Pollinators are in danger, but you can save them.

In New Orleans, the local flora is waking up from winter and filling the city with color. Around the globe, however, the animals responsible for our vibrant gardens and bountiful crops are in danger.

Populations of pollinators—animals like bees, bats, birds, and small mammals—are declining worldwide due to habitat loss, pesticides, disease, and climate change.

In addition to the tragedy inherent in any species extinction, there’s a practical reason to be concerned about the pollinator crisis. Pollinators help 80% of the planet’s flowering plants and crops reproduce. And two of mankind’s greatest inventions—chocolate and coffee—could not exist without pollinators!

Pollinators are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food. Put simply, without pollinators, Earth’s animals—including humans—don’t eat.

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Message from the President

L. Ronald Forman President and CEO

Dear Audubon Family,

With the year off and running, we are so grateful to share the spring with you. Because of your overflowing generosity, your animals continue to thrive. At the Zoo, Sumatran orangutan Reese gave birth to her first offspring, and, at the Aquarium, a new penguin chick hatched. We are thrilled to welcome these new members to our animal family.

In this newsletter issue, you’ll see how you helped release endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtles into the Gulf of Mexico and how Zion celebrated her first birthday. You’ll also see how one young donor creatively supports Audubon and how you can save pollinators and celebrate Party for the Planet presented by Entergy.

Audubon Park remains a beautiful source of respite for the community. Your support ensures it continues to be a great place to relax and unwind safely with your family and friends. As the weather warms, I hope to see you on my next walk around the Park. Until then, thank you for being part of the Audubon family.

With gratitude,

L. Ronald Forman

Pollinators (Continued)

That’s why your support is so important. With your generosity, you help our community learn about pollinators. At Audubon Zoo, you can see wild pollinators and find inspiration for your home garden by checking out the Butterfly Circle and the Bayer Feed a Bee Pollinator Habitat. In Audubon Park, you can explore the Gumbel Fountain Bed and Usdin Gardens.

You can spot bees, butterflies, and bugs of all kinds during a hike on any of Audubon Louisiana Nature Center’s trails. One dedicated pollinator path is also a stop for migratory birds!

Your generosity also supports the many pollinators in Audubon’s care, including the bats in the Zoo’s “Criaturas de la Noche” nocturnal house, the birds in the Zoo’s aviary and the Aquarium’s Parakeet Pointe, and, of course, many of the bugs you’ll see when the Butterfly Garden and Insectarium reopens as part of the Aquarium.

Pollinators need our help, but the good news is that you can make a positive impact for them right in your own backyard. Steps as simple as planting native flowers and grasses, providing nesting grounds for birds, cutting your grass a little higher to let small native flowers grow, avoiding harsh pesticides, and choosing organic produce can add up to a big difference!

Be sure to mark your calendar for Party for the Planet presented by Entergy for a series of virtual events and activities making a positive impact on the natural world. The virtual festivities kick off during Earth Week on April 18 and run through June 27. Virtual events include Endangered Species Day, World Oceans Day, and Pollinator Week. You can follow along by tuning into Audubon’s social media pages to discover imaginative new ways to experience nature, create healthy habitats, and help neighbors, big and small, from home.
A Young Donor Creatively Gives Back
Justin Mouledous creates VisZoo to support the animals he loves.

Justin Mouledous grew up at Audubon. A lifelong animal enthusiast, he would visit frequently with his mother, sometimes multiple times a week. “Growing up in suburbia, the most exciting animal I ever got to see was the occasional white-tailed deer,” said Mouledous. “The Zoo became my happy place.”

He attributes a large part of his development to his time at Audubon—learning animal facts and behavioral habits at a young age. One animal that stands out is the giraffe, which Justin hopes to work with in the future. “They are currently experiencing a silent extinction, and I want to do everything in my power to make sure that does not progress,” he said. “I cannot imagine walking through Audubon Zoo and not seeing the giraffes around the bend from Monkey Hill.”

A meaningful place in his life, Justin wanted to give back to Audubon. While a student at Archbishop Hannan High School, he created VisZoo, which combines “visual art,” “visit,” and “zoo” in its name. “Its three core values are the proverbial ABC’s: Art, Biology, and Charity,” said Mouledous.

VisZoo organizes art contests and features the winner’s design on a t-shirt. Proceeds from contest entry fees and t-shirt sales are “donated directly to the institution that has given me and all of the people in the New Orleans community so much, Audubon Nature Institute,” Mouledous explained. Last year, Justin donated VisZoo’s first proceeds to the Audubon Recovery Fund—helping ensure Audubon’s viability for future generations.

Justin is enjoying his first year at the University of Oregon where he studies environmental science with a concentration in conservation biology. “I also plan to minor in landscape architecture to pay homage to my creative and nature-oriented soul,” he added.

Thank you to Justin and everyone who has supported Audubon during these challenging times. Your support means the world!

Happy Hatch Day, Zion!

Zion turned one on February 17! The endangered African penguin had a Mardi Gras themed celebration with her parents, Hubig and Ocio, and the rest of the colony. Thank you for supporting Zion and ensuring she can grow, thrive, and be a representative for her endangered species!
Coastal Wildlife Network releases Kemp’s ridley sea turtles into natural habitat
Thank you for helping 28 endangered sea turtles return home!

In March, Audubon’s CWN released 13 Kemp’s ridley sea turtles into the Gulf of Mexico after being rescued from a large cold-stunning event last fall. The turtles were named for iconic Mardi Gras krewes and marching groups, including Zulu, Themis, Rex, and Endymion.

After being stabilized in New England, the turtles were transported to CWN for long-term treatment, where they underwent highly individualized treatment plans. The remaining 15 turtles will be released in additional phases.

You’re Invited: Tickets on sale Friday, April 30!
Support your favorite animals through the 2021 Zoo-To-Do events! These social-distancing-friendly fundraisers will offer an in-person experience for a limited number of guests at Audubon Zoo.

Zoo-To-Do for Kids presented by Children’s Hospital New Orleans
Friday, September 10
4-8 p.m.
KidsZooToDo.org

Hancock Whitney Zoo-To-Do
Friday, September 17
7-11 p.m.
This year’s event will offer an in-person experience for Sponsors and Patrons only.
ZooToDo.org

Thanks to your generosity, CWN released 13 sea turtles along the Grand Isle shoreline.