



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FREE ADMISSION, INDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS, AND LIMITED HOURS TODAY WHEN SANTA BARBARA ZOO REOPENS AFTER FIRE-CLOSURE**

- Free Admission & Parking 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 13; Possibly on Thursday & Friday, Depending on Conditions
- Inside: Live Animals at Noon, 1 and 2 p.m.; Bounce House, Ride-on Animals, Story Time, Holiday Movies, Crafts & More; Visits from Santa, Princesses, and Duncan the T. Rex
- Outside: Some Animals on View After Ash Cleanup; Guests Should Refer to Air Quality Warnings
- Winter Zoo Camp Begins Next Week, if Conditions Allow
- Zoo Closed 3 Days Due to Thomas Fire; Near Voluntary Evacuation Zone

Santa Barbara, CA, December 13, 2017 – The Santa Barbara Zoo will reopen today (Wednesday, December 13) and offer free admission, parking, and indoor activities after a three-day closure due to the effects of the Thomas Fire. This offer will continue on Thursday and Friday, December 14 and 15, if conditions allow. Check the Zoo's website ([www.sbzoo.org](http://www.sbzoo.org)) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/santabarbarazoo](http://www.facebook.com/santabarbarazoo)) for updates.

The Zoo's Discovery Pavilion classrooms have been transformed into an inside play area for kids including a bounce house, ride-on animals, seasonal crafts, education stations, Story Time (in the Library), and holiday movies.

Keepers will bring out live animals at noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Zoo Educators will be on hand to lead activities, and there will be visits from Santa Claus, costumed princesses, and Duncan, the Zoo's popular T. rex character.

Activities are free. Children must be accompanied by an adult; no drop-off is available. Zoo Camp begins on Monday, Dec. 18 (see information below).

Outside at the Zoo, a huge cleanup effort is underway, with Zoo staff suited up in special protective gear to remove the ash and soot deposited by the fire's smoke. Some animals may be on

view at their enclosures, but guests should use their own judgement about spending time outside, check air quality notices from officials, and wear breathing masks designed for smoke (N95), if necessary. The Climb for Condors rock wall and Giraffe Feeding Deck are closed. Food service is open, with standard prices, at the Ridley Treehouse. The Zoo Train will run if conditions allow.

“Many of our animals are itching to get outside,” says the Zoo’s Director of Marketing Dean Noble. “We’ve made them comfortable and kept them engaged for three days, but now we feel that it is safe to allow them access to outside areas. We’re cleaning up the ash and soot in both exhibit and public areas, keeping an eye on the fire, and making decisions on a day-by-day basis. We will be open and allow animals outside as conditions allow.”

The Zoo closed on Sunday, December 10 and remained closed through Tuesday, December 12. The Zoo is outside the evacuation zone, but began preparations to ensure the safety of the animals and the staff. No evacuations were needed.

**Winter Zoo Camp** begins next week, if conditions allow, and runs Monday through Friday, December 18 to 22 and Tuesday through Friday, December 26 to 29. Half- and full-day sessions are available for children aged 3 to 12. The cost is \$45 for a half-day (\$40 for Zoo Members) and \$57 a day for full-day (\$52 for Zoo Members). Visit <https://www.sbzoo.org/learn/zoo-camp-day-camp/> to enroll online and for more information.

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Visit [www.sbzoo.org](http://www.sbzoo.org).

*Known as one of the world’s most beautiful zoos, the **Santa Barbara Zoo** is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, Channel Island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements.*