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Audubon Nature Institute Projecting to Lose \$21 million
During COVID-19 Closure

Seeking Recovery Fund Support Amid Pandemic

(New Orleans, La) - As a non-profit, Audubon Nature Institute relies on ticket sales, special programs, sales from concessions and gift shop, and donations to support the mission of protecting and sharing the wonders of nature. While closed to help stop the spread of COVID-19, Audubon's estimated loss of revenue directly generated by visitors to Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas and Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium during March, April, May, and June, is approximately \$21M.

The COVID-19 closure is also happening during what is typically Audubon's busiest season, when it generates 44 percent of the revenue it uses to fund operations throughout the year.

With the uncertainty of the times, Audubon Executive Team has been forced to make the following operational decisions regarding facility closures and cancellations.

- Audubon Cool Zoo and Gator Run will remain closed for the 2020 Season.
- Zoo Summer Camp will be cancelled for June 2020, July 2020 camps are still pending decision.
- Audubon Zoo Lights presented by Children's Hospital 2020 will be cancelled.
- Private special events at all locations through May 30, 2020 will be cancelled or rescheduled.

While Audubon's doors are closed to the public, dedicated staff are still onsite each day caring for the animals, which cost nearly \$70,000 to feed each month. Unfortunately, because of the financial impacts of COVID-19, Audubon has reduced full-time staff by nearly 50 percent and reduced the salaries of some full-time employees by 25 percent. The salary reduction includes Audubon's executive team and CEO and President Ron Forman has taken a 50 percent pay cut.

"93 percent of Audubon's operating budget is self-generated and our self-generated revenue sources have been eliminated due to the closure of our facilities," says Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman. "At this time, we cannot predict how long COVID-19 will impact our operations. As such, we are implementing short-term and long-term strategies to address the financial implications of the virus. We are committed to supporting staff affected by these very difficult decisions and are providing resources to help them get through this."

While the public attractions are closed and resources are low, Audubon's commitment to the community remains strong through the [Virtual Community Connection Series](#), a virtual connection to its attractions through social media for families online. The program launched on March 19, and is designed to virtually engage Audubon's supporters. It consists of daily activities posted across Audubon's social media platforms, and includes interactive videos, virtual visits to the attractions, keeper takeovers, daily quizzes, and more.

During the Audubon facilities closures, supporters can help the dedicated staff who continue to provide outstanding care for the animals and the parks loved by the New Orleans community by donating to Audubon's [recovery efforts](#).

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