



STAFF REPORT

To: Board of Management

From: Shanna E. Young
Executive Director
Marketing & Communications

Subject: **VISITOR STATISTICS YEAR TO DATE DECEMBER 31, 2009**

Date: 2010-01-06

Summary:

This report will update the Board of Management on visitor statistics for the period ending 2009-12-31.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that this report be received for information.

Background:

Budgeted monthly attendance targets are based upon rolling five-year averages by month. The targets also reflect any shifts in the calendar for statutory holidays and number of weekends each month.

While the Zoo is open 12 months of the year, the peak months for visitors attending is between May to October with consistently warmer and dry weather when visitors want to enjoy the outdoors.

Comments/Discussion:

The third highest attendance in the Zoo's 35 year history was achieved in 2009 reaching 1,459,574 visitors. The year surpassed the previous third place (Dinosaurs in 2007 and 1,432,656 visitors) and was close behind second place (White Lions in 1994 and 1,473,855). Year to date attendance was 11% ahead of 2008 and 15% ahead of budget. The Zoo's membership base also achieved its highest levels ever, reaching 33,620 households, +8% or 2,510 households to 2008.

While the dreary weather of snow and rain in December impacted the usually popular 34th Annual Christmas Treats Walk held on December 26 with fewer visitors, the Zoo's 7th Annual New Years Eve Family Countdown was once again enjoyed by a sell-out crowd of 4,000 visitors who withstood the constant freezing rain throughout the night. A good time was had by all as special animal visitors, magicians, Max & Ruby characters, African drumming featuring Njacko Backo and a Jonas Brothers tribute band entertained the crowd.

These results are especially gratifying given the very difficult economic climate in 2009 where we saw our corporate groups' activity fall off by approximately 30% and the region suffering through a wet summer until August. Some well placed promotions and special events throughout the year, the high appeal of the interactive Sharks at Stingray Bay exhibit, the opening of the new Tundra Trek exhibits with the return of polar bears and the on-going popularity of the Zoo's educational programs especially Zoo Camps and the overnight Serengeti Bush Camp were key contributors to our strong performance. Some examples of admission coupon promotions include the TTC Metropass program, Spring free child admission with Kelloggs cereals, Mark's Work Warehouse June flyer, Telus, the Delta Toronto East partnership and a cross-promotion with the National Ballet during their Nutcracker performances.

Plans for 2010 are well underway. The year starts with promotional support from Boom 97.3 (formerly 97.3 EZ ROCK) in January and February with our Polar Bear Days promotion reminding people that we are open throughout the winter, followed by the Zoo's annual Love Bugs for the Valentines Day and for Family Day weekend of February 13-15, 2010.

Shanna E. Young
Executive Director
Marketing & Communications

List of Attachments:

Toronto Zoo Visitor Statistics for the year-to-date ending 2009-12-31
Toronto Zoo Comparison of Attendance by Month