 2025, 27,585 visitors received discounted Zoo admission through the program.

While some guests experience disabilities that are visible, many have conditions that are not readily apparent, such as neurological, cognitive, mobility, or sensory issues. More sensory inclusive practices were adopted, and we shared our findings with other AZA organizations. To further provide an inclusive and seamless experience for all, the Zoo has also partnered with the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower project. Guests can request a sunflower lanyard at any admission point or attraction around the Zoo which identifies them as a visitor who may need additional assistance.

With Allegheny Regional Asset District's (RAD) generous support, the Zoo continued participating in the RAD Pass Program, which welcomed 15,000 Allegheny County residents with free admission into the Zoo. This program provides Allegheny County library card holders the opportunity to reserve two tickets to visit the Zoo per year.





Protecting Species, Preserving Futures ► Several Zoo staff members were key players in creating and leading the Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) Red Panda program – an AZA initiative that connects zoo-based conservation efforts with outcomes in the field. Using the skills that zoological institutions have with conservation science, husbandry, animal health and behavior, and education, the SAFE plan unites zoos and their collective expertise to help address the threats facing red pandas in the wild.



Seven rescued Kemp's ridley, four green, and two loggerhead sea turtles were rehabilitated at the Aquarium and released back into the Atlantic Ocean as part of the Sea Turtle Second Chance Program, generously funded by Peoples. Sixteen additional endangered juvenile Kemp's Ridley sea turtles were sent to

us for medical treatment and rehabilitation in December 2025. Twenty-three turtles is the largest number rehabilitated by the Zoo in a single year.

The Zoo and the International Conservation Center embarked on a new chapter of elephant care and conservation. A carefully

planned series of elephant moves was planned to enhance herd dynamics while prioritizing the unique needs and well-being of each animal. Created in collaboration with the AZA and leading wildlife experts, the plan ensures appropriate companionship for elephants at both facilities and allows for growth of the herd.



From Curiosity to Conservation

The Zoo planned and delivered twelve months of theme days that were celebrated onsite, including species awareness days, such as International Red Panda Day, Shark and Ray Day, and International Migratory Bird Day. These educational and entertaining events captured the attention of our audience and offered information on how to protect these amazing species and the habitats we all rely on.

The Zoo's efforts were supported by its dedicated volunteers. After a long history as a separate entity, we welcomed the Docent Program into the Conservation Education Department as an internally funded, integral part of the department.

► Teens worldwide are stepping up as environmental stewards for good reason – the future belongs to them. The Zoo launched Green Teens, a new low-cost program for interested students who are passionate about protecting our planet. Sessions focus on exciting projects like community cleanups, tree planting, recycling programs, and advocacy for eco-friendly practices. In its first year, the program attracted 20 teens passionate about making a difference.





Hard Hats and Habitats ► We kicked off our master plan with construction of a new Zoo front entrance. To continue welcoming our guests, we implemented interim gates, which include operating kiosks, the blue box for temporary ticket sales, and a secondary checkpoint. We also prepared our electronic logistics to navigate the transition and prepare for significantly improved digital signage. Thinking through these logistics so thoroughly helped us understand things in a way that will allow us to successfully implement the new two-tiered admissions process at entry.



Design, construction documentation, and permitting were all completed in preparation for building the new Giraffe Care Center. That project kicked off in December with needed modifications to the Tropical Forest Complex building, and the main site work is expected to start in mid to late January 2027.

The former sea lion exhibit in Kids Kingdom was overhauled to

welcome a colony of Humboldt penguins and three brown pelicans. Maintenance, grounds, and horticulture combined efforts to create a habitat that is truly a penguin and pelican paradise!

At the International Conservation Center, the “Big House”, was reimagined as a retreat space for providing immersive conservation education experiences with themed rooms coupled with on-grounds

programming. Extensive work was completed in preparation for expansion of the elephant herd, including adding paddocks that increase the outdoor space to 40 acres, splitting the sand room, babyproofing, and adding new hydraulic gates with added safety features.



The Wildest Stories

Some of the year's most popular stories included the successful move of two elephants, Victoria and Zuri, to Somerset and the introduction of African lion Hondo and our Humboldt penguins to great excitement. Mickey the penguin making Valentine's art went viral with 41,000 likes and over a half million views. In December, a video of our penguins frolicking in the snow received 2.4 million views across all our channels with over 107,00 likes.



A Fundraising Year to Roar About

► 2025 was the most successful fundraising year in the history of the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium! Overall fundraising totaled more than \$22 million, including restricted, unrestricted, Adopt an Animal, Summer Safari, Membership, and campaign. Corporate fundraising ended the year with \$775,000, which is \$80,000 more than last year, and \$50,000 more than this year's goal!



New Kids on the Zoo Block

The Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium added a new mane attraction – Hondo, an eight-year-old male African lion from the Idaho Falls Zoo. He arrived as a companion for our lionesses Abana and Scarlett and quickly became accustomed to his new home and his new pride-mates.

The Zoo's Animal Ambassadors program bred and hand-raised three baby nine-banded armadillos – the entire experience was a first within that department! The armadillos went on to become



ambassadors of their species at other zoos and science museums.

The Conservation Center welcomed two more camels and three new bison. As a new local conservation project, acclimation habitats were built to house and prepare Allegheny woodrats for release.



Seasons of Wonder at the Zoo

The Zoo peppered the calendar with unforgettable experiences in every season, from vibrant spring blooms and lively summer adventures to gently spooky autumn fun and magical winter nights.



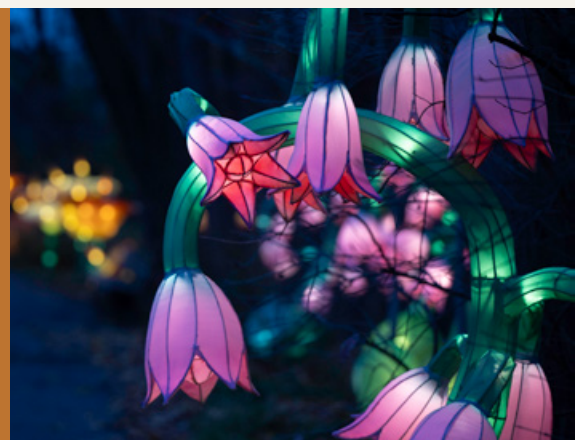
The springtime special exhibit **Ice Age: Frozen in Time** reanimated long-extinct animals, many with modern-day counterparts among Zoo residents. The show was populated by mammoths, mastodons, saber-toothed cats, giant sloths, and more.

Pittsburgh's wildest pumpkins returned to the Zoo as the **Jack O'Lantern Extravaganza**—



the area's favorite family-friendly nighttime event — glowed again with the light of even more artistically carved pumpkins. Approximately 35,000 guests discovered magic in every pumpkin they met, including some very familiar characters and scenes, such as sports legends and Pittsburgh landmarks.

The Zoo made spirits bright again this winter holiday season with



the return of the fabulously festive **Wild Illuminations: A Holiday Lantern Experience**. All new silk-and-steel lanterns sparked our guests' imaginations, including amazing animals, beloved holiday characters, traditional Asian icons, and many other enchantments. The event also featured thrilling performances from Chinese acrobats, a face changer, and balancing acts.

ZooBoo welcomed
close to an average of

6,000
people a day



Summer Safari was
a great hit, achieving
record revenue due to an
excellent attendance of
1,102 guests and generous
sponsorship funds totaling

\$245k

Jack O'Lantern
Extravaganza
earned more than

\$798k

Zoo Brew saw nearly
1,300
attendees and grossed
\$27k
more than last year

There was a total of 116
Private Events venue
rentals this year, including
17 weddings and 3
All Zoo Rentals earning

\$264k

On Pride Night the
Zoo welcomed

244

members of the
LGBTQIA+ community
for a family night at the Zoo

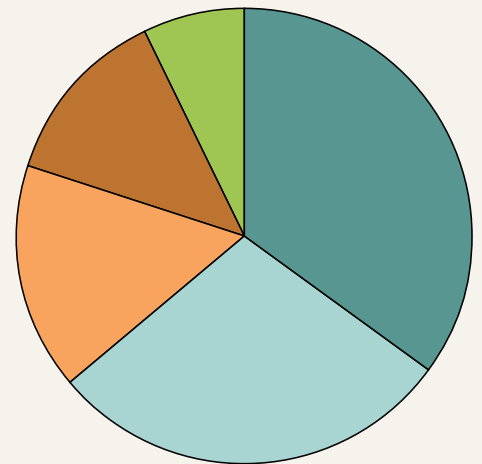
Zoo Memberships
accounted for

\$3.6 million



Revenue \$29,895,568

- 39%**
Operations & Admissions
- 20%**
Special Events
- 19%**
ARAD
- 12%**
Membership
- 5%**
Conservation
Education
Programing
- 3%**
Community
Outreach &
Marketing
- 2%**
Unearned
Revenue



Expenses: \$28,632,368

- 35%**
Administration,
Business Operations
- 29%**
Animal Husbandry
- 16%**
Maintenance, Horticulture,
and Landscaping
- 13%**
Utilities
- 7%**
Education

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