

2024 Impact Report

Date: March 21, 2025

To: Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo

From: Chief Science Officer

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides an annual summary of the Toronto Zoo's Conservation Science research, education, communication, community engagement and outreach, partnerships, and conservation breeding and monitoring programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Science Officer, recommends that:

1. The Board of Management of the Toronto Zoo receives the 2024 Impact Report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from this report. The report will be available online as a public document.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history available for this item.

COMMENTS

In 2024, the Wildlife Science branch at your Toronto Zoo celebrated 50 years of conservation science, a time during which we built our expertise and collaborations in core science areas: veterinary, reproductive, nutrition, welfare, and field conservation

sciences. The knowledge acquired in those science fields enabled us to significantly enhance zoo practices, leading to improved animal health and welfare, successful breeding programs, increased longevity under human care, and stronger contributions to national and global conservation efforts. As we prepared to undertake the new Strategic Plan, 2024 became a year of transition with the science teams moving towards an inter-disciplinary and holistic approach to conservation science. This impact report highlights our first steps in that new and exciting direction.

Your Toronto Zoo is deeply committed to a nature-positive future and accelerating conservation action in support of Canada's 2030 Nature Strategy. Our goal of expanding our conservation impact involves the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN's) One Plan Approach to conservation, which brings together zoo, wild and 'frozen' individuals to ensure genetically and demographically healthy populations for future generations. Establishing effective species preservation and recovery programs requires an in-depth understanding of the species' and individual's physical, psychological and reproductive needs across the varied stages of their lives, which was accomplished through our world-class conservation science research and implementation with local, national and international partners from the zoo, academic, government and non-governmental communities.

Your Toronto Zoo is also deeply committed to inclusive conservation and knowledge sharing. Successful conservation requires people to be actively involved in the story by fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for protecting the environment and wildlife. On-going and new relationships were nurtured with Indigenous and local communities to engage in collaborative conservation efforts. Outreach initiatives ranged from interactive science 'pop-up' events held on-site for zoo guests to community-based knowledge-sharing events aimed at inspiring nature-positive behaviours. Our team delivered science communication and education to diverse audiences that included lecture-based and experiential learning, scientific conferences and publications, as well as traditional and social media releases.

Our conservation science goals were achieved while exceeding in animal welfare standards expected by our accrediting and certifying bodies (AZA, CCAC, OMAFA), demonstrating our commitment to excellence in ethical animal management and research. Conservation science impact would not be possible without the support of our colleagues across the zoo, including, but not limited to, Wildlife Care, Strategic Communications, Partnerships & Events, and Learning & Engagement.

This report will serve as a public document that supports the Strategic Plan connecting people, animals, conservation science and traditional knowledge to fight extinction. The Conservation Science team is looking forward to 2025 and moving from a guest funded zoo with conservation science programs to a community funded conservation science organization operating a world class zoo.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - 2024 Impact Report