



CONSERVATION IMPACT REPORT 2023



Impacting the protection and preservation of wildlife by inspiring the next generation

ZooTampa at Lowry Park is a nonprofit organization committed to the protection and conservation of wildlife. Through unparalleled habitats, innovative educational programs, and hands-on field initiatives, we are creating a community of hopeful, action-driven conservationists, fueled by our dedication to taking action to protect and preserve wildlife.

With the support of our board of trustees, donors, members, community leaders, and the hard work of our team and volunteers, ZooTampa had numerous accomplishments in 2023 that benefited the species entrusted to our care at the Zoo and their counterparts around the world.

Behind each of these milestones are the many stories of the animals and individuals who were impacted by our unwavering dedication to our mission of conservation.



Joseph A. Couceiro
President & CEO



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FLORIDA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

85% | *of guests polled are aware of efforts to protect manatees*
*(Morey Group, Spring 2022)

35 | *Manatees*
REHABILITATED

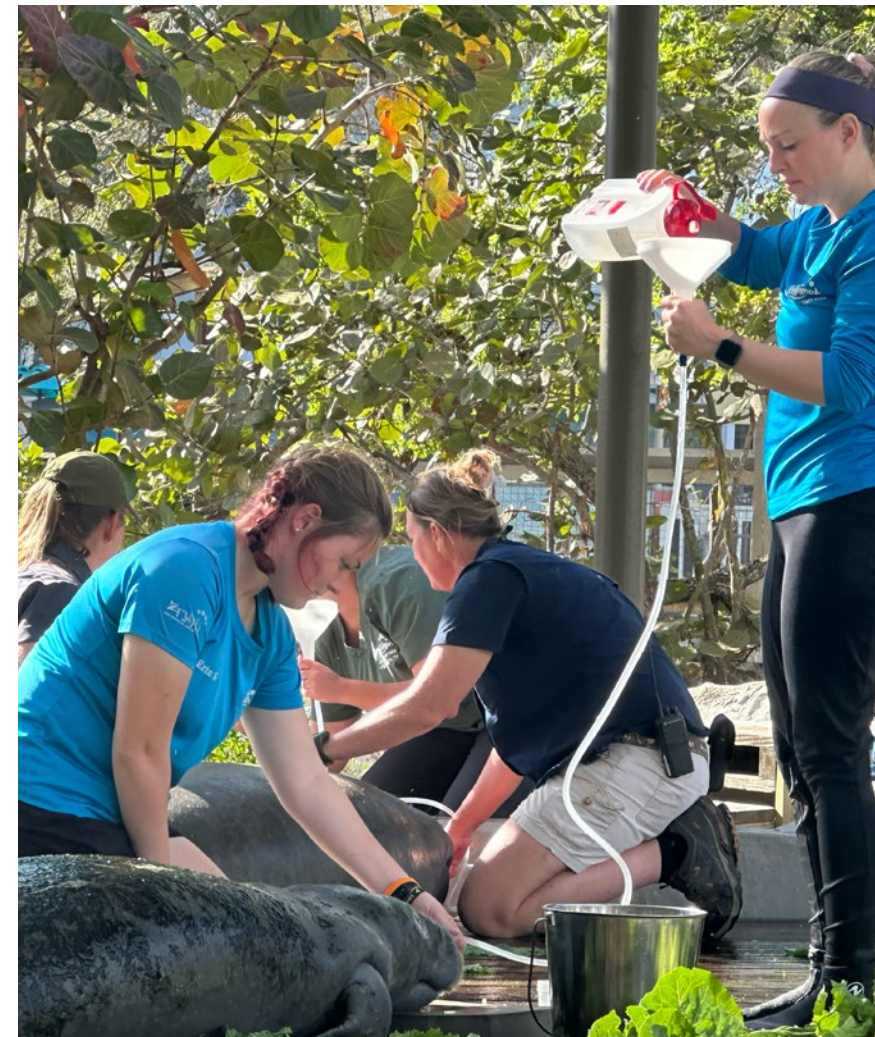


14 | *Manatees*
RELEASED
Back to Florida waters

SAVING THE MANATEES

ZooTampa is a renowned international leader in the care and conservation of our state's most iconic species with more than 500 manatees cared for by our expert team of veterinarians and animal care professionals. For nearly three decades, the David A. Straz, Jr. Manatee Critical Care Center has been at the forefront of emergency situations aimed to intervene, triage and save critically injured, sick and orphaned manatees with the goal of returning each one of this threatened species to its native waters.

Our status as the go-to-experts was recently highlighted worldwide when ZooTampa stepped up to provide two elderly manatees, Romeo and Juliet, with urgent medical attention. Their unique situation and journey highlights what our team does every day, 24/7 at one of just four contracted and federally permitted manatee rehabilitation facilities in the state of Florida. They passionately live the mission of rescuing and saving wildlife, particularly native Florida species.



In 2023, the Manatee Rescue Team also accomplished the following:

- Assisted the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission with 51 rescues, transports, and verifications
- Facilitated the transportation of 36 manatees to critical care facilities and aided in animal recovery
- Participated in 9 outreach events throughout the Tampa Bay area to educate residents about co-existing with manatees, made possible by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program- Bay Mini-grant
- Drove over 10K miles throughout the state of Florida
- Participated in the Gasparilla Manatee Watch program to reduce the risk of boat strikes during the boat parade



ZooTampa leaders are active members of the MRP and its many committees.

The Manatee Rescue & Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP) is a cooperative group of non-profit, private, state, and federal entities dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, release, and monitoring of manatees. In 2023, the MRP became incorporated as 501c3; ZooTampa's Dr. Cynthia Stringfield, Senior Vice-President of Animal Health, Conservation and Education, was elected to the board, and Tiffany Burns, Senior Director of Animal Programs, was elected as Vice-President.

MAJOR MANATEE REHABILITATION SUCCESSES

STORIES OF INSPIRATION AND HOPE FOR THIS ICONIC SPECIES



Roz

Arrived: Rescued from Halls River, Homosassa, April 17.

Condition: Very sick young manatee who was losing large areas of her skin, likely due to a life-threatening infection.

Care: Roz required extensive daily wound management and medication for months, but her skin healed!

Released: December 14

Siblings

Arrived: He was found beached and unresponsive behind an Indian Rocks Beach residence during a Red Tide event on May 4.

Condition: Seizuring in the truck and twitching and tremoring when he arrived at 10:30 PM.

Care: After all night support and monitoring, Siblings improved dramatically and was quickly ready to go back home.

Released: August 16



FLORIDA CONSERVATION EFFORTS



48% of guests polled claimed that their interactions here expanded their knowledge on how to co-exist with Florida wildlife.*

* McMahon, Danielle Guests' Most Enjoyed Educational Media in the Florida Wilds study

Partnership with the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation (FWCF)

Interactive Installation

ZooTampa at Lowry Park and the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation unveiled the first educational interactive installation along the Zoo's Florida Wilds Trail. The exciting, interactive installation allows guests of all ages to learn more about what lives in the Florida Wildlife Corridor and how humans can co-exist with the diverse species that call Florida home.

Explore The Florida Wildlife Corridor Activity Guide

ZooTampa joined The Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation in developing an activity guide that is geared toward educators and caregivers. The activity guides were provided to specially selected schools during the Great American Teach In in November.



PATH OF THE PANTHER

The Path of the Panther film follows wildlife photographer Carlton Ward, Jr. through the stretch of un-interrupted land called the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The documentary offers insight into the lives and struggles of the endangered Florida panther.

- The documentary was released in Florida theaters and is also available on Disney+ and Nat Geo.
- ZooTampa was highlighted for the rehabilitation work of two orphaned Florida panthers, Cypress and Pepper. These two kittens were hand-raised at ZooTampa after a mysterious neurological disorder left their mother unable to care for them.
- ZooTampa Senior VP Of Animal Health, Conservation & Education Dr. Cynthia Stringfield joined board member Carlton Ward on the post-show panel of experts at the film's premiere at the Tampa Theater.



PRESCOTT FELLOWSHIP AT ZOOTAMPA

ZooTampa was again awarded the prestigious federal Prescott Grant, this time in support of a Manatee Critical Care Veterinarian Fellowship and to design a training program for manatee critical care veterinarians. ZooTampa's Senior Director of Animal Health, Dr. Melissa Nau, was a Fellow at ZooTampa in 2016 and now has come full circle to lead this program, and educate Dr. Emily Hardgrove who was selected from a very competitive applicant pool.



FIELDWORK WITH FSTOP FOUNDATION



HOW IS ZOOTAMPA MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

ZooTampa's Florida Animal Care team actively participates as field technicians for fSTOP/FDOT. fSTOP has a network of over 100 trail cameras deployed in underpasses, drainage culverts, and wildlife management areas to provide scientific data about wildlife land use.

ZooTampa is responsible for:

- Checking five cameras in South Lake Wales State Forest monthly
- Replacing batteries and SD cards
- Uploading and sorting footage

WHAT IS THE CROSSINGS & CORRIDORS PROJECT?

The Crossings and Corridors Project is a partnership between fStop Foundation, The Florida Department of Transportation, and the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation. The goal of the project is to create images and video content that increases the awareness of the importance of wildlife corridors and crossings in Florida, as well as to help FDOT increase the number of functioning wildlife crossings throughout the state.



GLOBAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

ZooTampa partners with and financially supports conservation projects **around the world** to ensure the wild counterparts of the animals we have at the Zoo are protected in their native habitats.



SOUTH AFRICA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

ZooTampa Animal Care Professional Caitlin Olsen traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, to help care for over 200 penguin chicks left orphaned due to recent heavy rainfall that caused nests to flood. Additionally, she participated in the return of 26 penguins back to the wild.



South African Conservation Foundation Of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) is a non-profit organisation that supports the rescue, rehabilitation and release of sick, injured, abandoned seabirds in South Africa.





CENTRAL AMERICA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Macaw Recovery Network (MRN)



ZooTampa provided a double-impact donation to support the employment of local residents in the Woman Ranger program. The Woman Ranger program provides essential habitat work in the Sarapiquí Rainforest Reserve, central to the Great Green Macaw breeding range. This habitat work helps secure the long-term future of the macaws so they have food and nesting opportunities for centuries to come.

ZooTampa's Supervisor of Behavioral Research, Kerry Gray, recently traveled to Costa Rica to work in-situ with MRN team members on observation techniques that will create a baseline scoring system. This system will identify Scarlet and Great Green Macaws' readiness to be released back into the local rainforest. Kerry will continue to support MRN through remote analysis of flock behavior using ZooMonitor.

REPUBLIC OF HAITI & DOMINICAN REPUBLIC CONSERVATION EFFORTS



ZooTampa supported the International Iguana Foundation which manages the restoration of the landscape of the Ricord's Iguana which only lives in Hispaniola. Ricord's iguana habitat restoration activities target areas degraded by charcoal production and include planting the prickly pear as a staple food and source of moisture for the iguanas, particularly during the dry season.



AUSTRALIA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

CURRUMBIN WILDLIFE HOSPITAL
**TREATS OVER 600 WILD
KOALAS EVERY YEAR**

ASIA CONSERVATION EFFORTS



KOALA

The Koala Photo Encounter, presented by the Yob Family Foundation, provides financial support to Currumbin Wildlife Hospital; which is one of the busiest wildlife hospitals in the world. Its mission is to treat, rehabilitate, and release Australian wildlife. This year, ZooTampa veterinarian Dr. Nico Maldonado visited Currumbin Wildlife Hospital and presented ZooTampa's donation check.



Gharial Ecology Project

ZooTampa supported the Gharial Sand Mapping project. Sand mining is impacting the resources needed to help support nesting for gharials. The project provides the Indian conservation community, state and central government agencies with the necessary information to make wise management decisions and take practical conservation actions for gharial survival.



ASIA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

THE BORNEO ORANGUTAN SURVIVAL FOUNDATION

Dr. Vivi and Dr. Muhtadin, both wildlife veterinarians for the Borneo Orangutan Survival Foundation (BOSF), spent three weeks at ZooTampa. It was a great opportunity for BOSF and ZooTampa team members to learn from one another about how both organizations support conservation.

ZooTampa also provided funds for digital cameras for orangutan post-release monitoring in the forest.

BOSF helps to protect and rehabilitate over 450,000 hectares of rainforest, which is an area approximately the size of Rhode Island.



432
Orangutans in
BOSF care

485
Orangutans
returned to wild

AFRICA & ASIA CONSERVATION EFFORTS

the Southern White Rhino is
classified as
near threatened

*making them the only one of the five rhino
species that are not endangered*



BOWLING FOR RHINOS

ZooTampa's team members participated in Bowling for Rhinos Fundraiser through the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK) which provides Animal Care professionals with an avenue to raise funds and awareness for rhino and habitat conservation. Over \$300,000.00 was raised by all AAZK chapters in 2023 and donated to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and International Rhino Foundation.



ZooTampa directly supports the
International Rhino Foundation.

AFRICA

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

ELEPHANT HUMAN RELATIONS AID

ZooTampa's Director of Guest Engagement Arinn Bolin, through our partnership with the International Elephant Foundation, visited Elephant- Human Relations Aid (EHRA), expanding on several educational initiatives, including elephant conflict mitigation and the Sustainable Environmental Education for Development (S.E.E.D) project. In December ZooTampa provided a double impact donation that will help with continued support of Elephant Guard salaries and learners attending the S.E.E.D program. We are also expanding our impact to include:

- Purchasing supplies for the classroom
- Purchasing Elephant Guard uniforms, binoculars and daypacks



ZooTampa at Lowry Park:

- Sponsored the salaries of three full-time Elephant Guards.
- Funded 50 primary school learners to attend the Sustainable Environmental Education for Development (S.E.E.D) Project.



AZA CONSERVATION



SAVING ANIMALS FROM EXTINCTION PROGRAMS

Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE) focuses the collective expertise within AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and leverages their massive audiences to save species that are at risk of extinction and need our help.

ZooTampa
participates in

7

SAFE Species Programs

Indigo Snake
Borneo Orangutan
Cownose Stingrays
Masai Giraffe

Red Wolf
Radiated Tortoise
North American Songbird



WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING ALLIANCE

ZooTampa is a Participating Partner for a second year with the Wildlife Trafficking Alliance (WTA), a coalition of more than 80 leading companies, non-profit organizations, and AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums working together to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife products.



SPECIES SURVIVAL PLAN (SSP)

As an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), ZooTampa participates in 114 Species Survival Programs that help ensure the long-term sustainability of vulnerable, threatened, and endangered species. Below are some of ZooTampa's 2023 highlights.

Komodo. For the first time, ZooTampa hatched endangered Komodo dragons, significantly increasing the numbers of the world's largest lizard. Zoo veterinarians were able to obtain blood for sexing from their eggs while the hatchlings were still inside the shell!

Panamanian golden frogs. Extinct in the wild, ZooTampa bred and hatched two clutches which equaled more than 60 frogs.

Impala. First impala calves born here since 2014 to first time parents Chad, Karen, and Linda. They were born 2 days apart!

Nyala. ZooTampa had their first female nyala born to mom, Sahara.

White rhino. Mkuu was the first calf born to sire "Mufasa" which makes Mkuu's birth particularly important to the SSP.

Red wolf. In March 2023, Nymeria and Sumac had a second litter of two pups named Bolt and Bay.



ZooTampa
participates in

114

species
survival
programs

COLLABORATIONS

American Institute of Rhinoceros Science (AIRS) - A Model for Saving Species with Science ex situ, Terri Roth, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden

The development of an epigenetic clock for rhinoceros: Characterization of DNA methylation patterns in whole blood, Jesssye Wojusik, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Assessing DNA recovery from noninvasive saliva swabs of lowland anoa, Michelle L. Green, Ph.D. Department of Integrative Biology, University of South Florida

SNP panel development for individual identification of Scarlet Macaws (Ara macao) in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala, Dr. Taal Lev, Oregon State University

Guest Engagement and Exhibit Usage: A comparison of ZooTampa's Canopy and Sulawesi Aviary, Jackson Pittman, Behavioral Research Intern at ZooTampa

Commodifying Conservation: Exploring Guest Connection to Retail, Stephanie England, Behavioral Research Intern at ZooTampa

Guest Engagement and Perception of the Malayan Tapir, Haley Metzger, Behavioral Research Intern at ZooTampa

Guest Perceptions of the North American Black Bear, Hailey Sullivan Behavioral Research Intern at ZooTampa

A Tell-Tail Sign of Guest Attentiveness in Manatee Viewings, Hann Webber, Behavioral Research Intern at ZooTampa

PARTICIPATED IN

20

RESEARCH
PROJECTS

Research conducted at the Zoo spans a wide range of areas and disciplines, behavior, conservation, evolutionary biology, and veterinary medicine.

Through our work with universities, interns, and our partners, the Zoo has a unique opportunity to advance animal care and conservation efforts through research and collaborations.



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF RHINOCEROS SCIENCE (AIRS)

ZooTampa participates in the American Institute of Rhinoceros Science (AIRS) White Rhino Research project. This collaboration between several members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a multi-disciplinary approach aimed to address the priorities of the Rhino Research Council research pillars.

Priorities include:

- 1) physical fitness and its relation to health
- 2) iron storage in browsing rhinos
- 3) reproductive success
- 4) behavioral and environmental factors that can maximize rhino well-being

AIRS researchers have conducted over 100 behavior observations totaling 50 hours of viewing how the Zoo's crash (a group of rhinos) spends its time.



Making a positive impact for

A group of children and adults are playing outdoors in a wooded area. A young girl in a green shirt is using a stethoscope to check the heart rate of a large, grey stuffed animal lying on the ground. Other children, some in green shirts with "OUTBACK" and "FLORIDA OUTDOOR EDUCATION" text, and adults are sitting around, smiling and watching. The background shows trees and a building.

Signature Encounters, chats, and Wildlife Connections add value to our guests' experience each day and are vital in inspiring action to protect and preserve wildlife.

183,000

Teacher

ZooTampa received funding from the Florida Blue Foundation to pilot an early childhood education teacher training. The program builds educators' knowledge and confidence in using instructional materials that explore themes of nature in urban spaces. Early Childhood Education Manager Christy Taylor led the program's design and development as she is now a doctoral candidate in Education at Florida Southern College.





Packaging With (Re)Purpose

ZooTampa's Animal Nutrition Center partnered with grain manufacturer Mazuri and grain supplier LabSupply, to recycle all grain bags used for the Zoo's animals. The Packaging with (Re)purpose program will prevent hundreds of grain bags from entering local landfills each month. ZooTampa received its first Re(purposed) bench in 2023.

Hose2Habitat

ZooTampa at Lowry Park participated in an enrichment workshop hosted by Hose2Habitat. Hose2Habitat founders created this non-profit organization to improve wild animals' physical and psychological well-being in human care by providing and enhancing enrichments for those animals through donating recycled and other materials, workshops, and other services. After volunteering with EMT and Fire Rescue teams, the founders created this project and combined their passion for animals and creativity to upcycle firehoses into enrichment. ZooTampa's team developed several new enrichment items that will benefit the well-being of multiple species.

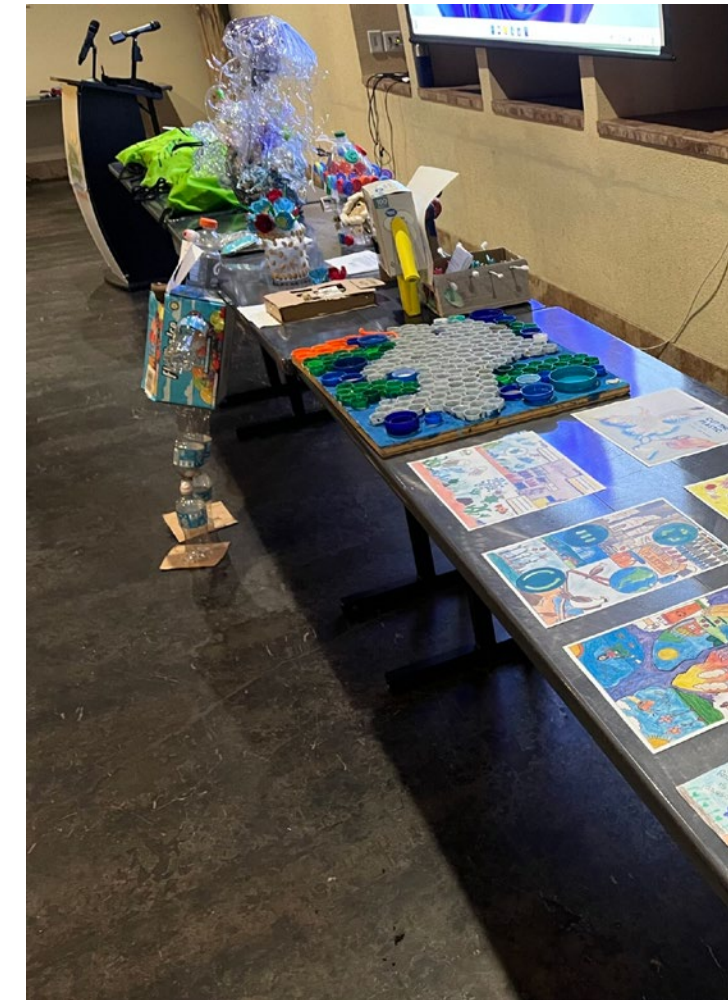
Habitat Restoration

Ecosphere Restoration Insitute, City of Tampa Parks and Recreation, Keep Tampa Bay Beautiful, and ZooTampa collaborated to remove and reduce invasive plants encroaching on the Lowry Springs Basin at Lowry Park. To ensure a clean, scenic sight for the public, we assembled over 30 individuals to remove Brazilian pepper and carrotwood that has spread around the basin and clean up the shoreline along the adjacent Hillsborough River and Hamilton Creek.

Community Art Projects

The Hillsborough County Solid Waste Management Department organized its inaugural Hillsborough County Recycling & Waste Reduction Art Contest. The competition's theme: "What Can We Do?" to help the community reduce waste, reuse what we have, and recycle more.

The City of Tampa, Department of Solid Wate and Environmental Program Management organized the 3R's Art and Poetry Contest. The contest is an outreach education program that encourages participants to promote environmental stewardship through the importance of the 3Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle; a message conveyed in the submitted artwork and poems.



ZOOTAMPA'S AWARDS



The Manatee Stranding Team received the **Florida Nature Conservation Award** at the Governor’s Conference on Tourism. This award from the Florida Association of Zoos and Aquariums recognizes excellence in field conservation efforts to benefit Florida species.

ZooTampa at Lowry Park became a 12-time winner of the **TripAdvisor Traveler’s Choice Award**.

ZooTampa at Lowry Park was voted among **USA Today’s 10Best Zoo Reader’s Choice Travel Award for Best Zoo**, and the David A. Straz, Jr. Critical Care Center was voted in the top ten for **Best Zoo Exhibit**.

CONSERVATION & RESEARCH PARTNERS





WE THANK YOU

At ZooTampa, we are committed to ensuring the animals in our care are protected in the wild. Supporting wildlife conservation and projects around the world helps us achieve this strategic objective.

The greatness of these accomplishments lies in the people who work tirelessly to ensure that we make a brighter future for wildlife conservation. With this report, we look back with pride at our accomplishments and with gratitude in our hearts to everyone who helped make this all possible, including dedicated supporters and friends of ZooTampa like you. Thank you!

