



PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
Contact: **Rosemary Jalink**
Director of Marketing
The Jackson Zoo
rjalink@jacksonzoo.org

Steve Feldman
Senior V.P. External Affairs
AZA
sfeldman@aza.org

Jackson Zoo Receives Coveted Accreditation
Ranks among top 10% of the more than 2,000 zoos and aquariums in the U.S.

Jackson, MS 9/21/11 **AZA Grants Accreditation To The Jackson Zoo**

"By meeting high Association of Zoos and Aquariums Accreditation Standards, The Jackson Zoo has demonstrated its leadership among zoos and aquariums," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "Only the best of the best rise to this level, and we congratulate the professionals at the Jackson Zoo for their hard work."

Beth Poff, Executive Director, stated that "to be accredited, the Zoo underwent a thorough investigation to ensure it has and will continue to meet ever-rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association. We are thrilled to maintain this distinction"

"I am extremely pleased that the Jackson Zoo has again been recognized as an accredited zoo. With the unstable economic times, it is difficult for non-profit organizations to not only maintain high standards, but also to improve the quality of services. The Jackson Zoo has strived to develop a comprehensive plan to strengthen the value of the Zoo as a community asset. Receiving the recent accreditation status from the AZA validates the leadership, commitment, and dedication of the zoo staff. They are to be commended for their efforts." added Jackson Zoo Board President, Wanda Quon.

The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the institution's operation in areas such as animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff, and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and other areas. The inspection team prepares an extensive written report for AZA's independent Accreditation Commission. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal Commission hearing, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied. Any institution that is denied may reapply one year after the Commission's decision is made.

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting an institution dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, please visit www.aza.org.

Zoo admission is \$9.00 for adults, \$6.00 for children ages 2-12, and \$8.10 for senior citizens (65 and over). Children under the age of 2 and Friends of the Zoo members are admitted free of charge.

The Jackson Zoo is located at 2918 West Capitol Street in Jackson and is open daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit www.jacksonzoo.org to check out exciting special events, animal updates, one-of-a-kind education programs, membership and adoption packages, and so much more. The Jackson Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The AZA is America's leading accrediting organization that sets rigorous, professional standards for zoos and aquariums. The AZA is building North America's largest wildlife conservation movement by engaging and inspiring the 143 million annual visitors to its member institutions and their communities to care about and take action to help protect wildlife.