



Audubon Zoo  
A Facility of Audubon Nature Institute

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**MAY 29, 2020**

**Audubon Zoo to Reopen June 3 with Limited Capacity**

*Guests must make online reservations in advance. Tickets on sale June 1.*

(New Orleans, La.) - Audubon Zoo is pleased to announce plans to reopen to the public on Wednesday, June 3, 2020. Following the guidance of State and City public health directives, Audubon is moving forward with reopening its family of parks and museums following a phased approach that strictly limits attendance and programming.

“We look forward to reconnecting the community with the animals in our care,” said Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman. “While our doors were closed to help stop the spread of COVID-19, Audubon’s dedicated staff continued to provide outstanding care for our animals and parks. Our guests have been dearly missed by the Audubon family and we look forward to welcoming you back.”

Audubon has consulted with experts at zoos and aquarium across the country as well as with local museums and attractions and City and State officials to develop a comprehensive reopening plan that will ensure the health and safety of its visitors, staff, volunteers, and animals.

In order to better ensure physical distancing, and as a requirement of the City, the Zoo will limit attendance to 25% capacity and require online reservations. The new timed admission protocol is critical to limiting the number of guests in the Zoo at any time and will support increased physical distancing. [Online tickets](#) are scheduled to go on sale Monday, June 1.

Along with attendance limits, other safety initiatives include requiring staff to wear masks in public spaces, stringent cleaning protocols, and physical distancing signage.

[Click Here for Plan](#)

“As Audubon prepares to reopen our doors to visitors, our ability to generate revenue is still severely limited,” said Forman. “Our facilities are not able to reopen at full capacity, some of our facilities still remain closed, and most of our programs have been halted until future phases of recovery. Since our closure, Audubon has lost an estimated 44% of this year’s self-generated operating revenue, leaving us in an unsustainable position to care for our animals and parks.”

Audubon typically welcomes 750,000 visitors over the summer months and is estimating nearly an 80% decrease this year due to limited capacity, pausing groups and field trips, and decreased

tourism visitation. Audubon's estimated loss of revenue directly generated by visitors to its facilities during March to June is [approximately \\$21M](#).

Although the Zoo is reopening, Audubon has made the difficult decision to cancel its annual fundraiser [Zoo-To-Do for Kids presented by Children's Hospital New Orleans](#), fee-based summer camps, and private event rentals at all facilities through August.

Audubon would like to thank its Reopening Partner, [Children's Hospital New Orleans](#), for helping welcome guests back to Audubon Zoo.

"During this challenging time for our community, Children's Hospital is proud to be the presenting sponsor of Audubon Zoo's Reopening," said President and Chief Executive Officer of Children's Hospital New Orleans John R. Nickens IV. "As neighbors and long standing partners with aligned missions to serve the New Orleans community, Children's Hospital and Audubon Zoo are proud to be working together to bring New Orleans families a safe and enjoyable zoo experience. This is an exciting step forward in our city's reopening, and a wonderful way for families to spend time together enjoying nature in a safe and engaging environment."

Audubon is one of a handful of the nation's top nonprofit zoos and aquariums that are ineligible to participate in any of the existing COVID-19 relief packages because their employee counts exceed 500 people and their annual revenues exceed the maximum allowed. Though closed to the public, these zoos and aquariums are caring for animals and parks with zero operating income.

"This crisis came at our busiest time of year, and the impact has been significant," added Forman. "Securing the resources to continue to care for our animals and reopen our doors as New Orleans families return to normalcy is a priority for Audubon. This first phase of reopening is not the end of our journey, however, and we still have a long road ahead to recovery."

The public can support Audubon by advocating to include zoos and aquariums in any [future legislation](#) and by contributing to the [Audubon Recovery Fund](#).

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