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POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM AWARDS \$312,330 IN GRANTS TO HELP FUND CONSERVATION WORK AT HOME AND AROUND THE WORLD

Funds aid field work to combat tiger poaching; track clouded leopards and polar bears; protect walrus habitat and more; plus sponsor research at home on red wolf health, tiger reproduction and an array of other projects

TACOMA, Wash. – Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium’s Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund has awarded \$312,330 to 32 projects that protect threatened and endangered species and advance scientific knowledge at home and around the world.

The 2017 grants bring the total of awards made by the fund, which is administered by the non-profit Zoo Society, to more than \$1.8 million since 2002. It is funded with donations from zoo visitors, staff members, individuals and private, non-profit partners, and fund-raisers.

The work is broad and meaningful. For example:

- On the ice floes of Canada’s Hudson Bay, male polar bears roam in search of food, their movements tracked by GPS ear tags that will help scientists learn more about the bears’ activities and the effects of climate change.
- In Indonesia, poachers are apprehended and issues of human-tiger conflict are addressed in an effort to save the estimated 300 endangered Sumatran tigers that remain in the wild.
- And in Alaska, money donated in Tacoma helps protect critical habitat that allows the huge mammals to haul out for respite from swimming in the cold waters of Bristol Bay.

Those are just some examples of the work supported this year by the fund named to honor the zoo’s longtime head veterinarian, Dr. Holly Reed, who died in 2012.

“Our donors can justifiably be proud of the reach their generosity has around the world,” said Zoo Society President Sue Mauermann. “The work their donations fund is critical in the continuing battle to conserve wild species and wild places for future generations.”

But the work is not limited to foreign shores, donations also help pay for Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff members to participate in collaborative research and conservation programs abroad and to conduct groundbreaking research at home.

It also underscores the zoo’s core commitment to extraordinary care and compassion for all animals.

“We are a medium-sized zoo with a huge heart for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and their habitat,” said Deputy Director John Houck “Across the world and right here at home, we are making a huge impact.”

Projects supported by the Dr. Holly Reed Fund are in direct alignment with the zoo’s Pacific Rim theme. In every case, the work is centered on protecting animals, gathering further scientific knowledge, or researching issues that affect species in peril.

- **Marine mammal research and conservation:** Money from the Dr. Holly Reed Fund supports programs that track the movements of polar bears in the Western Hudson Bay area of Canada; helps protect walrus habitat on Alaska's Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary at Round Island; and assesses food sources and foraging behaviors of walruses and sea otters.
- **Carnivores of Southeast Asia:** Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium long has been a leader in the area of clouded leopard research and conservation. The 2017 grants help protect and track clouded leopards through a variety of means including gathering and interpreting data from camera traps in four countries; purchasing GPS collars to track the animals in peninsular and Bornean Malaysia; and studying the exotic cats and their prey in Bangladesh. Grants also help aid Sumatran tiger conservation in Indonesia; help fund studies of the long-term effects of logging and hunting on carnivores in Borneo; support a survey of endangered carnivores in a remote region on the Laos-Vietnam border; and aid in protecting habitat for the endangered flat-headed cat in Borneo.
- **Zoo-based research and conservation.** At home, grants help Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff members gain insight into animals' reproductive status; search for possible links between diet and disease in red wolves; advance the potential for using artificial insemination to produce offspring among endangered Sumatran tigers in zoos; and collaborate with the Nashville Zoo, National Zoo and the Khao Kheow Open Zoo in Thailand to help manage, study and breed clouded leopards.

In addition to these three areas of emphasis, the Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund supports a number of other programs directly related to the animal ambassadors in the zoo's care. Those include aid to conservation response units that help protect Asian elephants in Sumatra; tagging hammerheads and other sharks in the waters off Baja California to gather additional scientific research about the little-studied animals; and public outreach to address the problems of hunting and habitat loss for the Anoa and babirusa in Southeast Asia.

Metro Parks Tacoma Board of Commissioners President Andrea Smith believes Tacoma residents can be proud of the global impact made by their local zoo. Metro Parks Tacoma owns and operates Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

"The field work, studies and research we help fund here and around the world not only aid in conservation of species, they help scientists better understand perils such as climate change that threaten both animals and humans," she said. "The Dr. Holly Reed Fund is globally known, and researchers from all corners of the Earth compete for its grants. It definitely sets Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium apart while also helping to fulfill the zoo's conservation mission."

For more information, go to www.pdza.org/hollyreedfund.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and 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).

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