



Our vision is securing a future for wildlife.
A non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | January 12, 2021

San Antonio Zoo Contact:
Hope Roth, VP Marketing, Sales and Communication
hope.roth@sazoo.org

Media Assets: <https://sanantoniozoo.box.com/s/g4dh6t33tmq5rwiembcpuaat950yzrvx>

San Antonio Zoo® Aquarium Team Earns Prestigious Honor

SAN ANTONIO – San Antonio Zoo is proud to announce the aquarium team has earned the prestigious Zoological Association of America’s Ex Situ Conservation award for their continued work with five species of endangered, critically endangered, and extinct in the wild Mexican freshwater fish. The five species are the Minckley’s Cichlid (Endangered), Tequila Splitfin (Endangered), San Marcos Redtail Splitfin (Critically Endangered), La Palma Pupfish (Extinct in the Wild), and Charco Palma Pupfish (Extinct in the wild).

ZAA is a zoological accrediting institution that promotes responsible wildlife management, conservation, and education. According to the ZAA’s website, the Ex Situ Conservation Award “recognizes excellence in captive care, welfare, and propagation of animal species in captivity, as a hedge against extinction.”

Director of Ectotherms San Antonio Zoo, Craig Pelke, said the award was received for the aquarium department’s work and success with the reproduction of fish species all of which range from a designation of endangered to extinct in the wild.

“The goal of the program was to reproduce the species to maintain assurance populations,” said Pelke. “Two species are currently extinct in the wild, but there are potential plans to reestablish their numbers. The other three species have extremely limited ranges in single water bodies that are in peril.”

President & CEO San Antonio Zoo, Tim Morrow praised the team’s diligence and dedication to the program through one of the most tumultuous years in recent history. While the coronavirus pandemic challenged zoo operations, the aquarium team stood fast and held to the zoo’s core mission, to secure a future for wildlife in Texas and abroad.

“I am honored to have them representing our entire zoo crew,” said Morrow. “We live by the tenets to love, engage with, act for, and protect all forms of wildlife, and what our aquarium department accomplished this year is nothing less than spectacular. Through unprecedented hardship, they carried the torch of conservation high for all to see, lighting the way for others to follow.”

Pelke echoed those sentiments and stated how proud he is of the team's accomplishments. The zoo's aquarium crew worked diligently to contribute to these conservation programs. While their success was apparent in the reproduction of the fish in this program, Pelke feels the award validates their hard work.

"I am very proud of my staff and their accomplishments," said Pelke. "I pass along my vision and direction for the department, and they carry out the mission and see it through. They are a very focused and solution-minded team, and success is obvious in their results."

For more information on conservation programs conducted by the San Antonio Zoo, please visit, <https://sazoo.org/zoo-conservation-efforts/>

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.

Website www.sazoo.org
Facebook www.facebook.com/SanAntonioZoo
Twitter www.twitter.com/SanAntonioZoo
Instagram www.instagram.com/SanAntonioZoo