



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **ANIMALS AND HUMANS ALIKE ENJOY 80 TONS OF SNOW AT THE SANTA BARBARA ZOO'S SNOW LEOPARD FESTIVAL ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4, 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M.**

- Human Activities: Sledding and Snow Play Area for Kids, Snowshoeing to Make Animal Tracks, Snow Painting, Photos with Santa, Climbing Wall, and More
- Animal Enrichment: Snow and Icy Treats Given to Snow Leopards, Meerkats, Otters, Barnyard Animals, and Others
- At Age 18, Zoo's Male Emmett is Oldest Snow Leopard in Accredited U.S. Zoo
- Keeper Talks Focus on Threats in the Wild to this Highly Endangered Big Cat

*Santa Barbara, CA, November 19, 2016* – More than 80 tons of snow will be sledded upon, played in, painted, tracked on, make into snowmen, thrown as snowballs, and much more by people attending the Santa Barbara Zoo's annual "Snow Leopard Festival," held this year on Sunday, December 4, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (9 a.m. early admission for Santa Barbara Zoo members only).



Many of the Zoo's animal residents, including the highly endangered big cats honored at this festival, will also sniff, taste, explore, roll in, and romp in the rare blizzard. This includes meerkats, Asian small clawed otters, Barnyard animals, and others.



The Zoo's two snow leopards are Everett, aged 18, and female Zoe, aged 13. Though they aren't breeding, they are part of a cooperative management breeding program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Everett is now the oldest snow leopard living in an accredited AZA zoo.

*Sledding is \$3 and are sold at Zoo's front gate and at the snow area. There are no advance sales. Regular admission is still required to enter the Zoo. Sledding is for children aged 4 to 12 only. No adult sledding. Sleds are provided—no personal sleds. Snow play area is open to children 12 and under. The climbing wall is \$5 per person, with a minimum weight of 45 pounds. For more information call 962-5339 or visit [www.sbzoo.org](http://www.sbzoo.org).*

## **Snowy Fun**

There are six sledding runs, including two bunny slopes for younger children. The snow play area has snowshoeing with special snowshoes to make animal tracks, a place to “paint” in the snow using watercolors, snowman-making supplies, and a holiday card craft area. A snow-leopard related craft is part of the Explore Store’s weekly Year of the Explorer. There’s also face painting, climbs on the 25-foot tall “Mount Everest” climbing wall, and pictures with Santa.



Snow leopard-related toys and books are available for sale, as are wool products made by the native people who live near snow leopard habitat, as part of a program of the Snow Leopard Trust ([www.snowleopard.org](http://www.snowleopard.org)). The Zoo supports the Snow Leopard Trust, and proceeds from sales of these items direct benefit snow leopard conservation. Information about the Trust is available at the Festival.

## **About Snow Leopards**

Snow leopards are critically endangered and currently number between an estimated 3,900 and 6,400 in the wild. They have long been prized as hunter’s trophies, destroyed as predators of domestic flocks, and sought as a source of valuable fur. Adapted for the extreme weather, snow leopards have been viewed at elevations as high as 19,600 feet in summer. Their furry feet help them to stay on top of the snow by providing a greater surface area—like snow shoes—and their fur keeps their paws warm and dry, providing traction as well. Unlike most big cats, snow leopards don’t roar, but they do make vocalizations.

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*It is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$17 for adults, \$13 for seniors aged 65+, \$10 for children 2-12, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$7.*

*The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Visit [www.sbzoo.org](http://www.sbzoo.org).*

*AZA zoos are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great visitor experience, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and is the public’s link to helping animals in their native habitats.*

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