Looking for inspiration? I’m inspired every day by the people and projects in the 2017 Audubon Nature Institute Conservation Report. Our Audubon team members take their expertise, experience and professional networks, add in healthy doses of imagination and blue-sky thinking, and spin it all into solutions creating a positive impact on our eco-system and the world’s animals. Just when it seems our challenges are insurmountable, an Audubon program such as those you’ll learn about here will give me hope. With commitment and the help of supporters and peers around the region and around the world, Audubon makes conservation happen. It’s never been more important to keep moving forward for our children and our planet.

Sincerely,

Ron Forman
President and CEO
Audubon Nature Institute
Partnership for Wildlife

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to transform zoos and aquariums with the Alliance for Sustainable Wildlife (ASW). Ensuring animals will engage and inspire future generations, this partnership between Audubon and San Diego Zoo Global launched in September 2017 at Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center. The program provides a breeding haven for mammal and bird species declining in population. Before the year was out, ASW welcomed the birth of an endangered bongo antelope. More births would quickly follow in 2018.
**Partnership Against Ocean Plastics**

The Aquarium garnered special recognition from the City of New Orleans in 2017 for efforts to address the growing plastics crisis in our oceans. Aquariums across the country are joining forces to shift away from single-use plastics, encouraging consumers to demand alternatives. It’s all part of the “In Our Hands” consumer campaign of the Aquarium Conservation Partnership, a coalition of 19 aquariums taking action together to advance ocean and freshwater conservation.

**Campaign Results:**

- **19 Aquariums**
  - Joined together for a collective impact on the plastic pollution issue

- **120,000,000**
  - Readers from 362 individual news stories

- **3,000,000**
  - People reached from 60 dedicated emails

**Saving Animals from Extinction (SAFE)**

Audubon Nature Institute has continued its support of the SAFE program through a substantial, multi-year pledge to help ensure that it continues to mature. SAFE combines the power of zoo and aquarium visitors with resources and expertise of Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoos and aquariums to save vulnerable wildlife species from extinction. Audubon has supported sharks, rays, and penguins through this program.

**Crowdsourcing for Penguins**

“Invest in the Nest” launched in 2017, and exceeded our $150,000 goal for artificial nests for African penguins through crowdfunding on Kickstarter. Audubon CEO Ron Forman called it “…a great way for the public to join us in helping save African penguins in the wild.” The AZA partnership brought together scientists, engineers, accredited zoos and aquariums, and the public to construct nests for penguins, which have been declining in numbers, in South Africa.
Conservation Near and Far

From far-flung locales to familiar areas close to home, Audubon Nature Institute participates in field projects having a real-world impact on wildlife. Our work with Jamaican iguanas and Louisiana pines snakes found our animal experts in sometimes less-than-ideal conditions, bolstering populations of species like these to give them a shot at survival in the wild.

Restoration Close to Home

Audubon teamed up with the New Orleans Pelicans and the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana for a hands-on project in Buras, La., in May. This rewarding day doing good conservation work included bagging oyster shells from restaurants for transport to oyster reef restoration sites. This was the second year for Audubon’s participation in the project, which began in 2014.

Partnering for Outreach

The Zoo Conservation Outreach Group (ZCOG) promotes capacity building and collaborative zoo and aquarium-based wildlife conservation efforts throughout the Americas. Audubon is especially proud to be a member of the ZCOG Leadership Circle, which provides critical operations and programming support allowing ZCOG to pursue its core mission.

Scholarship Outreach

Audubon sponsors ZCOG’s Species Conservation and Management scholarship to help improve records-keeping standards in developing country zoos and aquariums.
Audubon Zoo welcomed the births of two Barasingha deer. These “swamp deer” are part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Species Survival Plan population. The goal of the SSP is to create a genetically sustainable zoo population through cooperative breeding programs.

**BIG BIRTHS**

**Endangered animal baby highlights**

- 10,584 Hours Dedicated to raising these chicks
- 44 Births at Audubon Zoo of threatened mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians
- 12 Endangered cranes hatched at the Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center
- 85 Eggs Laid by the Whooping Cranes at the Survival Center from 2000-2017
- 1 Critically endangered eastern bongo born at the Survival Center
Welcome Ruby

A young endangered sea otter got a warm New Orleans welcome in March at the Aquarium. Ruby was just a day old when she was found abandoned off Monterey, California, and was determined to be unreleasable. Audubon Aquarium was fortunate to bring her into our sea otter program. Ruby quickly fit right in and is a favorite with staff and guests, teaching visitors about the fragile nature of the Pacific coast eco-system.

Colobus Blossom

Spring brought a different kind of bloom to the Zoo in 2017 with an endangered baby colobus monkey, Ua, which means “flower” in Swahili, was born March 17. The birth was part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Colobus Species Survival Plan (SSP), a program to manage a genetically healthy population of black and white colobus monkeys in North American zoos.

Arthropod species bred at the Insect Rearing Lab

30

Arthropod exhibits at Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium

The Butterfly Garden and Insectarium’s support lab in eastern New Orleans is where staff maintain and rear live arthropods for display downtown. This offsets the need to re-supply the museum, saving time and money while giving staff expertise in how to sustain managed populations.

70
Since 1993, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center has been Audubon’s innovative off-site breeding and research facility. The Survival Center is home campus to a number of significant conservation programs, including Coastal Wildlife Network (CWN) and Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.).

The Audubon Aquatic Center at the Survival Center serves as an animal rehab facility.

2017 Program Highlights

Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries
$475,000  |  7,800 hours

Coastal Wildlife Network
$125,226  |  2,500 hours

Whooping Crane Recovery Project
$72,039  |  3,700 hours

Jamaican Iguana Recovery Program
$5,300  |  200 hours
A Good Day for Raye

May 10 was a very good day for a rehabilitated Kemp’s ridley sea turtle nicknamed Raye. The young turtle was found emaciated and dehydrated some ten months earlier in Lake Calcasieu and brought to Coastal Wildlife Network (CWN) for recovery. On May 10, in partnership with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the turtle, a federally-protected species, was released back into the wild. It was just the latest in a series of successes for Audubon’s Coastal Wildlife Network, which has rehabilitated more than 200 sea turtles since 2010.

Tasty Tradition

It’s New Orleans, so it’s no surprise that our seafood sustainability initiative is incredibly delicious! The Sustainable Seafood Dinner Series presented by Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) continues to gain in popularity. The second year of the series drew renowned chefs from across the Gulf region celebrating the bounty of the Gulf of Mexico for enthusiastic diners. G.U.L.F. focuses on supporting our fisheries, creating sustainability projects that will increase their profile to buyers, and educating consumers about the importance of supporting local, domestic seafood.
Decades of Crane Conservation

The distinctive call of the endangered Mississippi sandhill crane has been ringing through Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center for more than twenty years. As one of Audubon’s signature conservation initiatives, each year cranes hatched and reared at Audubon are released into the Mississippi sandhill crane population at the federal refuge in Gautier, Mississippi. The success of this program led to Audubon assuming a greater role in the federal whooping crane reintroduction program. Audubon experts raised three of the twelve whooping crane chicks released in a conservation partnership including Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Chevron in 2017.

Caring for the King

Enrichment and training programs for the creatures under our care enhance the quality of life for our cherished animals. Case in point: endangered green sea turtle King Mydas at the Aquarium was due for a physical, so curators prepped him through operant conditioning training in the weeks before the exam. The result? One very relaxed and compliant 233-pound turtle who passed his 2017 physical with flying colors, even enjoying a snack or two in the process.

Reef Rescue

At the Aquarium, Reef Rangers were on the job, taking a virtual dive into a coral reef environment to help restore the ecosystem. The cutting-edge technology of “Reef Rescue” created a unique, fun and rewarding experience for guests, communicating the importance of coral reefs to our planet. Even the youngest divers and future conservationists could take the plunge.
Audubon Nature Institute participates in more than 100 Species Survival Plans and Studbooks across amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals along with many other managed programs.

Highlights from our participation in AZA Cooperative Programs include:

1. UNITED STATES
   • American Black Bear
   • Desert Pupfish
   • Eastern Bog Turtle
   • Lined Seahorse
   • Louisiana Pine Snake
   • Mississippi Gopher Frog
   • Sand Tiger Shark
   • Southern Sea Otter
   • Spotted Turtle
   • Texas Blind Salamander
   • Whooping Crane

2. CUBA
   • Cuban Amazon Parrot

3. PANAMA
   • Panamanian Golden (Ahogado) Frog
   • Panamanian Golden (Sora) Frog

4. CENTRAL/SOUTH AMERICA
   • Black Howler Monkey
   • Bushmaster
   • Capybara
   • Chacoan Peccary
   • Crested Screamer
   • Giant Anteater
   • Hoffman’s Two-toed Sloth
   • Hyacinth Macaw
   • Jaguar
   • King Vulture
   • Maned Wolf
   • Plush-crested Jay
   • Scarlet Ibis
   • St. Vincent Agouti
   • Stingrays:
     - Bigtooth River Ray
     - Ocellated River Ray
     - Tiger River Ray
     - White-Blotched River Ray

5. AFRICA
   • Aardvark
   • African Painted Dog
   • African Penguin
   • Black-crowned Crane
   • Bongo Antelope
   • East African Eland
   • Eastern Black and White Colobus
   • Mandrill
   • Pink-backed Pelican
   • Red River Hog
   • Serval
   • Southern White Rhino
   • Western Lowland Gorilla

6. INDIA
   • Nicobar Pigeon
   • Zebra Shark

7. ASIA
   • Asian Elephant
   • Asian Small-clawed Otter
   • Barasingha

8. MALAYSIA
   • Malayan Great Argus
   • Malayan Sun Bear
   • Malayan Tiger
   • False Gharial

9. INDONESIA
   • Bali Mynah
   • Komodo Dragon
   • North Sulawesi Babirusa
   • Rhinoceros Hornbill
   • Sumatran Orangutan

10. MARIANA ISLANDS
    • Mariana Fruit Dove

11. AUSTRALIA
    • Abdimis Seahorse
    • Prehensile-tailed Skink
    • Straw-necked Ibis
They hail from the far corners of the world, but they come together at the Zoo to create connections and engage visitors in saving our natural world. Audubon’s Animal Ambassador program brings animals like Mr. Miyagi, an orange-eyed Eurasian eagle-owl, up close to visitors for a personal and memorable experience. Other Ambassador Animals delighting guests in 2017 included Maui, the military macaw, serval Chobe, and Aragora, the rose-haired tarantula.
GREEN TEAM

Audubon’s Green Team is on the job, taking steps every day to help our environment. For starters, all Audubon facilities recycle common materials as well as special waste like batteries, ink cartridges, paint, aerosol cans, light bulbs, and electronics. In 2017 the Green Team recycled Audubon’s old uniforms when we updated styles.

Audubon Catering
The first Louisiana caterer to be certified by the National Green Restaurant Association

Most Common Recycled Materials at Audubon Nature Institute

- **66,700** cigarette butts collected in Woldenberg Riverfront Park for the cigarette butt recycling program
- **720 Cubic Yards** of debris composted and recycled
- **50-gallon rain barrels** collect rainwater to water Audubon plants
- **210,500** plastic items saved from landfills

No plastic shopping bags, cups, straws, or lids

Cigarette butts collected in Woldenberg Riverfront Park for the cigarette butt recycling program

50-gallon rain barrels collect rainwater to water Audubon plants

210,500 plastic items saved from landfills
As an Audubon volunteer, we put you to work helping wildlife! For example, in 2016, Audubon volunteers planted 1,696 native trees, shrubs, grasses and flowers at Audubon Louisiana Nature Center over the course of three weekends. That’s making a difference!

JOIN
The Audubon Nature Institute family is growing every day. Join this forward-thinking group of environmental citizens who are ensuring our children have a future surrounded by the wonders of nature. Become an Audubon Nature Institute member.

DONATE
Donate to Audubon Nature Institute and invest in the future of our natural world.

Audubon Nature Institute is a 501(c)3 not for profit that operates a family of ten museums and parks dedicated to nature. Working together, we can create a bright future for generations to come.

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