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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# **Audubon Zoo Earns Prestigious AZA Accreditation**

(New Orleans, La.) - The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) today announced that Audubon Zoo was granted accreditation by AZA's independent Accreditation Commission.

"AZA accreditation signifies that Audubon Zoo is committed to meeting the very highest standards in the zoological profession," said AZA President and CEO Dan Ashe. "It means that Audubon Zoo is a proven leader in animal care and welfare and in providing educational and meaningful experiences for visitors."

To be accredited, Audubon Zoo underwent a thorough review to make certain it has and will continue to meet ever-rising standards in categories which include animal care and welfare, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association.

The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the institution's operation, including animal care and welfare; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and more. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal hearing of AZA's independent Accreditation Commission, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied. Any institution that is denied may reapply one year after the Commission's decision is made.

Audubon Zoo has been an accredited AZA member since 1981.

Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman said the accreditation is a testament to Audubon Zoo's longstanding commitment to excellence.

"Here at Audubon Zoo, we pride ourselves on providing the finest care for our animals and a family-friendly environment for guests to learn about the wonders of nature," Forman said. "We're honored and pleased to be recognized for our ongoing efforts by our peers at AZA."

The AZA inspection team highlighted several notable strengths at Audubon Zoo, including its new elephant and orangutan habitats and the Gator Run lazy river attraction,

a staff that displays great enthusiasm about working at the zoo, and a comprehensive program for integrated safety.

**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).

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