



TIGER TRAILS
& Den Academy

topeka zoo
& conservation center

A LEGACY OPPORTUNITY



WHO WE ARE

Mission Statement

To enrich our community through wildlife conservation and education.

Vision Statement

We believe what we do changes the world. Every choice we make helps save the planet.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Statement

We are committed to ensuring everyone feels welcome and valued by striving to create an environment that is as diverse as the wild spaces we are trying to protect.



ACCREDITATION

In 1971, the Foundation for Zoos and Aquariums was established. Today, it is known as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The organization developed a comprehensive vision to address all aspects of zoo operations, including safety, accreditation, customer service, finance, facilities, and governance.

REBRANDING

The Topeka Zoo has continuously adapted and enhanced its brand over the years. Our aim is to emerge as a front runner in various conservation efforts, actively involving the community and rescuing animals from the brink of extinction. In 2016, we updated our brand to incorporate conservation into our name, highlighting our efforts to enrich the community through wildlife conservation and education.



GOVERNANCE

On April 3, 2021, the City of Topeka and Friends of the Topeka Zoo joined in a Public Private Partnership, transitioning full responsibility for the operations and funding model for the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center to Friends of the Topeka Zoo. This allowed the zoo to move forward as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center is now a true performance and mission-based organization, free from limitations associated with a municipal form of governance.

GAGE PARK IMPROVEMENT

During the November 2022 ballot, residents of Shawnee County voted to implement a 0.2% sales tax to support the three entities located within Gage Park, including the Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center. This tax generates annual revenue to sustain the operational budget of the zoo.

A VISION FOR TIGERS

Celebrating our past while looking toward the future.

As a cherished member of our Topeka Zoo family, you have been an integral part of our journey, helping us create a sanctuary where animals thrive, and guests are inspired by the wonders of the natural world. Thanks to generous donors like you, we've achieved remarkable milestones in animal care, conservation, and education. Today, we invite you to join us in looking towards an exciting future—one that will empower the next generation to become passionate animal advocates.

We are thrilled to announce our new habitat called Tiger Trails & Den Academy, a groundbreaking initiative that will transform how our community engages with conservation. This immersive experience will provide guests with an unprecedented view into the lives of our Sumatran tigers, showcasing the transparency of our work in real time. Through carefully designed habitats, guests will witness the challenges these magnificent creatures face in the wild, and the innovative solutions that are helping them not only survive but thrive.

Our new tiger spaces will highlight the cutting-edge training and breeding program that allow these tigers to participate in their own healthcare. From voluntary blood draws to ultrasound, guests will see firsthand how our team collaborates with these incredible animals, ensuring their well-being while supporting global conservation breeding efforts.

But our vision extends beyond just observing. Through the Den Academy, we are committed to nurturing the animal advocates of tomorrow. Children will be empowered through STEM learning and interactive lab activities, gaining hands-on experience that brings science and conservation to life. They will learn about the devastating impact of poaching and discover how they can make a difference. These interactive experiences will not only educate but also instill empathy, as they see the bond between a mother tiger and her cubs—a powerful reminder of what we stand to lose if we don't act now.

Your continued support is vital to making this vision a reality. By contributing to the Tiger Trails & Den Academy, you will leave a lasting legacy—one that ensures future generations understand the importance of conservation and are equipped to protect the wild wonders of our world.

Together, we can inspire and empower our youth, giving them the tools to become the advocates our planet needs. Thank you for being a part of our past successes, and for joining us as we build a future filled with hope, compassion, and a deep commitment to the animals we all cherish.

With heartfelt gratitude,



Dr. Christina Castellano
Chief Executive Officer
Topeka Zoo & Conservation Center



ABOUT SUMATRAN TIGERS



COMMON NAME: Sumatran Tiger

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Panthera tigris sumatrae*

Sumatran Tigers are the smallest species of Tiger on Earth. They are found only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra, with most of their population existing on nature preserves.

They are considered critically endangered due to habitat loss driven by the palm oil industry, as well as poaching. Several parts of the tiger are utilized in the traditional medicine trade, and their pelts are highly sought after on the black market.

Sumatran Tigers are apex predators within their habitat, with a diet including animals such as wild pigs, deer, monkeys, and fish.

They have webbing between their toes and are considered strong swimmers. They are known to hunt prey, which are less adept at swimming, near the water's edge.

Adult Tigers are solitary animals and will typically only come together to mate. Females give birth to a litter of two to three cubs which will remain with her for about two years.

Fun Fact: Tigers have a range of vocalizations they use to communicate, ranging from an aggressive roar, which can be heard up to two miles away, to the soft and friendly chuff.

SUMATRAN TIGER QUICK FACTS

WHERE THEY LIVE: The Indonesian island of Sumatra

HOW MANY REMAIN: Approximately 500

MAJOR THREATS: Habitat loss, poaching of tigers and their prey

PROJECTS WE SUPPORT: Tiger-human conflict mitigation, Combating wildlife crime and illegal habitat loss

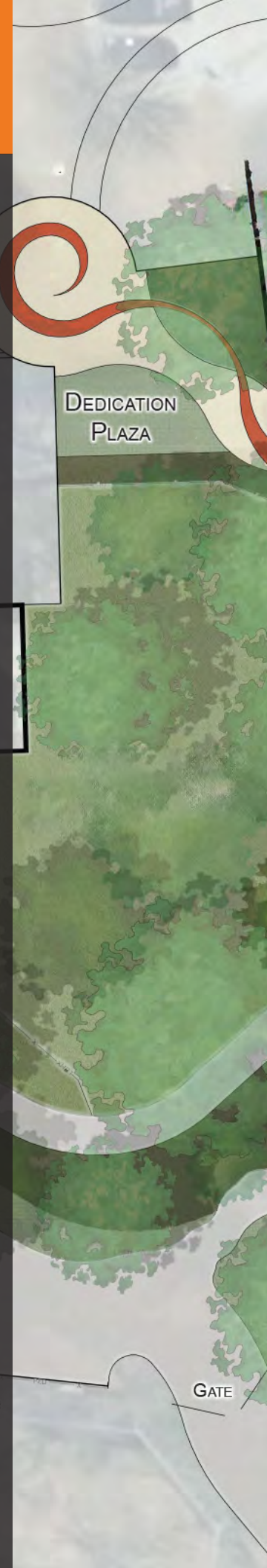
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VISION FOR TIGERS IN TOPEKA

- Engaging platform to inspire youth through the **legacy** of Mark and Bette Morris and their profound contributions to animal wellbeing and conservation.
- Immersive experiences that highlight **transparency** and a 360-degree view of the world of tigers and their conservation challenges and solutions.
- **Innovation** is the foundation to tiger wellbeing that elevates their participation in their own health care.
- **Active, hands-on learning** through a STEM laboratory and themed classroom experience that highlights applied research in animal well-being with a focus on nutrition.
- **Empowerment** through participation in conservation action that tackles the critical issue for tigers – poaching.
- **Conservation breeding program** that builds on the success of our past and ensures a bright future for tigers in nature.
- **Empathy** for tigers fostered through an intimate nursery experience, connecting us with mother and cubs and our shared sense of family.

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GLASS VIEWING

VIEWING
1,600 S.F.

GLASS VIEWING

Glass Viewing

TIGER YARD
10,000 S.F.

BRIDGE

RESTROOM
750 S.F.

POCKET EXHIBIT

TRAINING WALL

GLASS VIEWING

WATERFALL

TRAINING WALL

TIGER YARD
7,250 S.F.

TIGER HOLDING
2,350 S.F.

SERVICE

OFF EXHIBIT
1,400 S.F.

OUR GLOBAL EFFORTS

The survival of these magnificent creatures is under constant threat. The island of Sumatra is divided into three main forest landscapes, where 60% of the world's remaining Sumatran tigers reside. With fewer than 600 tigers left in the wild, they are listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Deforestation, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict continue to push these tigers toward the brink of extinction.

Conservation efforts by the Indonesian government, conservation agencies, and national park staff have led to an increase in the Sumatran tiger population within one of Sumatra's forests. The Topeka Zoo plays a crucial role in these efforts by sponsoring a ranger in Sumatra. This ranger patrols the forests, tracks down poachers, removes snares, and prevents illegal encroachment on the tiger's habitat. Beyond deterring illegal activities, the ranger also fosters positive relationships with local communities, helping to resolve conflicts between humans and the wild tiger population.

Nathanael Jawak, our Anti-Poaching Patrol Coordinator, lead our efforts in the Leusser Range working tirelessly to protect these magnificent creatures. His work is essential to ensuring that the Sumatran tiger population continues to grow and thrive, safeguarding a future for these extraordinary animals



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Nathanael Jawak
Anti-Poaching
Patrol Coordinator

TOPEKA ZOO'S RECENT ACTIVITY IN TIGER CONSERVATION

In May 2014, the zoo welcomed a litter of three female cubs—Shanti, ChloJo, and Raza—who have since moved on to other zoos.

10% of the Sumatran tigers in AZA-accredited zoos have been born at the Topeka Zoo.

In 2018, four more cubs—Badar, Bintang, Raja, and Zayana—were born to Sanjiv and Jingga, with Zayana now residing at Auckland Zoo in New Zealand, where she has had a cub of her own.

The Topeka Zoo is actively involved in tiger management across AZA-accredited zoos, contributing to increased tiger births through initiatives like the Tiger Husbandry Advisory Team (THAT).

The Topeka Zoo's success in tiger breeding led to the arrival of Thomas from Kansas City Zoo and Nisha from Jacksonville Zoo in 2023, marking a new chapter in the zoo's breeding efforts.

The zoo also participates in the Felid TAG Steering Committee, guiding the management and breeding of all cat populations in AZA-accredited facilities.

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TIGER TRAILS & DEN ACADEMY

The Topeka Zoo is proud to announce the upcoming launch of the Tiger Trails & Den Academy Program, a groundbreaking initiative set to revolutionize how our community engages with wildlife conservation. This new program offers an immersive experience that will bring guests closer than ever to our Sumatran tigers, providing a unique window into the lives of these magnificent creatures.



An Unprecedented Conservation Experience

The Tiger Trails & Den Academy Program is designed to showcase the transparency of our conservation work in real time. Guests will have the opportunity to witness the daily challenges faced by Sumatran tigers in the wild, from habitat destruction to poaching, and learn about the innovative solutions that are helping these animals not only survive but thrive.

Carefully designed habitats will allow guests to see the tigers' natural behaviors up close, offering an experience that is both educational and deeply moving.

Cutting-Edge Training Programs

One of the highlights of the Tiger Trails & Den Academy Program is the introduction of cutting-edge training programs that empower our tigers to participate in their own healthcare. From voluntary blood draws to ultrasounds, these training sessions will be conducted in full view of the public, demonstrating the strong bond between our animal care team and the tigers.

These programs not only ensure the well-being of our tigers but also support global conservation breeding efforts, reinforcing our commitment to preserving this critically endangered species.

Empowering the Next Generation

Our vision for the Tiger Trails & Den Academy goes beyond observation. We are dedicated to nurturing the animal advocates of tomorrow by providing children with hands-on experiences that bring science and conservation to life. The Den Academy Program will feature STEM laboratory exhibits and interactive activities designed to educate and inspire.

Children will learn about the devastating impact of poaching, understand the importance of conservation, and discover how they can make a difference. These experiences will foster empathy and awareness, particularly as young guests observe the powerful bond between a mother tiger and her cubs—a poignant reminder of what is at stake.



KEY FEATURES OF THE TIGER TRAILS & DEN ACADEMY

- Immersive habitats that provide an up-close look at Sumatran tigers and their behaviors.
- Transparent conservation efforts, allowing guests to witness the challenges and solutions in real time.
- A look into cutting-edge training programs where tigers participate in their own healthcare.
- STEM-focused displays and activities designed to educate and inspire children.
- Empathy-building experiences that highlight the bond between tiger mothers and their cubs.
- Interactive trail with immersive experiences.

"This immersive experience will provide guests with an unprecedented view into the lives of our Sumatran tigers, showcasing the transparency of our work in real time."





Usually **2-4 tiger cubs** are born per litter.



In short bursts, tigers can run up to **40 mi/hr.**

Tigers can live up to

20

years.



A tiger's stripes are much like our fingerprints — **no two are the same.**

Tigers have

30

teeth.



Their tail is typically **3-4 ft** in length.



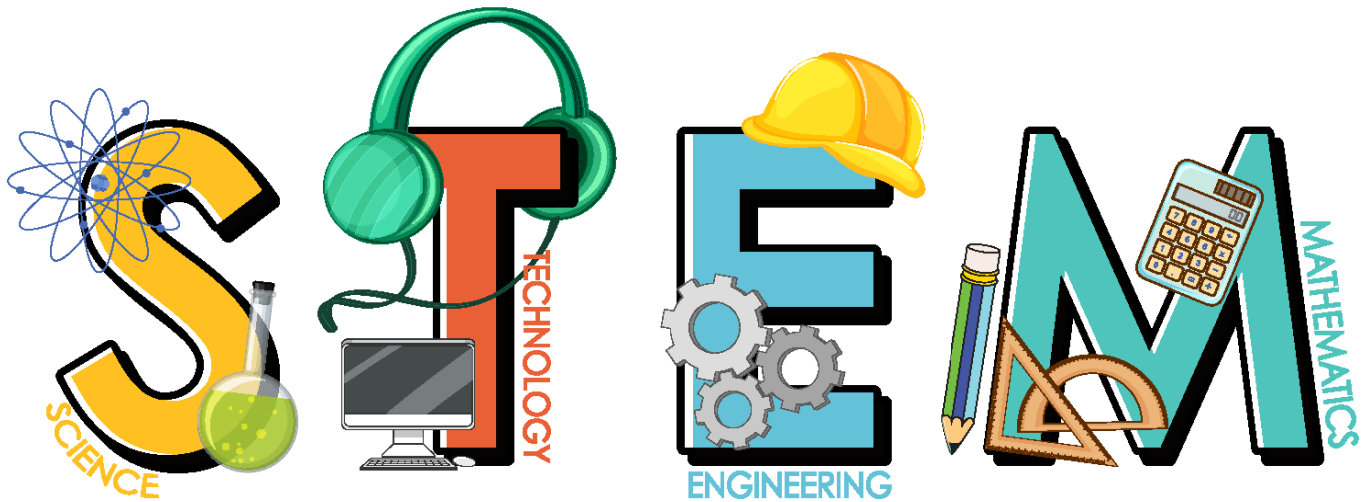
A tiger's claw is on average **2 inches long**. This is comparable to a common house key.



Tigers are **great swimmers** and can even cross large rivers.



INSPIRING FUTURE SCIENTISTS



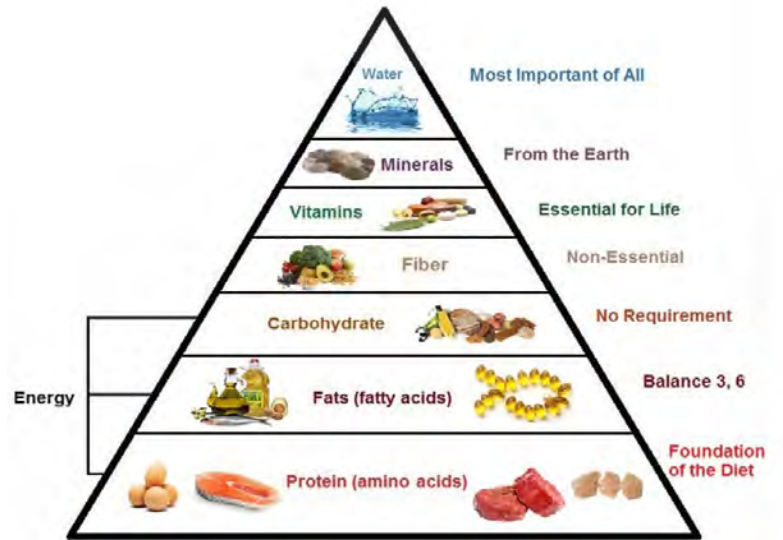
The Tiger Trails & Den Academy is a new initiative that combines STEM learning with wildlife conservation in an engaging and interactive way. As part of this groundbreaking program, children will have the opportunity to participate in a thrilling clues and investigation game designed to teach them how to track a poacher. Through this hands-on activity, young participants will uncover clues, solve puzzles, and learn about the challenges faced by Sumatran tigers, such as habitat destruction and illegal poaching. This immersive experience not only educates children about the importance of conservation but also empowers them to become future wildlife advocates by connecting them directly with real-world conservation issues.

The Topeka Zoo enriches the community through wildlife conservation and education. The zoo's Conservation Committee helps to guide the organization towards practicing, promoting, and supporting conservation at home and around the globe. Our conservation work takes many forms including hands-on conservation work in the field by zoo staff, funding efforts of organizations, making our own facilities greener, and using our animal collection to improve conditions for endangered animals through research in cooperation with other zoos.



INSPIRING FUTURE SCIENTISTS

As our young scientists slip on their lab coats and discover the fundamentals of food and the nutritional needs role playing animal nutritionist. They not only discover what elements are but how combining protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, fatty acids & oils, amino acids combined create a healthy diet for a tiger. By applying taste, texture and variety along with nutritional needs for strong, charismatic animal, we empower and inspire future generations to come. Committing to the wellness of youth today and tomorrow as well as sustaining tigers here and in the wild. Inspiring our future scientists, field researchers, nutritionists, veterinarians, and animal care staff.





THE REMARKABLE WORLD OF VULTURES: NATURE'S CLEANUP CREW



The White-backed Vulture, often overlooked, plays a crucial role in maintaining the health of its ecosystem. As a key scavenger, this vulture species is essential for preventing disease and recycling nutrients. Here's a closer look at why the White-backed Vulture is so important and the challenges it faces.

White-backed Vultures are indispensable to their habitats due to their scavenging role. By consuming carrion, they help keep the environment clean and limit the spread of disease. Their powerful digestive systems are adapted to handle pathogens found in decaying flesh, preventing potential health hazards for other wildlife and humans.

The White-backed Vulture is adapted for its scavenging lifestyle with keen eyesight that allows it to spot carrion from high altitudes. Its large wingspan helps it glide effortlessly over vast distances in search of food. This adaptation is crucial for locating and efficiently exploiting carcasses across extensive areas.

Despite their essential ecological role, White-backed Vultures face severe threats. Many are critically endangered due to habitat loss,

poisoning, and hunting. Poisoning is particularly problematic, as vultures often ingest toxins while feeding on poisoned carcasses intended for other animals. Habitat destruction further exacerbates these challenges by reducing the availability of food sources.

Protecting the White-backed Vulture requires concerted conservation efforts. Organizations are working to combat poisoning, preserve habitats, and enforce legal protections. Public education and awareness campaigns also play a critical role in fostering a greater appreciation for vultures and their conservation needs.

Efforts such as creating safe zones and breeding programs are vital for the recovery of White-backed Vulture populations. By supporting these initiatives, we can help ensure that this remarkable species continues to fulfill its essential role in the ecosystem and thrives for generations to come.

As indispensable scavengers, they contribute significantly to ecosystem health by preventing the spread of disease and aiding in nutrient recycling.





The Impact of Your Support

The success of the Tiger Trails & Den Academy Program relies on the continued support of our community. By contributing to this initiative, you are not only helping to create a world-class conservation program but also leaving a lasting legacy. Your support ensures that future generations will be equipped to protect the wild wonders of our world and continue the vital work of conservation.

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