

Z Paw Points

ZOOLIGHTS

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Staff biologist Lisa Triggs feeds walrus Joan and Basilla during training.



Male walrus pile together after hauling out at Round Island, Alaska.



E.T. will be immortalized in a bronze statue at the Zoo's front gate.



California sea lions will be among the stars at the renovated Rocky Shores.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Point Defiance Zoo at the front lines of walrus research and conservation

Stroll down to Rocky Shores and watch Pacific walruses Joan and Basilla as these seemingly ungainly, blubberous animals swim gracefully around their 120,500-gallon pool.

Some might think their bushy moustaches and wrinkled snouts make them appear a bit like wise and curious college professors. And, in fact, we can learn from them.

The walruses of Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium help teach us how climate change imperils marine mammals in the Arctic.

In return, the Zoo's deep commitment to conservation helps researchers in Alaska learn more about wild walruses, their needs, habits and breeding patterns.

Last year, The Zoo Society's Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund granted \$10,000 to a walrus research program at an Alaska Department of Fish and Game sanctuary in northern Bristol Bay.

At home, Rocky Shores zookeepers and Zoo veterinarians furthered walrus science through a number of studies in recent years.

Senior Staff Biologist Lisa Triggs conducted her master's degree thesis research on walrus reproduction, adding to the scientific body of knowledge on how daylight and other factors affect the species' reproductive biology.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff members also engaged in studies and aided other researchers to:

- Investigate the physical characteristics and mechanisms that allow walruses to produce a variety of unique sounds
- Assess variations in food consumption and body conditions of walruses
- Identify a reliable blubber measurement to assess body condition in marine mammals, using Pacific walruses as the model
- Study the development of diving physiology and capacity in walruses

"Each of these studies helps marine mammal experts and other researchers better understand these magnificent mammals," Triggs said. "The more we learn about them, the more able we are to help wild walruses as they adapt to changing climates and altered landscapes."

Triggs is too humble to mention this, but after nearly a quarter-century caring for walruses, she is somewhat of a superstar among the international

group of zookeepers who study the massive animals. Earlier this year, the Chinese Association of National Science Museums invited her to speak about her research during a Walrus Breeding & Care and Animal Training Workshop in Wuhan, China. She's been invited to talk in Japan next year.

And she's a leader in the Walrus Conservation Consortium, a shared initiative among North American organizations working to conserve walruses.

There are only 14 walruses in accredited U.S. zoos and aquariums. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is working toward breeding walruses in Tacoma as part of the Species Survival Plan.®

"We are deeply committed to understanding walruses and taking action to help them in the wild," Triggs said.

What can you do? Wait a bit later in the season to turn up your thermostat. Put on a sweater and keep your home a couple of degrees cooler. Don't let your car engine idle for more than 30 seconds; turn it off when waiting for someone. Small actions can reduce your carbon footprint and combat climate changes that threaten walruses, polar bears and other animals.

Remembering a giant

E.T. welcome sculpture planned for Zoo entrance—and you can help by buying a T-shirt or making a gift

For more than three decades, E.T. the walrus beckoned visitors to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. He was a beloved symbol of the Zoo's conservation efforts and often entertained crowds with his flipper waves, pool splashes and a vocabulary of riveting walrus sounds that ran the gamut from whistling to thrumming like a bell.

E.T. arrived at Point Defiance Zoo in 1982 as an orphan from Alaska. The community quickly fell in love with the little walrus calf, who eventually grew into a giant, sometimes tipping the scales at around 4,000 pounds. He died last year at the age of 33.

Now, The Zoo Society is raising money to celebrate E.T.'s life and legacy in a life-sized bronze sculpture at the Zoo's front gate.

Plans call for installation next year.

Contributing is easy:

- Buy a T-shirt emblazoned with a drawing of E.T. and his signature wave. The shirts range from \$20 to \$23 depending on whether they're short or long-sleeved and may be purchased at booster.com/pointdefiancezoo through Dec. 8, with delivery in time for holiday giving.
- Make a donation using the envelope included in printed editions of ZooPoints or by going to thezoosociety.org/et-sculpture or calling 253-404-3651.
- Adopt a walrus through The Zoo Society. Your gift of \$50 will go to the E.T. sculpture fund-raiser and comes with a walrus plush, an adoption certificate and a professional photo of one of the walruses at your Zoo.

In bronze form, E.T. will once again deliver that signature welcome wave, reminding us all that a day at the Zoo is always fun and inspires us to care about animals and conservation.

A "new" Rocky Shores coming in early 2017

A new home for California sea lions Chinook, Neah and Matia (May-sha) will open in early 2017 as part of a major renovation at Rocky Shores. The project was financed with bond funds approved by Tacoma voters in 2014.

The revamped Rocky Shores will include:

- A renovated harbor seal pool modified to become a new home for the frisky sea lions and the Zoo's torpedo-fast harbor seals.
- New underwater viewing windows from which visitors may watch the sleek seals dart and dash, gliding by in flashes of gray and black; or stand in awe as huge walruses move gracefully through the water, coming so close to the glass that guests feel as if they could reach out and touch them.
- A new above-water seating area for viewing the sea lions and harbor seals.
- An improved viewing experience at the sea otter pool.
- A stroller- and wheelchair friendly pathway from Rocky Shores to the polar bear exhibit.
- All new graphics and murals highlighting our connection to the marine animals that share our shores and ways you can join in their conservation.



ZOO-MAZING DISPLAYS LIGHT UP Holiday Nights



Hearts are aglow during the holidays—and so are the nights at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, where animals, local landmarks and lush landscapes spring to life nightly in more than 600,000 crisply colorful LEDs.

Look for a brand new walrus family frolicking in the Zoo's center hub, the male shimmering in the darkness, his long tusks aglow. Over here is a Sumatran tiger cub, chasing an elusive butterfly. Over there, the green-and-purple Flame Tree shines with more than 30,000 lights.

Hop on a stationary sleigh with two real reindeer up front for an all-new family photo op.

And all around the Zoo, light and color fuse into a landscape of whimsical animal scenes, iconic endangered animals, and local landmarks guaranteed to bring smiles to the faces of visitors of all ages.

Some scenes are relocated for the 29th edition of Zoolights. Go on a "treasure" hunt to find your favorites.

And because we love octopuses, you'll find two of the enigmatic cephalopods this year. The first greets visitors at the Main Entrance, its tentacles waving in four changing colors. And that 100-foot-long Giant Pacific octopus

shines in morphing colors atop the North Pacific Aquarium.

Glaciers glisten on a detailed replica of Mount Rainier. Eagles chase after leaping salmon. Sea lions hunt fish in the sea.

A polar bear family drifts on ice floes that reflect the blue of the sea, while a gibbon swings from vine to vine to grab a snack.

There's a rainbow of trees and shrubs and the sparkle of even the tiniest creatures—spiders, flies and ants. Even a brand-new, insect-eating pitcher plant.

If Zoolights is a feast for the eyes, it also presents gastronomical delights of another kind. This year, visitors can relax with a glass of beer or wine or a cup of hot chocolate in the Plaza Café. And follow your nose to a selection of gourmet hot dogs being served up at the Pearl Street Grille.

A trip to Zoolights is a Family Night, a Couples' Night, a Date Night, a Teen Get-together Night.

"We're proud and pleased to present the Northwest's first and most endearing holiday lights display," Zoo Deputy Director John Houck said. "Representing wildlife with the colors of the holidays is our gift to the community," he said.



Tips to light up your nights with joy this holiday season

1. **Skip the lines, buy tickets in advance at pdza.org/zoolights.** Scan them at the entrance and get right to the fun!
2. **The price is nice.** Zoo members get half off Zoolights general admission. That's just \$5 per person for an entire evening of light-filled joy.
3. **Beat the crowds.** Arrive at 5—or come after 7:30 p.m. Crowds are a bit thinner then, and you'll have lots of space to roam. Weeknights, especially in early December, are a great time to visit.
4. **Have a carload of fun!** Carpooling is a great way to help the environment.

ZOOLIGHTS 2016

What: See more than 600,000 colorful LEDs come to life as animal figures, whimsical scenes, local landmarks and more.

When: Nov. 25 – Jan. 1; 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. nightly (closed Dec. 24)

Admission: \$5 for members; \$10 for non-members at the gate; \$8.50 online or at Fred Meyer stores.



Only at Zoolights

Picture yourself with a reindeer: Step into a festive sleigh "pulled" by real reindeer and get a wonderful holiday photo.

Ride a camel: Yep. The camels are back for the holidays, and riding one at night gives you an entirely new view of Zoolights. Ages 3 and older.

Take a break indoors with mesmerizing sharks and other sea creatures. Zoolights isn't only about lights. The aquariums are open for great views of aquatic animals.

Meet and greet: Feed a goat and get close-up looks at meerkats, amphibians and other animals at Kids' Zone.

Great food, hot chocolate—plus beer and wine. Stop into the Plaza café for some food, cocoa or—new this year—even a glass of beer or wine.

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ALL-DAY ADVENTURES

Ages 6 – 8

\$47 members/\$53 non-members per session
Time: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Dec. 21: Under the Sea

Stay warm and dry while learning about aquatic animals that live under the sea.

Dec. 22: Build Your Own Zoo

There's a lot of construction and excitement at the Zoo! Learn about how we design and build exhibits for our animals and then build a model of your own!

Dec. 23: All Around the Zoo

Meerkats! Apes! Wolves! Learn about the animals that live all around the Zoo—and around the world. Spread holiday cheer by caroling and delivering treats to the animals!

Ages 9 – 12 (Small class maximum of 6)

\$63 members/\$74 non-members per session
Time: 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Dec. 21: Junior Vet Tech

What do veterinarians and veterinary technicians do? Spend the day learning about these important careers and get a tour of our animal hospital.

Dec. 22: Junior Aquarist

Learn about our awesome aquarists and what they must do to care for animals who live in the water.

Dec. 23: Junior Zookeeper

Explore a day in the life of a zookeeper. Learn how they clean habitats, prep food and deliver enrichments to our animals.

Wrap up a gift of seeing, doing, helping

A membership to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium; an Eye-to-Eye Shark Dive; an animal "adoption," or a trip to Zoolights provide experiences and conservation actions that last well beyond wrapping paper and bows. Check out these ideas for making memories and protecting wildlife. pdza.org/gifts



Wildlife watching abounds

A Zoo membership brings an entire year full of chances to see, admire—and even touch some animals. Plus, you get easy entry at the Front Gate, discounts and special events. Better still, Combo Memberships also come with unlimited visits for a year to our sister Zoo, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park.

Zoolights tickets

Give family and friends a dazzling holiday treat with tickets to Zoolights. Add even more value with a Day/Night Combo Pass.

Eye-to-Eye Shark Dives

Immerse family and friends in an unforgettable experience with more than a dozen massive sharks. Whether they watch from an underwater cage or swim among the sharks during a scuba dive, it's an adventure—and learning experience—of a lifetime. Cage dives are for ages 8 and up; scuba dives are for certified divers 15 and older.

Gift cards

Want to let friends or loved ones choose their favorite Zoo adventure? Gift cards are applicable to admission fees, memberships, the gift shop, and other activities.

Be visionary

Become a Vision Keeper—or gift a Vision Keeper membership to someone who loves animals and conservation. Your donation of \$500 helps The Zoo Society support wildlife conservation, fund new exhibits, and provide educational resources. Vision Keepers are year-round Zoo members and enjoy special events and behind-the-scenes opportunities.

Connect with us



Muskox calf Hudson makes himself at home

The large green ball stands at the ready, a target for Hudson's favorite pastime.

As a keeper gently holds it in place, the 6-month-old muskox calf practices an important skill for his species: head-butting. Nose down, forehead forward, he pushes against the ball, which—for now—is about as tall as he is. When full-grown, Hudson could stand 4 to 5 feet tall at the shoulders.

He arrived at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in late summer from the Large Animal Research Station at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, where he was born May 1.

Zoo staff are working with facilities in Alaska to bring in potential mates for both Hudson and Mya, a 13-year-old female who has been at the Zoo for many years.

Only two zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums exhibit muskoxen in the Lower 48.

Muskoxen are known to native peoples as Oomingmak, or "bearded one." They



are ancient, stately animals, which help bring the Zoo's conservation messages about climate change into sharper focus. Weather variations since the last Ice Age eliminated the muskoxen population in Northern Europe and parts of Asia, leaving the majority to roam the tundra of far North America.

The animals are massive and powerful, weighing between 400 and 800 pounds and are able to run up to

25 miles per hour as adults. They are herbivores that travel in herds, and when the herd is threatened, the animals form a circle, heads out, protecting calves in the center. The fighting strategy? Head-butting.

"We're happy to be able to share this remarkable animal with visitors," says Zoo Deputy Director John Houck. "Its survival is a testament not only to conservation efforts but also to its ability to adapt to its harsh environment."

Be a Zoo "parent" and adopt a species

Be a Zoo-per Hero for conservation—and for yourself, a child or a friend—by adopting a species through The Zoo Society. Twenty species are available—from Sumatran tigers to Malayan tapirs to Clouded leopards, Polar bears, Magellanic penguins and more. For a tax-deductible donation of \$60 you can be a Zoo Parent and will receive a stuffed plush animal, certificate of adoption, animal fact sheet and 5-by-7 photo of your animal. Zoo Friend packages also are available. To learn more, go to thezoosociety.org/adopt. Note: Herald is cute, but he's not available.

