

Santa Barbara Zoo

2024 OVERVIEW

The Santa Barbara Zoo is dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of the natural world and its living treasures through education, research, and recreation.

Reach and Audience

- **Second most-attended “museum”:** The Zoo is consistently ranked as the second-most attended “museum” in the tri-county area by the *Pacific Coast Business Times*. (Hearst Castle, a state park and international destination, is number one.)
- **Top paid attraction:** The Zoo is ranked as Santa Barbara County’s top paid attraction (*Pacific Coast Business Times*).
- **Market reach:** The Zoo’s market reach includes San Luis Obispo County to Bakersfield and the edges of Los Angeles County, including Malibu.
- **Guest visits:** The Zoo hosted 464,958 guest visits in 2023.
- **Memberships:** The Zoo’s household memberships number 13,009 (as of December 2023).
- **Membership newsletter:** The Zoo’s membership newsletter reaches 54,000 email addresses (as of December 2023).



Market Reach



159,800
FOLLOWERS



85,400
FOLLOWERS



73,000
FOLLOWERS



20,500
FOLLOWERS

Business Partnership Opportunities

If you're interested in a partnership that meets your marketing and community relations goals, look no further than the Santa Barbara Zoo. With a variety of options to promote your business, the Zoo's partnership opportunities can help you succeed by enhancing workplace culture, enriching your employees' experience, strengthening client and customer relationships, and reaching a receptive audience.

- **Sponsor an event** like Zoofari Ball or ZooLights and receive prominent recognition at the Zoo and the opportunity to network with other sponsors.
- **Host your company party** at the wildest venue in Santa Barbara.
- **Volunteer as a group** for a rewarding team-building experience.
- **Purchase Zoo Memberships** for employee incentives and rewards or for client gifts.
- **Treat your employees** to a special Zoo visit; receive discounted admission passes when you buy in bulk.
- **Schedule a penguin feeding** or other VIP animal encounter for your team.
- **Sponsor an animal** through the Zoo's Foster Feeder Program. Your company will receive special benefits, including recognition at the Zoo.
- **Showcase your business** by sponsoring a booth at one of the Zoo's wildly fun events like Boo at the Zoo or Roar and Pour.



Zoo History

The Zoo is owned and operated by the Santa Barbara Zoological Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, originally established in 1961 in response to the City of Santa Barbara's charge to create a park consistent with the wishes of benefactor Lillian Child.

The de facto "land owner" is the Santa Barbara Department of Parks & Recreation. The grounds are leased from the City of Santa Barbara, and the Zoo is currently in its third lease (35 years, renewable for an additional 15 years effective August 2012).

The Zoo first opened to the public in 1963.

Accreditation, Certification, and Licensure

- Certified Autism Center since 2018
- Continuously accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums every five years (the accreditation cycle) since 1982
- Licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as an "animal exhibitor" under the provisions of the Animal Welfare Act
- Licensed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife





Zoo Operations

- The 2024 annual operating budget of the Zoo is \$17.2 million, most of which is generated by revenue sources within the Zoo such as admissions, membership, food and beverage, retail, the Zoo Train, and private events.
- The Zoo operates on a calendar year. Budget preparation begins in earnest in August of the preceding year.
- The Zoo had 377 total employees in 2023 (126 full-time, 194 regular part-time, and 57 seasonal part-time), making the Zoo the 22nd largest employer in Santa Barbara South County (SBSC Chamber Magazine 2024).
- The Zoo is open to the public every day of the year from 9:30 AM to 5 PM with a few exceptions for special events and seasonal extended hours.



Animals

- The Zoo is home to 393 animals representing 109 species of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fishes, and invertebrates (State of the Collection 2023).
- Animals live in open, naturalistic habitats and are offered daily enriching experiences to encourage natural behaviors.
- The Santa Barbara Zoo is one of only six AZA-accredited zoos in North America and one of only ten zoos in the world to exhibit California condors.

Featured Education Programs

The Zoo’s education team connects people to the natural world through immersive programs rooted in environmental stewardship.

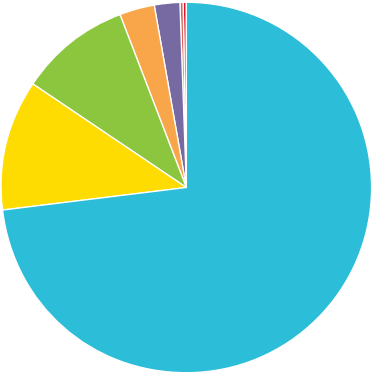
Curriculums align with state and national science standards and inspire a deeper understanding of conservation principles through hands-on experiences.

Safari Sleepovers: Guests enjoy an on-grounds, overnight group camping adventure filled with animals, fun, and s’mores.

Zoo Camp: Four seasonal camps offer hands-on science activities, crafts, and up-close animal encounters for ages 3 to 12. Camp in a Box is available year-round for children to enjoy the camp experience from home.

Wildlife Experiences: Private tours are available for guests who would like an up-close animal experience. Virtual animal encounters are also available.

Early Explorers: This play-based, outdoor preschool program is the first outdoor licensed preschool in California and focuses on learning through rich experiences for ages 3 to 5. Early Explorers gain a deep appreciation for the natural world through animal encounters, gardening, outdoor play, and exploration.



Program Participants in 2023

Field Trips (391 groups)	18,199 (73.3%)
Safari Sleepovers	2,800 (11.3%)
Zoo Camp	2,414 (9.7%)
Wildlie Experiences	783 (3.1%)
Volunteers	539 (2.2%)
Early Explorers Preschool	51 (0.2%)
After School Enrichment	47 (0.2%)
Total	24,833



Major Capital Improvements since 2000

JUNE 2023

In June, a \$79,000 Ranger Station was added to California Trails, giving guests a new opportunity to connect with nature and learn how to practice environmental stewardship in National Parks. The construction of a new \$571,000 red panda habitat sponsored by Nora McNeely Hurley & Michael Hurley / Manitou Fund was completed in September, bringing the beloved red panda back to the Zoo.

JANUARY 2022

On January 8, 2022 the Zoo opened the Australian Walkabout, a 15,000-square-foot walkable habitat featuring three iconic Australian species. With \$3.2 million donated for this project from the Zoo community, the new habitat transports guests "down under" with a focus on appreciating Australian wildlife, learning about conservation efforts, and honoring Aboriginal culture.

MARCH 2019

The Zoo completed construction of the Giraffe Management Facility in March of 2019. The \$1.2 million project created a new management facility for the Zoo's giraffe breeding program in support of global giraffe conservation efforts. In addition to the construction of the new barn, a percentage of the campaign went to the Zoo's endowment fund.

MARCH 2014

Discovery Pavilion, a 9,500-square-foot, \$8.5 million "green" education and conservation building, opened on March 22, 2014. The Discovery Pavilion project invested nearly \$6 million in local contractors, subcontractors, vendors, and consultants.

APRIL 2009

California Trails opened on Earth Day, April 22, 2009. The \$7.8 million project features species native to California including California condors, island foxes, desert tortoises, bald eagles, and a number of reptiles and amphibians of the Los Padres National Forest.

JUNE 2006

Crawford Family Penguin House (Humboldt penguin exhibit) opened on June 2, 2006. With multiple viewing areas, this \$485,000 renovation to convert an old sea lion exhibit remains one of the Zoo's most popular attractions.

AUGUST 2004

Expanded accessible pathways from Gibbon Island to the Crawford Family Penguin House were created as part of a larger \$2.7 million capital improvement project in August 2004. Wings of Asia, a walkthrough aviary, was renovated as part of this larger project as well.

MARCH 2003

Cats of Africa, a habitat with African lions and fennec foxes, opened on March 22, 2003 with the support of a \$2.6 million capital campaign.

Priority Capital Projects

- The Santa Barbara Zoo's Campaign for Tropical Wonders is a \$2.8 million capital campaign to renovate the Main Hall of the former Eeeww! exhibit, the attached supporting animal management area, and connecting Tropical Aviary. This is the Zoo's current priority capital fundraising project.
- In 2023, the Zoo entered into a collaborative agreement with California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) to create the first-ever Conservation Center and Field Conservation Academy on the CSUCI campus. This will be a multi-year fundraising effort with substantial lasting impact for future generations.



Conservation

The Zoo actively contributes to and participates in local wildlife conservation programs, including:

- California condor (since 2002)
- California red-legged frog and other amphibians of concern (since 2003)
- Island fox (since 1999)
- North American songbirds (since 2022)
- Oiled Wildlife Care Network (since 2015)
- Southern sea otter (since 2012)
- Unarmored threespine stickleback (since 2017)
- Western monarch butterfly (since 2012)
- Western snowy plover (since 2015)



The Zoo maintains excellent working relationships with partner conservation organizations, including:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (member of the California Condor Recovery Program since September 2002)
- Channel Islands National Park (received Partnership Achievement Award for island fox conservation in 2004)
- Los Padres National Forest (received grant for Rattlesnake Canyon exhibit for display of species native to the national forest)
- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary (created an interpretive display for the sanctuary on Zoo grounds with funding from NOAA, host regular Sanctuary Advisory Council meetings)
- U.S. Geological Survey (tracking Southern sea otter distribution south of Point Conception)
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (translocating federally threatened California red-legged frogs)



Other Zoo-supported conservation programs include:

- African Vulture SAFE
- Amazon Conservation Team
- Asian Elephant Support
- Gorillas on the Line
- The Ocean Project
- Snow Leopard Trust
- Vaquita SAFE
- WildCats Conservation Alliance
- Wildlife Trafficking Alliance



Awards: 2018–2023

AZA Innovation Award: Early Explorers Preschool (2023)

AZA Significant Achievement in Education Award: Inclusion Initiatives Project: The Importance of Inclusive Education (2022)

Best After School Program, Best of Santa Barbara Awards (*Santa Barbara Independent*, 2023)

Best Family Fun Spot, Best of Santa Barbara Awards (*Santa Barbara Independent*, 2018-2023)

Best Kids' Summer Camp, Best of Santa Barbara Awards (*Santa Barbara Independent*, 2018-2023)

Best Places to Work (*Pacific Coast Business Times*, 2018-2020, 2023)

Community Partnership Award (PathPoint, 2019)

Fundraiser of the Year: Rich Block, President/CEO (AFP's National Philanthropy Day, 2022)

Milestone Business Award (Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce, 2023)

Non-Profit Award for embracing the spirit of inclusion (City of Santa Barbara Mayor's Awards, 2019)

Recovery Champions Award for the Zoo's work with threatened and endangered species along the California coast (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2018)

Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice (2018-2020)

Who's Who in Nonprofits & Foundations: Rich Block, President/CEO (*Pacific Coast Business Times*, 2022-2023)

4-Star Rated Charity (Charity Navigator, 2018-2023)

40 Under 40: JJ McLeod, Education Manager (*Pacific Coast Business Times*, 2020)

50 Most Influential People in the Region: Rich Block, President/CEO (*Pacific Coast Business Times*, 2022-2023)



Giving Back to the Community

Every year the Zoo supports other nonprofits, underserved audiences, and educational institutions through outreach programs and staff-directed giving. As a nonprofit organization that depends on operating revenues, donations, and volunteers to operate, the Zoo understands how important it is to support the people and organizations of our community. The Zoo team is committed to helping others whenever possible.

- The Zoo commits more than \$200,000 (including staff time) to assist other nonprofit organizations in fundraising efforts and to provide access to the Zoo for underserved audiences.
- In 2023, the Zoo distributed 1,397 guest admission passes to 655 community institutions, service organizations, and schools for fundraising purposes.
- The Zoo dedicates resources to give underserved children and other disadvantaged audiences the opportunity to benefit from a Zoo experience through its Sponsor a Class/Zoo4U, Zoo Camp Scholarships, and Early Explorers Scholarship programs.
- The Zoo is a proud participant in the Museums for All program, offering significantly reduced pricing for those receiving food assistance (SNAP benefits). In 2023, this program served 13,353 individuals who may not otherwise have been able to visit the Zoo.

Your investment in the Zoo helps create outstanding guest experiences, provide the best animal care, enhance educational opportunities for students and families, and make a significant contribution to the conservation of the area's wildlife treasures.



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rblock@sbzoo.org

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Greg Wilson

gwilson@sbzoo.org

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amarshall@sbzoo.org

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jbarnes@sbzoo.org

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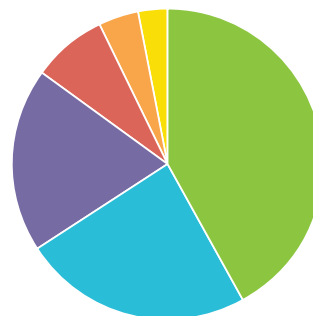
Elaine K. Mah Best

emahbest@sbzoo.org

2023 Statement of Revenue and Expenses*

* unaudited

REVENUE AND SUPPORT



42%

Park admissions

24%

Retail and concessions

19%

Membership and educational activities

8%

Special events

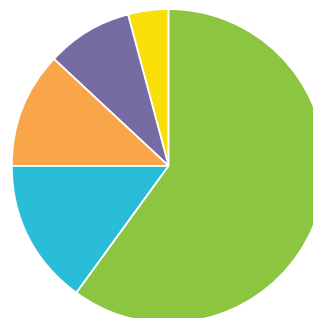
4%

Contributions

3%

Interest, dividends, gain

EXPENSES



60%

Park operations and maintenance

15%

Retail and concessions

12%

General and administration

9%

Membership and educational activities

4%

Public relations and fundraising



CONTACT US

Santa Barbara Zoo
500 Niños Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93103
(805) 962-5339 • zooinfo@sbzoo.org • sbzoo.org

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