

A black bear is the central focus of the image, leaning against a vertical wooden post. The bear's head is tilted slightly to the left, and its pink tongue is hanging out of its mouth. Its fur is dark brown with some lighter patches around its eyes and on its chest. The background is a dense, out-of-focus green forest. The text 'topeka zoo' is in the top left, and 'topeka zoo annual report 2024' is in the bottom left.

topeka zoo
& conservation center

topeka zoo annual report
2024

In memoriam of Ho Ho
1989-2024



Our Mission is
to enrich our
community
through wildlife
**conservation &
education.**

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Hi Friends,

When looking back on all that the zoo has accomplished in 2024, I could not be more thrilled about my first full year serving as CEO. I am beyond proud of the efforts we have made in conservation, education, and community engagement, and it is thanks to all our staff and stakeholders that these efforts were possible!

Now to brag a bit...notable in our 2024 accomplishments is the 50th anniversary of our beloved rainforest, which has housed many of this year's 220 programs, educating both children and adults on the beauty and necessary protection of wildlife. Our Storm Drain Art Initiative raised public awareness about storm water pollution and waste disposal to conserve our community's Kansas River. We can't forget one of the highlights of this year: Sean Kenney's Animal Super Powers Made with LEGO Bricks, which invited our community to experience a combination of art and nature in a unique way.

At the heart of all these feats are wildlife lovers like you. Your local Topeka Zoo and myself are incredibly grateful to you for sharing in your passion to help save the planet one step at a time. A heartfelt thank you for an amazing 2024 and a thank you in advance for the many great years to come!

Sincerely,
Dr. Christina Castellano, PhD, MBA
CEO

Christina Castellano



WAZA
World Association
of Zoos and Aquariums



Species Survival Plan

**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

2024

By the Numbers

Total Attendance

263,350

Social Engagement

Instagram: 25.8K Followers

Facebook: 59K Followers

TikTok: 47.1 K Followers

Vision & DEAI Statement

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

DEAI 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.

Financials

Special Events & Promotions:
\$961,093.42

Memberships: \$489,519.95

Conservation: \$44,898.68

Admission Revenue:
\$815,510.99

Zoo Experiences & Rentals:
\$190,093.42

Concessions: \$166,455.09

Retail Revenue: \$301,770.76

Zoo Education: \$142,777.34

Events at the Zoo

Earth Day

April 22nd, 2024

Party for the Planet celebrates conservation and environmental stewardship with hands-on learning and family-friendly activities. Guests explore interactive exhibits, participate in crafts and games, and engage with Zoo educators to learn about wildlife and sustainability. Student-led projects from the Zoo's EcoClub are showcased, highlighting youth-driven conservation efforts. This annual event inspires curiosity, connects the community to nature, and reinforces the Zoo's mission to protect wildlife and the environment.



Roar & Pour

April 26th, 2024

This year's Roar and Pour Wine Fest presented by Kaw Valley Bank and Kendall Construction invited guests to sip, savor, and explore the Zoo after hours while enjoying live music and local flavors. The event's standout feature—a collaborative art auction pairing the creativity of nine local artists with our animal ambassadors—gave attendees a truly one-of-a-kind experience. Coupled with a robust silent auction showcasing items from area businesses, the evening raised critical support for the Zoo's conservation work and educational programming.

Brew at the Zoo

September 14th, 2024

Brew at the Zoo, presented by Kaw Valley Bank and Kendall Construction, remained one of our most popular fundraisers. Guests sampled local and domestic beers while enjoying live music, games, food trucks, and up-close animal encounters. This lively event brought the community together and raised vital support for the Topeka Zoo's conservation and education efforts.

Boo at the Zoo

October 19th & 26th, 2024

Boo at the Zoo, the highest-attended family event of the year, delighted guests over two full weekends with a safe and spooktacular Halloween experience. Families explored the Zoo's decorated pathways, enjoyed trick-or-treating, engaged with costumed staff and volunteers, and participated in seasonal games and activities. This beloved event offered a fun, interactive way for the community to connect while supporting the Zoo.



Zoo Lights

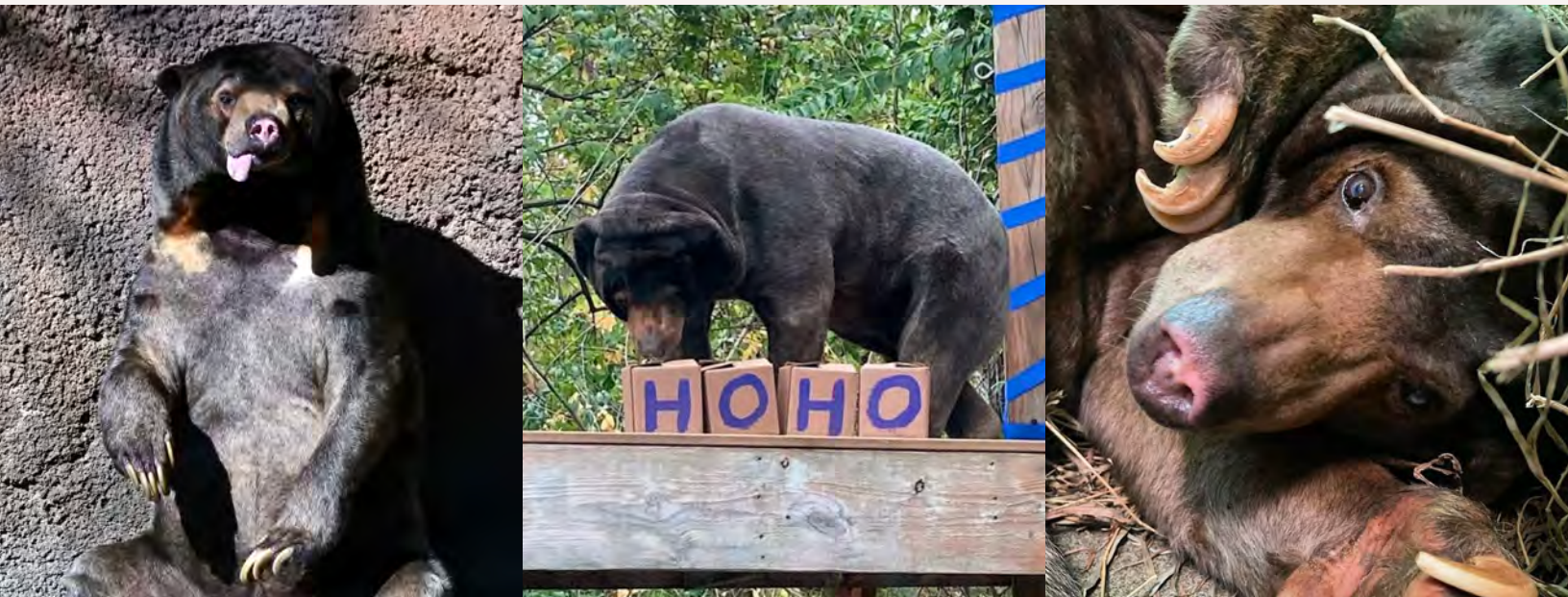
November 22nd-December 28th, 2024

The 5th annual Zoo Lights Presented by Everygy continued to shine as one of Topeka's most cherished holiday traditions. From mid-November through late December, thousands of guests experienced dazzling light displays, festive entertainment, and visits from Santa Claus. With options ranging from private family igloos to corporate gatherings and group celebrations, Zoo Lights provided a joyful and memorable backdrop for the community to come together during the holiday season.

In Memoriam of Ho Ho the Sun Bear

Our beloved sun bear, Ho Ho, passed away on November 25 at 35 years old. Born at Woodland Park Zoo in 1989, Ho Ho lived at several zoos before calling Topeka home in 2017. He was beloved locally and online for his remarkable longevity and endearing features—a droopy tongue and missing teeth that gave him unforgettable expressions. Though he never roamed the wild, his species faces growing threats in Southeast Asia, where sun bears are listed as Vulnerable. Ho Ho's legacy lives on, inspiring support for conservation and ethical wildlife experiences.

Rest in peace, Ho Ho. You were one of a kind.



The Circle of Life

*Celebrating the animals we've welcomed,
remembering those we've lost.*

Arrived/Born/Hatched

Lippy the Giant Indian Fruit Bat
Blue Death Feigning Beetles
2 Patas monkeys

Passed

Ho Ho the Sun Bear
Cocoa the Nigerian Dwarf Goat

Individual Animals

67 Mammals
84 Birds
21 Reptiles
5 Amphibians
17 species of invertebrates
1 Group of koi fish

Strategic Plan Initiatives

- 01** *Slow the threat of extinction*
- 02** *Reduce the effects of plastic on the environment*
- 03** *Ensure food availability for the future*
- 04** *Create respect and empathy for water conservation*
- 05** *Innovation: Be a pipeline to solutions*

Single-use plastics pose a significant threat to wildlife, ecosystems, and waterways. Through a new partnership in 2024, the Topeka Rotary Club helped sponsor an educational video on reducing disposable plastics. This collaboration engages the community, raises awareness, and offers practical tips for minimizing plastics at home, in gardens, and throughout daily life, supporting a healthier environment for wildlife and future generations.

Learning and Engagement

In 2024, the Topeka Zoo's Education Department engaged over 13,000 learners through 500 programs, both on Zoo grounds and throughout the community. From interactive on-site experiences to off-site school programs, participants explore topics in conservation, sustainability, and wildlife, connecting local and global ecosystems. The student-led EcoClub offers middle and high school students hands-on opportunities to plan activities and create conservation projects, which are showcased at the annual Party for the Planet. These programs inspire curiosity, foster environmental stewardship, and create lasting connections between the community and the natural world.



Our Generous Donors

Thank you to our incredible donors for your unwavering support and generosity over the past year and all those prior. Your contributions play a vital role in helping the Topeka Zoo provide exceptional care for our animals, support important conservation initiatives, and create meaningful educational experiences for our community. Because of you, we continue to grow as a place where wonder, learning, and wildlife come together.

The zoo and our animals continue to thrive thanks to YOU. Your contributions directly sustain animal care, enrichment programs, and conservation efforts. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and commitment to our mission.



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www.topekazoo.org
(785)368-9180
635 SW Gage Blvd. Topeka, KS 66606