



2019

IMPACT REPORT

Our mission takes flight



CONSERVATION
SOCIETY OF
CALIFORNIA

OAKLAND ZOO

TAKING ACTION FOR WILDLIFE



Photo: Steven Gotz

From the Board of Trustees

When four gray wolf pups were born at Oakland Zoo this past spring, it was a unique chance to reflect on our work. The pups' birth was a testament to the efforts that had come before: the thoughtful construction of their habitat, the careful acclimation process, the attentive care they received. It was also an opportunity to focus on things to come—the bonds of a new family, the growth of gray wolf populations, future strides in conservation.

As with our wolves, when we think about Oakland Zoo, we are both reflecting on the past and looking intently at the future. Looking back, we've had incredible success in 2019: California Trail continues to draw and engage visitors, with a 30% growth in attendance since its opening in July 2018. We saw 960,000 visitors in the first twelve months alone. In that same period, our membership community has increased 10% to 31,000 households—and growing.

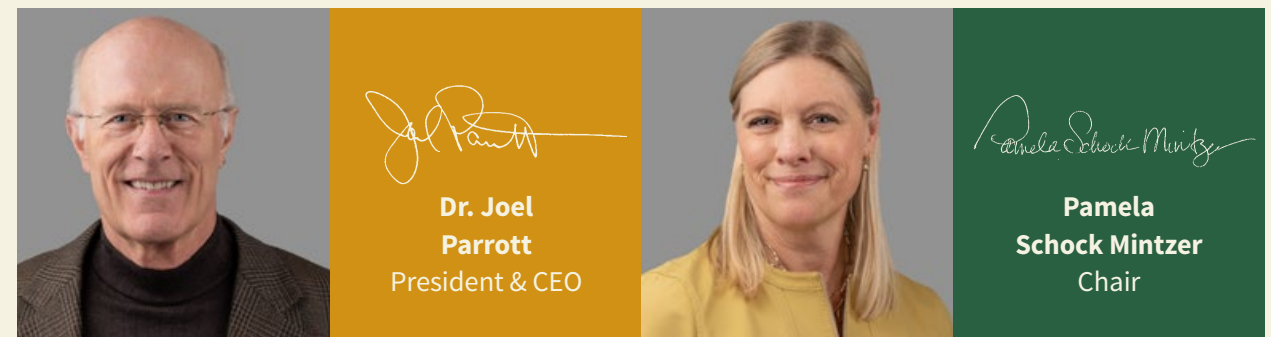
The opening of California Trail set a new bar for Oakland Zoo, and we are better poised than ever to step into our conservation role. At a time when urgent threats like climate change, habitat loss, and biodiversity loss are accelerating, and public attention is increasingly turning towards action, our work carries a particular resonance.

Looking forward, we are focusing on what the Conservation Society of California can achieve over the next ten years. Over fifty Trustees and staff participated in Vision 2030, a visioning process we convened in 2019. Board Committees and staff are now actively working on the strategies and annual plans to realize Vision 2030.

We are thrilled to announce five new leaders who will support our execution of Vision 2030: Dr. Caterina Meyers, Vice President of Education; Dr. Alex Herman, Vice President of Veterinary Services; Michelle Myers, Vice President of Experience and Engagement; Mark Stuart, Vice President of Operations; and Kristin Heller, Vice President of Development.

We're not resting on our laurels; the entire world urgently needs our leadership in animal welfare, education, and conservation if we are to mitigate the catastrophic effects of our climate crisis. Thank you for your continued support, dedication, and shared values. You're an integral part of our past, and an inspiring part of our future.

With gratitude,



“With our continued focus on guest experience, conservation and increased connection to our community, each year is the best year yet for Oakland Zoo.”

DR. JOEL PARROTT, PRESIDENT AND CEO, OAKLAND ZOO

THE MANY FORMS OF ANIMAL CARE

At Oakland Zoo, Animal Care & Welfare involves many things our visitors can see, like caring for our animals, seeing to their ongoing needs, and educating the public. However, it also involves work that many don't get to witness, like our efforts in protecting animals everywhere.

While many zoos focus on animal conservation efforts outside their walls, not as many set their sights on animal welfare advocacy. I'm proud to say that Oakland Zoo stands out in this respect.

One place our advocacy work has been particularly effective is in challenging roadside zoos, which are unregulated collections of exotic or wild animals, often under inhumane or dangerous conditions. Working with partners like PETA and the Animal Defense Fund, our team's expert testimony in court has been critical in helping to rescue animals from these deplorable conditions. A large success in 2019 resulted in over 120 animals being rescued from Wilson's Wild Animal Park in Virginia, including lions, tigers, bears, camels, goats, water buffalo, and more. [Continued ►](#)

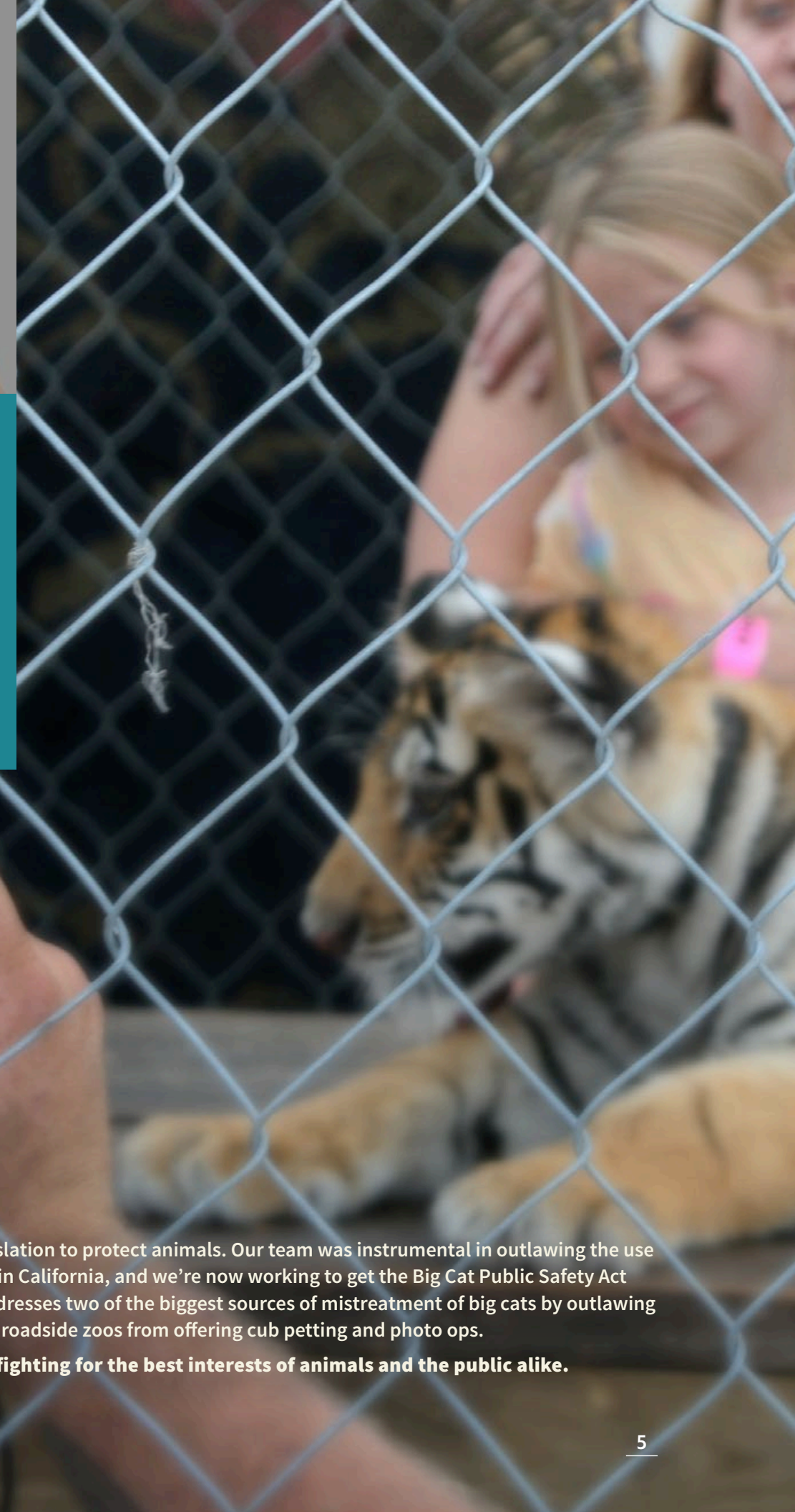


COLLEEN KINZLEY

Vice President Animal Care,
Conservation, and Research



**SAY NO TO THE
EXOTIC PET INDUSTRY**



We're also working on legislation to protect animals. Our team was instrumental in outlawing the use of bullhooks on elephants in California, and we're now working to get the Big Cat Public Safety Act passed. A federal bill, it addresses two of the biggest sources of mistreatment of big cats by outlawing them as pets and stopping roadside zoos from offering cub petting and photo ops.

We hope you'll join us in fighting for the best interests of animals and the public alike.

A Closer Look

Behavioral observation volunteers offer another pair of eyes

The more you can see, the more you can understand. That's the thinking that goes into the Behavioral Observation Team (BOT) at Oakland Zoo. For over 15 years, this core group of volunteers has assisted in routine monitoring of animals at the zoo, like our elephants, giraffes, otters, and sun bears.

Because animals form relationships with their keepers (and vice versa), animals tend to act differently when in the presence of their caretakers. Our BOT volunteers enable us to have a neutral person observing and recording information in as unbiased a manner as possible. Looking at everything from what areas of their habitats they use to how they're interacting with their species-mates, BOT is a critical piece of Oakland Zoo's efforts to help improve animals' lives.

For observational data that's more in-depth, we also partner with local universities like Sonoma State and Cal State East Bay, inviting graduate students on months-long projects. Grad student Holly Molinaro observed our baboons to study clan formation. We had introduced two younger males, Milo and Koussa, to the group and were watching to see if they'd make a connection with any of our baboon females to build their own clan. Thanks to the fact that we're in a zoo, we can really observe and document the development of clans in a way that wouldn't be possible in the wild, where troops are already formed.

The relatively simple act of observation can hold deep insights, thanks to the dedication of our BOT volunteers and grad students. They're a huge asset to us, and a testament to the strong community we have at Oakland Zoo. Next time you visit, keep an eye out for them.



Photo: Steven Gotz

Welcoming Wolves

Our gray wolves illustrate a conservation story

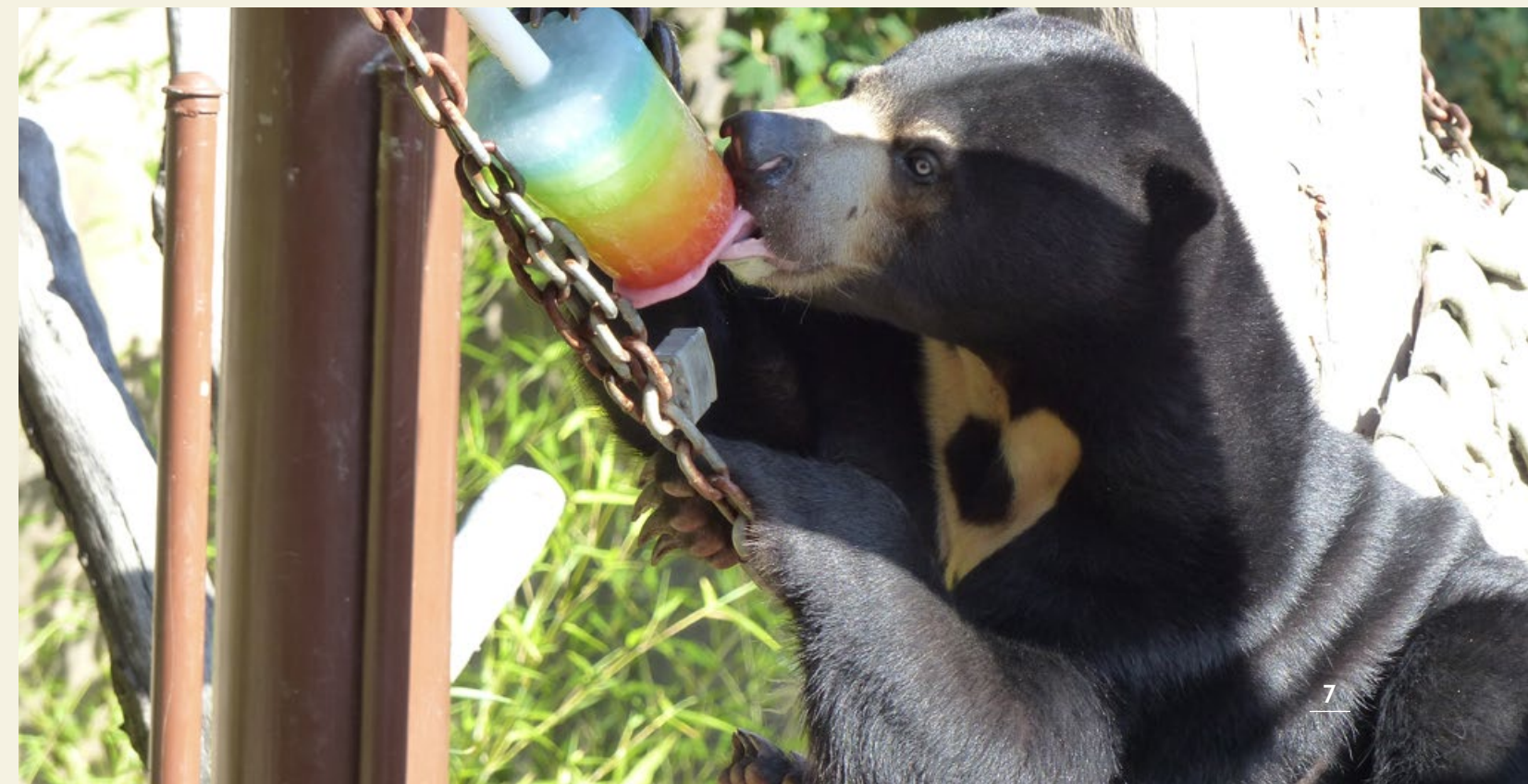
Oakland Zoo is a great place for families—and that includes gray wolf families. On May 13th, Siskiyou, our female gray wolf, delivered four healthy wolf pups, a sure sign that she and partner Sequoia were feeling safe and comfortable at the zoo.

“Creating a pack is important to the emotional health of wolves,” says Darren E. Minier, Assistant Director of Animal Care, Conservation, and Research. “We are thrilled the pups are doing well—mom and dad have been amazing first-time parents.”

Parents Siskiyou and Sequoia, two gray wolves born in captivity, both arrived in April 2018 and took up residence at our California Trail. Their arrival was part of our partnership with the California Wolf Center (CWC), an organization dedicated to helping wolves return to the Golden State.

Although up to 2 million wolves once lived in North America, they were deemed dangerous and a threat to livestock and driven to near extinction by extirpation. The last gray wolf in California was killed in 1924.

An endangered species, gray wolves are now making a comeback—and Oakland Zoo, along with our partner Working Circle Proactive Stewardship, is helping in that mission. Our new wolf pack helps us tell the story of these reclusive and shy creatures, the threats they face, and how the public can support the repopulation of a historic species.



CSC BY THE NUMBERS

51k

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES participated in education events

12

GLOBAL CONSERVATION LEADERS trained to be more effective and inspiring speakers



5 SCHOOLS IN PANAMA whose students became Guardians of the Jaguars

960k

VISITORS in the first 12 months after CA Trail opened



31k

MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

113k

VOTES for Quarters For Conservation featured projects

18

CAMERA TRAPS in the City of Oakland and its regional parks, capturing photos of local wildlife

4.2k

PUERTO RICAN CRESTED TADPOLES & TOADS returned to Puerto Rico for release

4

GRAY WOLF pups born



\$237k

RAISED by Quarters For Conservation

\$29k

GIVEN to Kaminando, our jaguar conservation partner in Panama

\$107k

GIVEN in time and in-kind gifts, by Zoo staff and volunteers to conservation efforts

82

MOUNTAIN YELLOW-LEGGED FROGS returned to the wild in a location they haven't existed since the 1920s



264

VOLUNTEERS to be pollinator pioneers, pledging to plant almost 2,000 square feet of native plants

200

FOOTHILL YELLOW-LEGGED FROGS rescued from fire-ravaged Northern California

25

CONSERVATION PARTNERS

11

AMERICAN BISON returned to Montana (2 male bison with Yellowstone lineage arrived from Colorado)



582

VISITORS thanked companies for using sustainable palm oil

8

ANIMALS RESCUED & TREATED by Oakland Zoo Veterinary Hospital

1k+

DONORS invested in Oakland Zoo

14

GREEN ZONES established to help reduce the amount of Zoo waste going to landfill

A YEAR OF FOCUS

Now more than ever, I'm seeing CSC's mission of conservation animate our work. With California Trail newly opened, a number of new leaders at the Zoo, and the urgency of caring for the planet, 2019 was a year of greater engagement within our zoo staff and guest community. With so many hands and hearts involved, our positive impact on wildlife took a huge leap — locally and globally.

From our Pathways for Pollinators project to encourage native plant gardens, to our eco-trip to support the protection of chimps with the Budongo Snare Removal Project, we rose to the call of our mission.

Read on for a few additional highlights from the year in conservation.



Amy Gotliffe

AMY GOTLIFFE

Vice President of Conservation
at Oakland Zoo



CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Photo: Steven Gotz

Building the Herd

Bison moms and calves successfully travel back to Montana

In April 2018, Oakland Zoo got a bison surprise—actually, ten surprises. Of the 14-member herd of American bison that came to California Trail, ten arrived unexpectedly pregnant, and gave birth to calves within weeks of arriving. About a year later, eleven of those bison—mothers and calves specifically chosen to uphold the critical social bonds within the herd—traveled back to Blackfeet Nation in Montana.

The transition is part of the linnii Initiative, also known as the Bison Restoration Project, which seeks to restore free-roaming bison to Blackfeet tribal land and nearby national parks. American bison are North America's largest land mammal and were once driven to near extinction in the 1900s due to westward expansion. Many Native American tribes revere bison as a sacred and spiritual symbol of their heritage, and bison numbers are rebounding thanks to conservation and breeding efforts.

To ensure genetic diversity and the long-term health of these growing herds, two new male American bison joined the remaining females at Oakland Zoo. They hail from the Laramie Foothills Bison Conservation Herd in northern Colorado, and bring unique genetics. Once they mate with the females at Oakland Zoo, the new calves will be transferred back to Montana to roam freely on tribal lands and national parks.

Being able to contribute to this successful project has been a source of pride at the Zoo. Says Amy Gotliffe, Vice President of Conservation: "It's an honor to be a part of the linnii Initiative in bringing American Bison back to the Blackfeet Nation people."

Turning the Lens on Conservation

Camera traps in the wilds of Panama—and Oakland

Whether he's climbing, jumping, or just cat napping, our jaguar at California Trail is incredible to see. Getting a closer look at jaguars in the wild is one way to help with their conservation, and our partner Kaminando in Panama has a unique way of doing that: camera traps.

Jaguar populations are threatened due to challenges like habitat loss and illegal killing. Kaminando studies jaguars with motion-activated cameras, also known as camera traps. Kaminando was one of our 2019 Quarters for Conservation projects, and their work helps identify jaguar populations, prey availability, and movement corridors. Oakland Zoo sponsored staff to join the Kaminando team this year to assist with their camera trap efforts and community outreach.

Education is always a critical part of conservation, so we brought lots of educational supplies with us to Panama: lesson plans, books, science equipment, and literature in Spanish. We visited schools with the Kaminando team and created banners that said “Guardianes del Jaguar” (Guardians of the Jaguar) to help instill a sense of citizen conservationism among the students.

While in the schools, we also shared how Oakland and the Bay Area are having some of the same challenges with wildlife, especially mountain lions. It was a unique point of crossover for our work at home and abroad, especially since the Conservation Society of California has started using camera traps in our own backyard.

CSC has joined the Urban Wildlife Information Network, an effort started by the Lincoln Park Zoo to better understand our urban surroundings and their inhabitants. Using camera traps, Oakland and 50 participating cities nationwide can all examine and compare the populations and behavior of their animal neighbors. Our 18 camera traps around the East Bay have already captured images of foxes, coyotes, raccoons, deer, rabbits, skunks, geese, herons, and wild turkeys—with more to come.



Photo: Steven Gotz



ZooCampers spreading their wings for California condors.

Funds Invested in Conservation Work

In our last fiscal year, Oakland Zoo invested over \$493,000 in conservation work, spanning onsite efforts, community projects, and international work as far as Guatemala and Kenya

As we focused our efforts in conservation through extensive programs and changing our name, we saw an outpouring of support from our community. Our Quarters for Conservation program saw its largest year yet in 2019! Our support also includes:

\$237,000 raised by our Quarters for Conservation project

\$8,000 raised for wolves through our gift store effort, Round Up for Wolves

\$9,050 raised through our Impact Speaker Series

\$9,380 raised via eco-tourism led by Oakland Zoo

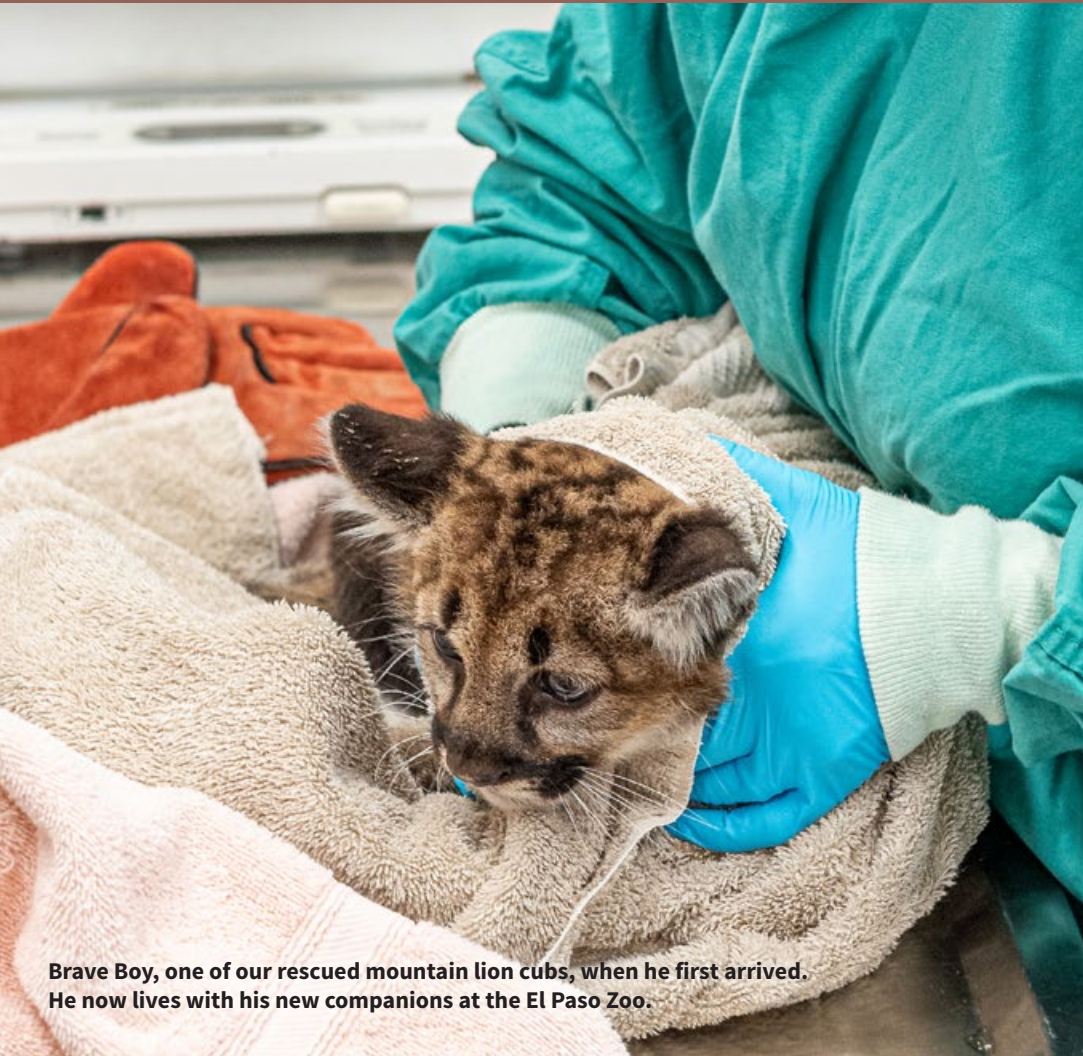
\$4,259 raised by Zoo Camp for the condors at Ventana Wildlife Society

WELCOME, DR. ALEX HERMAN

The child of biologists, Dr. Alex Herman always knew she wanted to be a veterinarian. “And not just for dogs and cats,” she adds, making it clear that a zoo—or something like it—was always in her plan. She started working at Oakland Zoo as a relief vet about 15 years ago, and worked on the Condor Recovery Team. In 2019, she joined as Vice President of Veterinary Services.

“The caliber of leadership, management, and staff is so high here,” she says of Oakland Zoo, adding “we’re also so engaged and alive with our community and partnerships.” From healing animals on site to working to reduce plastic waste, all of Oakland Zoo’s work ties back to its mission, which is a motivating force for her.

From everyone on the Veterinary Care team and beyond, we’re thrilled to officially welcome Alex into her new role!



Brave Boy, one of our rescued mountain lion cubs, when he first arrived. He now lives with his new companions at the El Paso Zoo.



DR. ALEX HERMAN

Vice President of
Veterinary Services

VETERINARY CARE IN ACTION

General Hospital

No patient too big, no patient too small

Treating everything from giraffes to frogs, our Veterinary Care team is well-equipped to handle a wide range of animals and ailments using innovative techniques.

Our team used a revolutionary new treatment to help our agouti (a medium-sized rodent) recover from an injury that left half of her front leg without skin. That would normally be a very difficult injury to treat: the risk of infection is high and the skin is slow to regrow. The team created a bandage out of tilapia skin—a wound management protocol being tested by UC Davis—to successfully manage the wound. Tilapia skin is used in Brazil to treat burn victims and has been used for animals such as bears with burned paws from Southern California’s Thomas wildfire. Our agouti successfully regrew the skin on her front leg, and is now doing quite well.

And if the animals residing at the Zoo aren’t enough to look after, the team also treats sick or injured animals from the wild, with some heartwarming results.

Ksh’Pali, a California condor, was brought to Oakland Zoo from Pinnacles National Park in Monterey County. He was suffering from lead toxicity, a result of eating an animal that had been shot with lead ammunition. Lead poisoning is one of the leading threats to California condors, a bird so endangered there are only about 450 of them in the wild. The Oakland Zoo team treated Ksh’Pali with fluid therapy, antibiotics, and calcium EDTA to pull the lead out of his bloodstream. Once he was strong enough, he was transferred to the Los Angeles Zoo for further rehabilitation and eventual release back into the wild.

Another rescue began in El Dorado County when a homeowner found three abandoned mountain lion cubs. Only two remained alive, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) brought them to Oakland Zoo for intensive care. Suffering from severe malnutrition, dehydration, anemia, parasites, ticks, and fleas, the cubs each weighed less than four pounds on arrival. While one succumbed to her injuries, the other survived and responded to treatment very well. Fully recovered and growing, he left Oakland Zoo in March for his forever home at the El Paso Zoo.



Agouti

INTRODUCING DR. CATERINA MEYERS

From mangroves to classrooms to farms, Dr. Caterina Meyers has studied and taught in nearly every locale imaginable. Now the Vice President of Education at Oakland Zoo, Caterina brings with her a rich background focused on education, conservation, and the natural world. “Organizations like zoos have an exceptional opportunity to innovate in education,” she says when speaking about her vision for Oakland Zoo.

One of her primary goals is finding more ways—and more engaging ways—to help people get excited about conservation. “Oakland Zoo is unique in its focus on conservation, and its ability to help people connect directly with animals, ecosystems, and habitats. We can engage people to become citizen scientists and conservationists by hands-on involvement.”

Welcome to the team, Caterina!



EDUCATION

On a trip to Costa Rica our Teen Wild Guides learn about sea turtle nesting behaviors.

The Trip of a Young Lifetime

Teen Wild Guides head to Costa Rica

Now 15 years running, our Teen Wild Guide (TWG) program is a great example of one of the ways we foster a lifelong commitment to wildlife. TWGs are teens from grades 9 - 12, and they play a facilitative role at the Children’s Zoo, helping our smallest visitors experience and understand the animals. It’s a unique opportunity for teens who are interested in animals or zoology to get hands-on knowledge and work experience, while being a face of the Zoo at the same time.

The TWGs’ annual research trip is always a highlight, and this year’s 9-day voyage to Costa Rica’s Osa Peninsula was no exception. Working with Latin American Sea Turtles (LAST), a nonprofit research group, our TWGs collected data on sea turtles in the waters of Golfo Dulce, a major feeding area for Pacific sea turtles, to understand their habitat use and threats. Beyond helping to release baby leatherback sea turtles into the wild, they also spent their nights patrolling the beach, looking for sea turtles laying eggs.

Mangroves are essential to sea turtles’ habitats, so the TWGs also focused their attention on these shoreline protectors. Along with the team at LAST, they collected mangrove seeds and mud for planting, sowing seeds to be grown in the nursery, and planting seedlings. They also collected information on growth and survival rate.

Creating a connection to wildlife and the natural world is a core part of our work, and our TWG program helps us get there. If you know a young person who’s interested in wildlife, let them know about being a TWG!



Photo: Steven Stenberg

DR. CATERINA MEYERS

Vice President
of Education

Opening Doors with Zoo to Community

The power of transformative experiences

“If you’ve heard of our Zoo to Community program, you have former Trustee Sonjia Redmond to thank for the idea. Seeking to improve science literacy and outdoor education experiences with equity in mind, the program began at Oakland Zoo in 2006. Zoo to Community provides a range of the Zoo’s educational programs—plus transportation—to Bay Area students in underserved schools, free of charge.” says Felicia Walker, a Program Director in Education.

The school day becomes a whole new experience when a hedgehog or lizard shows up to class. That’s the sort of discovery that happens when our beloved ZooMobile—part of Zoo to Community—is on the move, bringing small animals and an Education Specialist to participating schools for students to meet, learn about, and pet.

“People are surprised when they learn our ZooMobile is actually a Prius,” says Felicia, with a laugh.

Making Oakland Zoo’s educational programming more accessible is a central part of Zoo to Community efforts, but the work doesn’t stop there. The team makes monthly visits to George Mark Children’s House, a palliative care center for terminally ill children. Each of these visits is filled with free educational Zoo programming for the children and their families.

Additionally, in 2019, Zoo to Community began working with A Better Way, a Bay Area nonprofit that serves children in—or at risk of entering—foster care and their families. By providing free vouchers to Oakland Zoo to families going through incredible stress, Zoo to Community helps offer opportunities for family connection, strengthening, and memory-making. “It’s really touching to be part of that experience,” says Felicia.

By exposing young people from all walks of life to the Zoo, we’re doing more than building a connection with wildlife. We’re also encouraging thousands of underrepresented students each year to pursue an interest in veterinary, biological, ecological, and conservation sciences. Both are incredibly valuable lessons that are bound to change lives, and your support has a tangible impact.



EDUCATION

Oakland Zoo School Programs rated 3.9 out of 4 by teachers

for supporting the science content students are currently learning

BASED ON PARTICIPATING TEACHER POST SURVEYS

INTRODUCING MICHELLE MYERS, MARK STUART, AND KRISTIN HELLER

As Oakland Zoo grows, our team is growing too! With hundreds of thousands more guests each year, the Zoo is putting increased focus on our guest experience. Enter Michelle Myers, Vice President of Experience and Engagement and Mark Stuart, Vice President of Operations, who bring experience from places like Monterey Bay Aquarium and San Diego Zoo, and from Starbucks and Boudin Bread. They are dedicating their energies to ensuring each Zoo guest positively connects with nature by offering experiences that will last a lifetime. From the Zoo entrance and parking lot, to the gondola, to your tasty lunch at Landing Cafe, we are excited to continually improve your experience!

Continued ►



Michelle prepares for a daily episode of *Behind the Scenes Live & Interactive* with our lemurs.

Michelle and Mark are also leading our guest-facing staff, providing the tools and training that help create memorable guest experiences. Oakland Zoo is proud to be one of the largest employers of youth in Oakland, with 63 staff under the age of 25. We are conscious of our responsibility to nurture the next generation of community leaders and conservationists, and are thrilled to invest new energy and resources into our staff's development and engagement with our mission.

Also new to the team is Kristin Heller, Vice President of Development. Kristin hails most recently from the Exploratorium in San Francisco, and is enjoying connecting with our community of supporters and bonding over a shared love and desire to protect animals. As the Zoo grows and takes on new conservation challenges, it is evermore important to secure the philanthropic support that enables our local and global impact.

Michelle, Mark and Kristin look forward to welcoming you during your next visit!

“ Our guests are drawn to Oakland Zoo by the prospect of meeting fascinating animals from around the world; however, they ultimately leave with memories made through interactions with our staff. As we approach our centennial, we have proven ourselves as a leader in animal care, conservation and advocacy. Fostering a strong team of hospitable, knowledgeable and mission-driven individuals to inspire guests through every touchpoint within their zoological journey, will continue to set us apart. Our goal is for Oakland Zoo to be a model of engagement.

MICHELLE MYERS, VICE PRESIDENT OF EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT



MARK STUART

Vice President
of Operations



KRISTIN HELLER

Vice President
of Development



MICHELLE MYERS

Vice President of Experience
and Engagement



Photo: Steven Gotz

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Awards

Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) 2019 Exhibit Design Award: California Trail

“This award congratulates Oakland Zoo for significant achievement in designing a naturalistic, engaging habitat that provides high-quality animal care and welfare as well as meaningful guest experiences,” said AZA President and CEO Dan Ashe. “California Trail goes above and beyond AZA’s rigorous standards for animal management, safety, conservation, and education, and should be considered a model for others.”

National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Interpretive Media Award, Interior Exhibit: California Conservation Habitarium

The Interpretive Media Awards Competition promotes excellence in the delivery of natural, cultural, and historical nonpersonal interpretive services.

U.S. News & World Report ranked Oakland Zoo in the “Top 30 Zoos in the U.S.”

Oakland Zoo ranked in the top 30 out of 272 zoos evaluated nationwide.

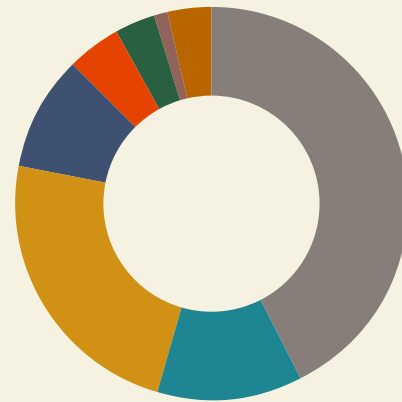


FINANCIALS

Fiscal Year 2019 Financial Overview

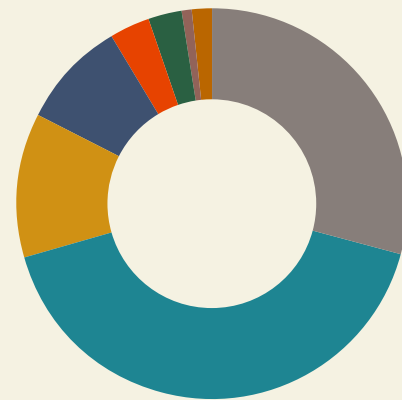
Operating Support and Revenue

Admission	9,870,742
Concessions	2,827,115
Membership and Annual Fund	5,433,127
Government Funding	2,248,866
Education Support	969,935
Events and Sponsorships	774,149
Other Revenue	276,258
Restricted Funding	818,294
Total	23,218,486



Operating and Program Expenses

Animal Care, Conservation and Research	7,568,390
Park Operations	10,655,615
Administration and Marketing	3,064,286
Education	2,338,172
Concessions	874,543
Fundraising	715,513
Capital Campaign	160,227
Special Events	423,126
Expenses Without Depreciation	21,337,826
Depreciation	4,462,046
Total Including Depreciation	25,799,872



TO THE ANIMALS WE LOST LAST YEAR:
YOU'VE LEFT A LASTING IMPRESSION ON US, AND EVERYONE WHO VISITED THE ZOO.
WE CONTINUE OUR WORK IN YOUR MEMORY.

“

We have been overwhelmed by the positive response from the community since the opening of California Trail. Our visitors, members and donors are responsible for the enhanced vitality of the Zoo and as we look toward our 100th anniversary in 2022 we have never been better positioned to take action for wildlife locally and globally.

—
NIK DEHEJIA, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Rest in peace M'dunda.

Thank you for supporting your Zoo.

Our local and global impact could not be achieved without the incredible generosity, support and conservationist spirit of our donors, members, volunteers, partners and daily guests.

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OAKLANDZOO.ORG