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**25TH ANNUAL EDITION OF ZOOLIGHTS OPENS NOV. 23 TO LIGHT UP  
HOLIDAY-SEASON NIGHTS AND PUT A WARM GLOW IN THE HEARTS OF THOUSANDS**

*Lighted and animated zoo-animal figures, Tacoma landmarks and an amazing Flame Tree; camel and carousel rides; family gatherings, laughs and smiles all come to life at Zoolights*

Tacoma, Wash. – Zoolights, a Tacoma holiday-season tradition since 1988, opens the day after Thanksgiving at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium to bring light to the night and a warm glow to visitors' hearts.



The 25<sup>th</sup> annual edition of Zoolights is unmatched in the Puget Sound area. No other outdoor event boasts more than 80 lighted zoo-animal figurines and multiple-piece scenes, half a million lights and a quarter-century of dedication to providing families from across Washington with affordable, holiday-season family entertainment.

Zoolights runs from Nov. 23 through Jan. 1 and is open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. every evening except Dec. 24. Discounted tickets are available at [www.pdza.org](http://www.pdza.org) and all Puget Sound-area Fred Meyer stores.

Visitors will ooh and ahh at the half-million lights strung around the zoo, on shrubbery and in trees and, of course, outlining elephants and tigers and bears, oh my!

In addition to longtime visitor favorites like the gorgeous green-and-purple Flame Tree, the twin Tacoma Narrows bridges, an eagle swooping down to catch a salmon, ice skating puffins and dozens of other colorfully lighted animals, there's a lot new at Zoolights this year.

- A 24,000-light, 100-foot Giant Pacific Octopus sits atop the North Pacific Aquarium, a huge addition to Zoolights this year.
- ZOOM, a complex of two challenge and zip line courses, will open in a wooded area of the zoo. The Super Kid and Discovery courses will test mental toughness and physical agility for kids as young as 5 all the way up through adventure-seeking adults of any age.
- Four-month old cubs Berani, a Malayan tiger, and Dumai, a Sumatran tiger, will be on exhibit during Zoolights. They're not just adorable, they're wonderful ambassadors for their endangered species.



Scuba-diving Santa is back for an encore in 2012. He will be in full Santa suit as he swims with the sharks, delighting aquarium visitors at 6 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the Zoolights run.

He does, however, have things to do on Dec. 25, so he won't make an appearance that night.

And he's taking Jan. 1 off to rest up.

Several areas of the zoo will be open for animal viewing, and visitors can watch meerkats, goats and other creatures. In addition, both aquariums will be open, showcasing a variety of marine creatures – from sharks to otherworldly moon jellies and an octopus. The aquariums also provide a great place to warm up after wandering along the outdoor lighted pathways.

And, as always, there will be carousel and camel rides, hot chocolate, espresso and a variety of other treats available for purchase. Hot, spiced apple cider also is on the menu. And there's a mouth-watering new treat called Fudge Puppies, which are waffles on a stick, dipped in chocolate and then served with chocolate sprinkles or nuts.

Discounted general admission tickets are available online and at all Puget Sound-area Fred Meyer stores: \$7.25 per person general admission.

The admission price for zoo members is \$4.25 per person. Those tickets must be purchased online or at the zoo's main gate.

At-the-gate general admission tickets will cost \$8.50 per person.

Visitors also can get a wonderful deal on the day-and-night combination ticket. They can come and spend the day, have dinner and enjoy the lights.

The Zoolights Value Pass costs \$15.75 for adults; \$15.25 for senior citizens; \$14.75 for youths from 5 to 12; and \$12.75 for tots, 3 and 4.

There is no admission charge for children 2 and under.

Parking is free.

Zoolights is presented by Fred Meyer with support from Russell Investments, Tacoma Power, Mary Bridge Children's Hospital & Health Center and KING 5.

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*Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).*