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San Antonio Zoo® Honors 2020 Wildlife Conservation Award Winners
Recipients include Matthew Winkler and the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS – San Antonio Zoo is pleased to recognize Matthew Winkler and the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation as recipients of its 2020 Wildlife Conservation Award, an annual award that recognizes those who exemplify a strong commitment to conservation leadership.

The zoo’s President & CEO Tim Morrow, says both recipients have been leaders and champions of wildlife through uncertain times. This year has been extraordinarily hard and brought unforeseen challenges, but these recipients have been unwavering in their commitment to creating a better world for tomorrow.

“Throughout this year, we have seen and experienced unpredictable hardships,” Morrow said. “It is imperative in these unprecedented times that we continue to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves in all of our wildlife. Even in these challenging times, we are honored to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those who share our passion for wildlife. We are extremely grateful to Matthew Winkler and the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation and are proud to call them allies.”

Winkler’s commitment to conservation is incredibly close to home and has been instrumental in the Texas Horned Lizard Reintroduction Project. His ranch boasts a large habitat suited for native biodiversity and makes a perfect area for the horned lizards and other wildlife. The Winkler Family Foundation has been extremely influential in working with the San Antonio Zoo’s Texas Horned Lizard Reintroduction Project. In October, Winkler’s ranch was the site of the first release of captive-born lizards. In addition to land management practices, Winkler has worked with researchers who have documented multiple undescribed spider, beetle, and salamander cave species and support on-going bat studies.

“The first year I was here, I found one horned lizard while walking and have never seen one in the wild since,” Winkler said. “The zoo was able to assemble a team to prepare the release site by identifying harvester ant nests and neutralizing fire ant colonies. The release site is now

almost pristine. I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the zoo doing additional releases, site maintenance, and monitoring the health of the lizards.”

San Antonio Zoo also welcomed Kelly Daniel representing the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation. The foundation has been a longtime supporter of San Antonio Zoo and its conservation efforts, most notably the remarkable and historic accomplishments with the Texas Horned Lizard Reintroduction Project as well as the zoo's Whooping Crane recovery efforts. A longtime supporter of the arts and education, Elizabeth Coates established the foundation in 1992 to continue her legacy in the San Antonio community.

“Elizabeth Huth loved supporting multiple areas of arts and culture,” Daniel said. “She especially believed in funding projects that promote conservation, and that would carry that conservation message forward. She wanted to make sure that species would not go extinct by happenstance. Through funding these types of programs, her legacy can live on through the support of her foundation.”

Morrow echoed the importance the foundation has had within the zoo and Texas communities.

“Without the amazing men and women of the Elizabeth Huth Coates Charitable Foundation, our horned lizard reintegration program would not have been nearly as successful,” Morrow said. “It is by their core beliefs in support of education for our community that we strive and continue to give back to Texas through caring for its wildlife.”

Former awardees include:

Organizations

Valero Energy Foundation 2016

YETI 2017

HEB 2018

Texas Parks and Wildlife 2019

Individuals

Lowry Mays 2016

Nelson Puett 2017

Karen Hixon 2018

John Nau 2019

About San Antonio Zoological Society

San Antonio Zoological Society was established in 1929 and is a nonprofit organization committed to securing a future for wildlife. The society operates San Antonio Zoo, Will Smith Zoo School, Edutainment, Center for Conservation and Research at San Antonio Zoo, and Kiddie Park.

Website www.sazoo.org

About San Antonio Zoo

San Antonio Zoo®, operating since 1914, is a nonprofit zoological facility committed to securing a future for wildlife. Through its passion and expertise in animal care, conservation, and education, the zoo's mission is to inspire its community to love, engage with, act for and protect animals and the places they live. The zoo welcomes more than a million visitors each year and is open year-round. San Antonio Zoo operates the largest nature based preschool in the country, Will Smith Zoo School, the Center for Conservation and Research, and Kiddie Park. San Antonio Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Zoological Association of America, and Humane Certified by American Humane.

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