



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Nov. 14, 2013

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## **ORIGINAL. TRADITIONAL. BIGGER. BRIGHTER. ZOO-DAZZLING!**

**ZOOLIGHTS MAKES HOLIDAY MAGIC AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM NOV. 29-JAN. 5**



*See a polar bear family frolic on an ice floe, backed by a squad of ice-skating puffins.*

*Warm up in the light of an all new Flame Tree.*

*Revel in Mount Rainier's glorious bright LED majesty.*

*Roar at a huge tiger head.*

TACOMA, Wash. – Zoolights, a Puget Sound holiday tradition for a quarter century, outshines them all. It's original. It's traditional. And for 2013, there are some things old (and much loved), and many things new.

Plus, there are legions of live animals to see – and even some to touch. Human fingers can feel stingrays' velvety surfaces and real kids can feed goats. There's a meerkat mob to marvel at, camels to ride, and Santa swimming with sharks.

The display of more than half-a-million lights is guaranteed to zoo-dazzle visitors with dozens of animal figurines and iconic landmarks. It's beautiful. It's majestic. It's great for family fun, a group gathering or a romantic date night.

It's open from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. nightly, Nov. 29-Jan. 5 (except for a closure on Dec. 24). Discounted tickets at just \$7.50 each are available online at [www.pdza.org](http://www.pdza.org) and at the Customer Service counters of all Puget Sound area Fred Meyer stores.

Zoolights, presented by Fred Meyer, strikes just the right balance of grandeur (think two-story high, LED Mount Rainier); whimsy (chuckle at a tiger cub chasing a butterfly); and awe (how did that 100-foot octopus get on that aquarium roof?).

### Some things new for 2013

- **Polar Bear panorama:** At center stage this year is an all-new family of polar bears in brilliant white, standing amid ice floes in a sea of blue light. They're backed by a colorful squad of ice-skating puffins. They'll delight visitors while reminding all how precious – and endangered – these lovely land mammals are.



- **Mount Rainier's Majesty:** Glaciers glow and the mountain stands majestically against the night sky, dressed in a completely new robe of blue and white LED lights.
- **Eagle's eager salmon chase – in 3D:** An eagle chases a swimming salmon, then swoops down to catch its prey – a scene played out in three-dimensional lights so real visitors might think they're standing on the banks of a river.

- **Tiger-riffic roar:** An enormous tiger head fades and flashes in 3D glory. It's like staring into the mouth of a larger-than-life snarling Sumatran tiger.
- **Reimagined Flame Tree:** An old favorite is reborn in a new location with more than 30,000 sparkling purple-and-green LEDs. The new Flame Tree, sponsored by MetroPCS, is bigger and brighter than its predecessor, more visible from the zoo entrance and other points around the grounds and anchors an area of enchanting displays.

### Old friends and images return for an encore

So many Zoolights favorites are back this year, it would take a list as long as Santa's to name them all.

So here's a sampling:



- A 100-foot octopus lounges atop the North Pacific Aquarium, slowly fading from orange to purple and back again, its brooding eyes pools of white in a sea of nearly 25,000 colored lights.

- Headlights glow white and tail lights shimmer red as a stream of cars cross the Narrows Bridges.

- A red wolf howls at a full moon plastered against an ink-dark sky. The scene is so realistic visitors can almost hear



the plaintive cries.

- Camels rest comfortably amid palm trees in a desert oasis.
- Peacocks proudly strut, their plumage punctuating the night with whorls of color.
- Reindeer romp on a hillside.
- Schools of fish swim in seas of twinkling lights.
- A whimsical sleigh pulled by a porpoise, tiger and llama.
- Perky penguins sliding down a hill.

And if the lights aren't enough to warm the soul or feed the holiday spirit in everyone, then there are dozens of animals to see and many to cozy up to and touch.

Animal exhibits and displays open for Zoolights include:

- **Stingray Cove:** An interactive exhibit in which visitors learn about – and touch – stingrays in the South Pacific Aquarium. The stingrays' barbs are clipped, so they can't sting as people feel their velvety smooth surfaces.
- **Shark sightings:** 17 sharks, including a 9-foot-long, 450-pound lemon shark, swim gracefully in the 240,000-gallon South Pacific Aquarium ecosystem.
- **Scuba-diving Santa:** Enough said. Santa swims with the sharks on six evenings during Zoolights: Dec. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18.



- **See the public dive with sharks:** On nights when Santa isn't diving, members of the public can be viewed diving with sharks – some in a cage as they breathe surface-supplied air, others with scuba tanks on

their backs, led by experienced diver-guides around the South Pacific Aquarium. It's all part of the brand new Eye-to-Eye Shark Dive program. (Learn more at [www.pdza.org/dive](http://www.pdza.org/dive).)

- **Warm up in the North Pacific Aquarium:** Glowing jelly fish, salmon, rockfish, bay pipefish, a giant Pacific octopus and dozens of other sea creatures will mesmerize visitors who take a stroll indoors.
- **Feed a goat:** Stop by Kids' Zone for this fun interactive activity. And, boy, those goats are cute.
- **Marvel at meerkats and other small animals:** Visitors can watch the antics of meerkat gangs and catch the eerie beauty of scorpions and other creepy crawlies in Kids' Zone.

And there's more. Rides on an antique carousel are just \$1. Parking is free and there will be to-the-gate shuttle service on busy nights. Hot chocolate, espresso and a variety of treats will be sold in the café and at other stations around the zoo. The gift shop will be open for a little holiday buying. And beautiful music will fill the grounds.

"We are proud to bring this cherished tradition to Puget Sound residents again – just as we have for 25 years," zoo deputy director John Houck said.

"Zoolights is our bright-spirited way of saying thank you to the community that supports Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. And, in keeping with our conservation mission, some 94 percent of the more than half-a-million Zoolights are energy-efficient LEDs."

So, it's time to flip the switch on holiday-season fun. Zoolights is ready to set Puget Sound aglow.

For more information, go to [www.pdza.org](http://www.pdza.org).

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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).*