



NEW EXCLUSIVE ANIMAL EXPERIENCES NOW AVAILABLE

Visit the Zoo before the crowds arrive, feed an unusual hero, groom a goat, dive with sharks or go behind-the-scenes of the Pacific Seas Aquarium

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TACOMA, Wash.—Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is expanding its [Zoo for You](#) exclusive animal experiences with two new premier adventures. In addition to grooming goats, diving with sharks and a behind-the-scenes tour of the Pacific Seas Aquarium, households can now book a private tour of the Zoo before it opens or get up close and personal with the Zoo's own superheroes- HeroRATs! These experiences make for excellent family bonding, birthday or holiday gifts, and are both a safe and fun way to get out of the house during uncertain times.

Wild Zoo Tour

Mornings at the Zoo are a special time: you can see the sunrise over the sound and in the quiet hours before guests arrive, you may hear the siamangs singing (listen for their duets of booms, barks and hoots), the walruses whistling and the wolves howling. The keepers are busy feeding breakfast to the animals and transitioning them from their overnight bedrooms to their outdoor habitats. Now, for the first time ever, guests have a chance to be there and enjoy those intimate early morning hours at the Zoo. Over 1.5 hours, visit selected areas of the zoo with a knowledgeable guide, without the crowds. This unique experience culminates with a special one-on-one surprise animal encounter at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater.

Who: All ages. This tour is for up to 5 people per program. Participants can either be individuals or a household group. Bookings will be sold either/or- we will not mix individuals with households.

When: On days when the Zoo is open!

Cost: Individual per person: \$75 member/ \$100 non-member. OR Household with up to 5 people: \$300 member / \$400 non-member. Prices include Zoo admission.

Heroes of Unusual Size

You've probably trained a dog, or know someone who has, or maybe watched the movie or read the book "How to Train Your Dragon." Now, Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is offering Heroes of Unusual Size- an opportunity for guests to learn how to train a surprising hero: HeroRATs! Also known as African giant pouched rats, HeroRATs are trained to detect landmines and tuberculosis.

Around 60 of the world's countries are contaminated with landmines left over from war, and injuries are severe and often deadly. HeroRATs have helped clear over 100,000 landmines, making land safe for people to live, work and play. The other way the HeroRATs save lives is by detecting tuberculosis, checking 100 samples in just 20 minutes where a lab technician would take days. It's a lifesaver, literally, for many African communities.

Now, Zoo guests have a chance to not only meet these heroes, but to help them in a training exercise. During a 30-minute close encounter, hide a spice ball and see exactly how they use their super senses to find it, and give them a special treat to reward these hard-working heroes.

Who: All ages (children must have an accompanying adult). This private experience is for up to 5 people of the same household.

When: 1 p.m. on Sundays

Cost: \$100 member/ \$150 non-members per household. Includes Zoo admission for up to 5 people.

Groovy Goats

Who doesn't love a spa day! In this 30-minute behind-the-scenes encounter, give the Zoo's goats the ultimate spa experience. Brush them, pat them, scratch their ears and watch them soak up all the attention! Zoo educators will teach guests all about how to interact with goats and what they like to eat and do. Guests will also get to hand-feed the goats their favorite pellets.

Who: 5 and up (children must have accompanying adult). This private experience is for up to 5 people of the same household.

When: 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. on days the Zoo is open.

Cost: \$100 per member group/ \$150 per non-member group. Includes admission to the Zoo.

Pacific Seas Aquarium Behind-The-Scenes

In this exclusive 75-minute experience, guests go behind-the-scenes of the new Pacific Seas Aquarium and see how aquarists feed and monitor the hundreds of sea creatures in the aquarium. Guests can touch a moon jellyfish, see baby jellies through a giant microscope, feed an anemone, discover hands-on how aquarists test water for salinity and temperature, look down into the Northwest Waters and Baja Bay habitats from above and see plenty of fish, green sea turtles and hammerhead sharks. This tour is perfect for those who love science or marine mammals. The tour finishes with a private session hand-feeding sea stars and anemones in the Tidal Touch Zone.

Who: 8 and up (children must have an accompanying adult). This private experience is for up to 5 people of the same household.

When: 12 p.m. on days the Zoo is open.

Cost: \$440 per member group/ \$465 per non-member group. Includes admission to the Zoo.

Eye-to-Eye Shark Dives

Adventure level: extreme! In this 60-minute experience, guests will get up close to more than a dozen massive sharks while learning about their biology and how we can protect them in the wild. The dive experts in the South Pacific Aquarium will teach guests the basics of breathing surface-supplied air, then guide you into a sturdy underwater cage in the 225,000-gallon warm water shark exhibit. No experience necessary! You'll have all the bragging rights after completing this epic underwater adventure.

Who: Ages 8 and up (children must have an accompanying adult). This private experience is for up to 4 people of the same household.

When: Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays

Cost: \$210 per member group/ \$255 non-member group. Includes admission to the Zoo.

Enhanced Safety Protocols

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is following all public health and safety guidelines for Phase 2 of Gov. Jay Inslee's Safe Start plan. Hand sanitizing stations are placed throughout the park. Face coverings are required for anyone 5 and over. Online timed tickets are required.

To learn more about these programs or book an experience, visit:

<https://www.pdza.org/discover/animal-experiences/>

To learn more about shark dives or book a dive, visit: <https://www.pdza.org/discover/shark-dives/>

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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. A member of the [Metro Parks Tacoma](#) family, the zoo creates a legacy of sustainability for future generations through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities; it also embodies Metro Parks' mission of creating healthy opportunities to play, learn and grow. The zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA). [The Zoo Society](#), a 501(c)(3) organization, is an instrumental partner in Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium's conservation, animal-care and education initiatives.

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