

Z Points

ZOOLIGHTS
Nov. 24 - Jan. 1



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**'I GO HOME EVERY NIGHT
THINKING ABOUT THEM'**



Dedicated aquarists care for hammerhead sharks, eagle rays and sea turtles as aquarium completion nears



Looking down on their 26,700-gallon, 40-foot-long-by-20-foot-wide temporary home, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff aquarist Melissa Bishop watches several young scalloped hammerhead sharks glide smoothly through the water, then swiftly flip their tails, turn and home in on ½-inch chunks of chopped up squid.

"I feel very privileged for the opportunity to come in every day and care for these extraordinary animals," she said. "Our team has worked hard to prepare for their care."

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium's staff, members and visitors are less than a year away from watching these scalloped hammerheads - along with spotted eagle rays and green sea turtles - explore their new 250,000 gallon Baja Bay habitat in the Pacific Seas Aquarium.

The buzz is building.

The animals began arriving toward the end of the summer – sharks and eagle rays from a sustainable fishery in Hawaii; green sea turtles Sunny and Azul from SeaWorld San Diego.

Though the scalloped hammerheads are endangered around the world as a species, they are plentiful in Hawaii. So are the eagle rays. Both species met Hawaiian regulations for transport to an out-of-state aquarium. The sea turtles, hatched at Sea World in 2003, are not releasable to the wild, according to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

Aquarists, architects, engineers, plumbers, electricians and others spent months studying tanks and filtration systems; building a state-of-the-art Aquatic Animal Care Center; filling it with water from Puget Sound; and then carefully monitoring bacteria, temperature and pH levels so the animals would have a healthy new home.

Bishop is the lead keeper on these three species, but everything is a team effort. Aquarists carefully observe each animal, continually monitor their sophisticated life-support systems, test water quality and make adjustments as needed to ensure optimal habitat.

"I go home every night thinking about them," Bishop said of her aquatic charges.

The aquarium team is establishing relationships of trust with the graceful, winged eagle rays, which love whole clams as well as squid; and with the turtles, eaters of romaine lettuce, other vegetables and pieces of seafood.

Once in their Baja Bay home, each animal will have its own spot for feeding.

And all will be ambassadors for their wild counterparts, helping Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium visitors learn about the threats to the world's ocean and the animals that live there—and the steps each of us can take to save our seas.

BE A SEA 'STAR'

The \$51.6 million replacement for the North Pacific Aquarium is due to open next summer. It is funded primarily with bonds approved by Tacoma voters in 2014, but opportunities remain for private donors to help with finishing touches. Call Zoo Society Executive Director Larry Norvell at 253-404-3663 for information about the exciting chance to make a contribution to the new aquarium.



Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Dive Safety Officer Gavin Wuttken, right, holds a hose that supplies water to a silvertip shark's gills as other members of a Fins Attached team work to tag it in the Gulf of California.

We're in the Sharks' Corner

Zoo initiatives provide money, expertise and advocacy for conservation efforts

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Dive Safety Officers Gavin Wuttken and Heidi Wilken knelt on a rolling boat deck off the coast of Baja California, each holding one end of a tape measure stretched across the length of a living silvertip shark.

It was delicate, dangerous, necessary work. And they were eager to participate.

The pair has helped thousands of Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium visitors learn about the threats facing sharks in the wild over the last four years. Some 12,000 people have participated in the Zoo's Eye-to-Eye Shark Dive experience, which immerses visitors in the South Pacific Aquarium, where they get an up close look at these magnificent animals. More than 85,000 people have watched—and listened to divers' talks—from the aquarium's large viewing window.

But now, Wuttken and Wilken were in the field, putting their knowledge and passion to work in a crucial shark-tagging program designed to add to the scientific community's sparse knowledge on some of the world's most mysterious animals.

Wuttken held a hose that kept water flowing over the shark's gills, allowing it to breathe as a skilled team from the conservation and research group Fins Attached made a short incision in the shark's skin, inserted a small transmitter and sewed it up.

Minutes later, the shark was gently placed back into the sea, thrashing its tail as it quickly swam away. The process is replicated with more sharks, more transmitters.

Underwater receivers can pick up each shark's movements, logging how far it swims, how deep it dives and how long it sticks to one feeding spot. Divers periodically retrieve the devices,

download their data, and replace them in the ocean.

"This is basic research," Wuttken said. "We have almost no baseline information about the shark populations in this area."

Wilken and Wuttken made their trip through a grant from The Zoo Society's Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund. In recent years, the fund has designated about \$35,000 for shark and ray conservation efforts. They included:

- Purchasing 10 acoustic tags and two receivers to monitor the movements of sharks in the Revillagigedo Islands off the tip of the Baja Peninsula. The aquarium staff also repurposed and donated four receivers from previous projects to this effort.
- Partnering with aquariums across the nation to protect sharks in the wild through the Association of Zoos & Aquariums SAFE (Saving Animals from Extinction) Sharks and Rays initiative.
- Helping to fund research on sharks and rays for the IUCN Red List. Documenting the number of species in the wild helps governments and other organizations make informed conservation decisions.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Go to pdza.org/savesharks for a list of actions you can take to help wild sharks. Pick up a Seafood Watch card at the Zoo or download one at seafoodwatch.org and purchase only sustainably caught seafood.

To book an Eye-to-Eye Shark Dive experience: Go to pdza.org/dive.



Swim into a sea of Zoolights

**30TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TRADITION TO
DELIGHT VISITORS NOV. 24-JAN. 1**

A 100-foot octopus glows amid waves of ocean-blue lights. An 8-foot green sea turtle swims serenely against an inky sky.

A giant crab, pincers constantly in motion, also inhabits this inland sea, where fish swim and aquatic creatures frolic on the Zoo's main lawn.

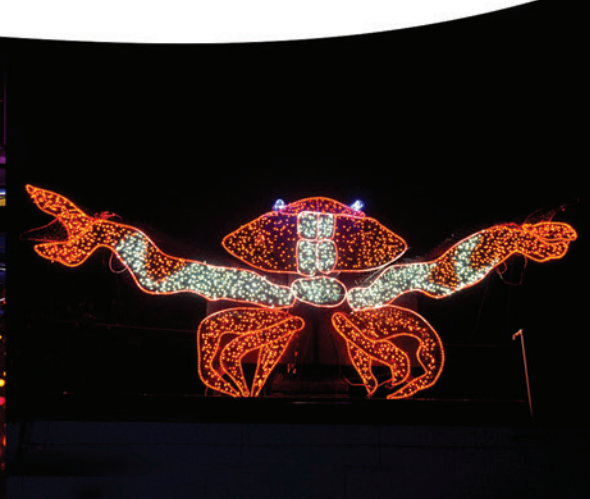
And just as the real landmark looms over Puget Sound, Mount Rainier stands tall above it all, a 23-foot-tall replica of the real volcano atop the North Pacific Aquarium.

Over where the new Pacific Seas Aquarium is rising, hammerhead sharks, eagle rays, sea turtles and jellies swim serenely in a blaze of color.

Come next summer, their real counterparts will delight visitors inside the new building.

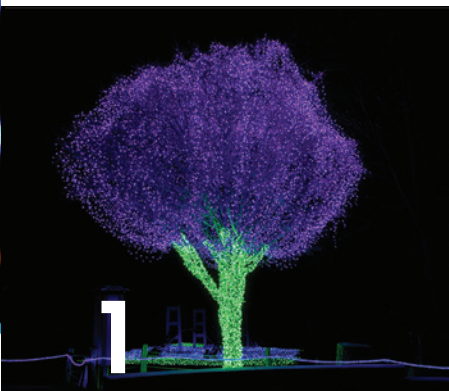
Zoolights, a wondrous amalgamation of old favorites (think Flame Tree, Narrows Bridges, salmon-catching eagle) and new loves (hammerhead sharks, green sea turtles, eagle rays, a color-transforming octopus and more), is celebrating its 30th annual edition this year.

"From humble beginnings in 1988, Zoolights has grown into a beloved community celebration of the holiday season," Zoo Deputy Director John Houck said. A handful of displays—all originally constructed in-house by the Zoo's talented carpenters, electricians and maintenance team—turned into dozens of whimsical animal scenes and lifelike local landmarks over the years. The tradition that began with a few thousand lights all those years ago has morphed over time into more than 650,000 energy-efficient LEDs for 2017.



The 30th annual event, which runs from Nov. 24-Jan. 1, is presented by Fred Meyer.
And to celebrate this milestone, here are:

30 WAYS TO ENJOY ZOO LIGHTS



1. FALL IN LOVE AGAIN WITH AN OLD FLAME
(and take a keepsake holiday photo). And guess what? The Flame Tree has—wait for it—30,030 lights.

- 2. SKIP THE LINES**
Buy your tickets online at pdza.org/zoolights.
- 3. MEMBERS GET A SWEET DEAL**
Tickets are just \$5 each.
- 4. COME EARLY – OR LATE**
Early birds and late-arrivers miss the big crowds.
- 5. PACK THE CAR**
Carpooling helps the environment.

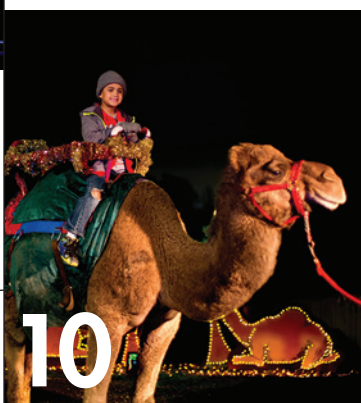


6. BRING FAMILY AND FRIENDS
Zoolights is best enjoyed with those you love.

7. MAKE IT A DATE NIGHT
Holding hands in a sea of lights is magical.

8. BE SOCIAL
#pdzazoolights on those Facebook and Instagram posts. Your friends will be envious.

9. WEAR YOUR WALKING SHOES
There are more than 650,000 lights to see.



10. RIDE A CAMEL
Get a new perspective from the saddle.

11. BRING THE GRANDKIDS
Share your memories of Zoolights with a new generation of fans.

12. STARE AT SHARKS
And warm up in the South Pacific Aquarium.

13. SEE CHILEAN SEA NETTLES
Find them down under in the North Pacific Aquarium.

14. OGLE AN OCTOPUS
Everyone's a sucker for this creature.

15. FEED A GOAT OR TWO
They're baaaaaack for Zoolights.

16. GO MAD FOR A MOB OF MEERKATS
Check out their antics in Kids' Zone.



17. HOP ABOARD A WALRUS
Or a polar bear. Or a slug. Take a spin on the Paul Titus antique carousel.

18. DREAM OF A NEW AQUARIUM
The Pacific Seas Aquarium is coming along. Check out the progress.

19. SIP HOT CHOCOLATE
This holiday tradition will warm your soul.

20. WARM UP WITH A GLASS OF WINE OR AN IPA
They're available in the Plaza Café.

21. CHECK OUT ALL THE TREATS
Those fudgy puppies are to die for.



22. TAKE A SEAHAWKS SELFIE
Our blue-and-green 12th Man tree is a must-see for home team fans.

23. SPY THE EYE OF THE TIGER
There's a 17-foot tall, snarling tiger head lurking in the dark.

24. LOOK FOR LANDMARKS
Find the Narrows bridges, Mount Rainier and other local icons—all ablaze in lights.

25. START A NEW TRADITION
Give E.T. a high five as you enter the Front Gate. The new 2,150-pound sculpture of the loveable walrus will greet guests every night.

26. DANCE IN THE RAIN
Yes, it might rain on Zoolights, but sprinkles on the pavement make the lights reflect that much more brightly.



27. VISIT MORE THAN ONCE
You'll appreciate a new angle every time you come.

28. ZOO SOME SHOPPING
There are some great holiday finds in the Gift Shop.

29. BRING YOUR OLD LIGHTS FOR RECYCLING
The money raised goes toward shark conservation.

30. BE A ZOO LIGHTS SANTA
Gift some friends the magic of the season with tickets to see this beloved community treasure.

Zoobilee

CAST AWAY

Thank you for supporting The Zoo Society
and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium

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|---|---|--|
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The Zoo Society
POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

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WINTER BREAK IS MADE FOR ZOO CAMPING

Tons of fun for kids awaits during a slate of December mini-camps

Give your kids a special day at the Zoo while you get some shopping done, or just enjoy some “me” time this holiday season. Our talented instructors will engage campers in hands-on activities. Plus, children will observe animals in natural-world habitats and have up-close encounters with amazing creatures. Book at reserve@pdza.org.

SPECIAL OFFER: BOOK TWO OR MORE CAMPS AND GET 10% OFF

ALL-DAY ADVENTURES 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

AGES 6-8

\$50 members/\$60 non-members per session

Dec. 20: Wild in Winter

Bundle up and get to know animals that are perfectly suited for life on the ice and snow, and watch them have some fun at the Zoo!

Dec. 21: Radical Rocky Shores

Sea stars, seals and snails all live life on the rocks. Find out how each of these animals and their relatives make living on the shore look easy!

Dec. 22: Zoo Crew

It takes a crew to build a zoo! Discover how we design and create the habitats for our animals, then use Legos® to build an exhibit of your own to take home.

AGES 9-12

Junior Veterinarian and Junior Zookeeper

\$65 members/\$75 non-members per session

Junior Marine Biologist

(includes Eye-to-Eye Shark Cage Dive)

\$120 members/\$130 non-members per session

Dec. 20: Junior Veterinarian

Our veterinarian team works hard to make sure all our animals stay healthy, including elephants, eagles, sea horses and snakes! You'll enjoy exploring the Zoo, getting to know some animals and learning about the special skills and equipment used to care for them.

Dec. 21: Junior Zookeeper

Find out what it takes to care for some of the finned, feathered and furry creatures at the Zoo. You'll learn how to prepare diets, clean exhibits and create enriching experiences for our awesome animals.

Dec. 22: Junior Marine Biologist

Immerse yourself in marine science by getting to know some of our aquarium and Rocky Shores residents. For part of the day, you'll join our scuba dive team to come Eye-to-Eye with 16 sharks in the South Pacific Aquarium. Visit pdza.org/divafaq/ for detailed information about our cage dives.



Zoo earns prestigious five-year accreditation

AZA gives high marks for passionate staff, first-class animal care and more

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium earned a new five-year accreditation from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) when the group recently met in Indianapolis for its annual meeting.

Earning this recognition from the prestigious peer group means the zoo meets rigorous standards for animal care, conservation work, fiscal responsibility, education, and visitor experience. Your Zoo has been continuously accredited since 1983.

Just 232 zoos and aquariums are accredited by AZA in the United States and eight other countries.

“Fewer than 10 percent of animal exhibitors registered with USDA have achieved AZA-accreditation, so Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium truly ranks among the best-of-the-best,” said AZA President and CEO Dan Ashe.

An AZA inspection team visited the Zoo in May and came away with impressions so noteworthy they praised a number of departments and practices. Those included:

- Passionate and dedicated staff who display both excellent camaraderie and consistently great morale.
- Longstanding successful participation in Species Survival Plan® managed breeding programs.
- Laudable commitment to saving wildlife. The Zoo connects visitors at home with animals and furthers research and conservation initiatives around the world.
- Well-trained dive safety staff who administer a strong program that oversees thousands of dives each year.
- Collaborative programming with Tacoma Public Schools, including the Science and Math Institute (SAMi partnership).
- Beautiful, meticulously maintained landscaping.

Metro Parks Tacoma Board of Commissioners President Andrea Smith congratulated the Zoo on its accomplishment.

“This accreditation is recognition of a fact that everyone in Tacoma already knows: Our zoo is the best,” she said.

Connect with us



BE A VISIONARY TREAT YOURSELF TO THE GIFT OF HOPE

Feel like a wildlife hero all year. Become a Vision Keeper—or donate to the Vision Keeper program as a meaningful gift for the whole family. For a donation of just \$500, you'll be helping to fund conservation to save endangered species in the wild, provide animal care here at your Zoo and provide educational programs with community-wide impact. Get the details at thezoosociety.org



WRAP UP YOUR SHOPPING IN STYLE

GIVE GIFTS THAT BRING A LIFETIME OF MEMORIES

Ask many people what they want for holiday gifts, and they will tell you, "Experiences, not things."

Well, we have the perfect answers to that desire. Wrap up a membership to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, and give your loved ones a year of visits. Purchase a gift card for an Eye-to-Eye Shark Dive. Or how about an early present of a trip to Zoolights? All exciting. All memorable. All one-of-a-kind experiences.

Go to pdza.org/gifts for all the details you'll need to be a holiday superstar.

"RAYS" YOUR HOLIDAY GAME

ADOPT A TRIO OF SEA CREATURES AS AN OUT-OF-THE-ORDINARY GIFT

Impress your loved ones and friends with not one, not two, but **THREE** adorable, large plush animals from The Zoo Society this year. You can adopt an aquatic trio—a hammerhead shark, green sea turtle and spotted eagle ray—for just \$150. Give them as a gift; buy a set to keep—or do both. You'll be among the first to enjoy the three exciting new species that will debut in the Pacific Seas Aquarium when it opens next summer.

All proceeds benefit conservation and education programs. Supplies are limited (a great excuse to get your shopping done early.)

Go to thezoosociety.org/adopt or call Laura Badeaux at 253-404-3694.



WILD REWARDS

ZOO MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES—AND THEY ARE ABOUT TO GET EVEN BETTER. LOOK FOR OUR NEW WILD REWARDS PROGRAM COMING SOON.