



## The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium - A Good Neighbor to Have

By Noell Wolfgram Evans  
Photos Courtesy of Graham S. Jones and the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

Every neighborhood has that one neighbor whom everyone knows. In our community, that neighbor isn't so much a person as it is a...well a creature. A collection of creatures at that. The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium has been a vital part of our collective neighborhoods, changing our perception of nature for generations.

The zoo encompasses nearly 600 acres of public spaces, animal habitats, rehabilitation centers, educational areas, medical pods, and offices. What many don't realize though is that the reach of the zoo extends well beyond its physical borders. Through a grants program, the zoo has awarded millions of dollars to organizations in over thirty countries dedicated to the conservation of their native wildlife. Closer to home, the zoo offers thousands of hours of educational opportunities (through classes, camps, special event appearances, talks, and workshops)

for people of all ages. The goal of all of this effort is to help the zoo achieve its Vision - "The sustainable co-existence of all living things."

### The Star Treatment

You no longer have to visit the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium to get the "zoo experience." That's because the zoo has announced its starring role in Zoo Life, a new series on Nat Geo WILD.

The one-hour series will begin airing in June and will allow viewers an unprecedented look at what makes the zoo the world class facility that it is. Not only will we be shown "behind the scenes" footage, but cameras will also be there when the zoo celebrates its rehabilitation efforts by releasing some animals back into the wild.



Zoo Life hopes to shine a spotlight on the care and education that the zoo provides to visitors each and every day. Keep an eye on your TV Guide for airtimes.

The Nat Geo WILD show is just one of the many exciting new changes that 2018 has brought to one of most beloved members of the community. Some of those changes include new residents.

### New Friends

One of the fun things about the zoo is that it's always growing. At the end of 2017 and the beginning of 2018, the White Rhino herd at The Wilds increased with the birth of four new babies. The White Rhino has been classified as Near-Threatened and so these births help to showcase the zoo's commitment to conservation.

Those babies were joined in the nursery by two Dama Gazelle calves. This is significant because there are estimated to be less than 300 Dama Gazelles currently in their native habitat.

### Plan Your Trip

When you visit the zoo this year you can take a trip to DinoIsland, participate in the world's largest swim lesson, hear some mournful jazz, take a HOOfit walk, or get in a game of Zoolue. Of course you can also experience true moments of natural inspiration as you get up close with some of the most majestic creatures to roam the Earth.

When's the last time you made a visit to this hometown treasure? Make your plans today at [www.columbuszoo.org](http://www.columbuszoo.org)

### Did you know:

There are over 10,000 animals from across 600 species under the care of the zoo.

Since 1991, the Partners in Conservation program has helped support the people and the wildlife of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The zoo opened in 1927. (Although it feels like he has been there forever, Jack Hanna didn't become Director until 1978.)

In May 1999, the zoo first became a temporary refuge for manatees looking to escape colder weather or recover from injuries.

In 1988, going to the zoo in the winter became a thing to do with the start of Wildlights.



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