



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **First of its Kind Kickstarter Campaign Launched to Help Save Endangered African Penguins**

*Audubon Nature Institute is proud to back "Invest In The Nest."*

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(New Orleans, La.) – African penguin populations have been declining for the past few decades. Audubon Nature Institute, an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), is joining with the AZA and other accredited aquariums and zoos to take action and help reverse this trend. The ["Invest In The Nest" campaign](#) seeks to raise \$150,000 to help build and place 1,500 artificial nests for African penguins in South Africa and Namibia through crowdfunding on [Kickstarter](#).

"Audubon's involvement in African penguin and other wildlife conservation projects is at the very heart of what we," said Audubon President and CEO Ron Forman. "Our penguin animal care professionals provide expert care to our birds every day, and we're applying that expertise directly to help these wild colonies. The "Invest in the Nest" Kickstarter campaign is a great way for the public to join us in helping save African penguins in the wild."

Also, Audubon is supporting the SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction®, a program that brings together the expertise and resources of AZA, its members, and partners to help save species from extinction. Establishing new artificial nests is a priority identified in the AZA SAFE African penguin conservation action plan, and necessary to help save African penguins.

"We're always excited about campaigns that expand our worldview and actively contribute to innovation around the globe. *Invest In The Nest* is pushing boundaries in the practice of conservation and bringing optimism and direct action to the Kickstarter backer community," says Clarissa Redwine, Kickstarter's Design and Technology Outreach Lead for the West Coast. "This conservation effort takes backers through the process of designing, building, and installing habitat structures that will help save endangered African penguins, helping Kickstarter backers play a vital part in protecting wildlife."

Supporters of the campaign won't go away empty-handed. A variety of rewards is available for backing the Kickstarter campaign, including exclusive behind-the-scenes opportunities at some of the best aquariums and zoos in the country, as well as original penguin art, symbolic penguin adoption kits, t-shirts, totes, posters and more.

Audubon Aquarium, home to 20 African penguins, has hatched 54 penguins since opening in 1990. This species was relatively abundant as recently as the early twentieth century, but an array of threats including habitat loss and massive declines in available prey have resulted in a steep population decline. This sobering fact underscores the importance of breeding efforts at Audubon and support for conservation projects in the wild.

“AZA-accredited aquariums and zoos believe we should do more to help save species, which is why we started SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction,” said Dan Ashe, President and CEO of AZA. “We brought together scientists and engineers to help us design the best nest for African penguins. Now we need the public’s help to build and place the nests in South Africa. *Invest In The Nest* is an opportunity for anyone to help save a species!”

If fully funded, the nests will be constructed by hand in South Africa, helping to create jobs for residents.

To back or follow the campaign, visit the “*Invest In The Nest*” campaign page on Kickstarter: <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/aza/invest-in-the-nest-save-penguins-from-extinction>

### **About Audubon Nature Institute**

Audubon Nature Institute operates a family of museums, parks and research facilities dedicated to celebrating the wonders of nature. Through innovative live animal exhibits, education programs, and scientific discovery, Audubon makes a meaningful contribution to preserving wildlife for the future. Audubon Nature Institute flagships include Audubon Park, Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy Giant Screen Theater, Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium, Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Woldenberg Riverfront Park and Audubon Wilderness Park. Ron Forman is President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute.

### **About AZA**

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. AZA is the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and eight other countries. Look for the AZA accreditation logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in saving species and your link to helping animals all over the world. To learn more, visit [www.aza.org](http://www.aza.org).

### **About SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction®**

SAFE: Saving Animals From Extinction combines the power of zoo and aquarium visitors with the resources and collective expertise of AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums and partners to save animals from extinction. Together we are working on saving the most vulnerable wildlife species from extinction and protecting them for future generations. To learn more, visit <http://www.aza.org/aza-safe>.

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