



Restoring balance between wildlife and human life, together.

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The President and CEO Annual General Meeting 2024 Report to the Community

Bonjour,

2023 was a remarkable year for your Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo. As President and CEO, it is a privilege to lead such an exceptional team dedicated to wildlife conservation, animal welfare, and learning.

I would like to thank you for being here with us today as we look back on our 2023 successes. Our passionate team of more than 1,200 staff and volunteers once again provided exceptional care to the animals that call your zoo home, we continued to educate and inspire our community about the importance of wildlife conservation, and we delivered more memorable experiences to our visitors than ever before.

Our community showed immense support in 2023, with 15,265 generous donors contributing to securing a future for wildlife and wild places and 95,920 members supporting our critical conservation work through the purchase of their membership. 579 volunteers invested 61,740 hours to support wildlife conservation, breaking our previous record of 57,927 in 2019. We welcomed a record setting 1.5 million guests to your zoo last year, engaging in educational programs and enjoying various special events. We connected with nearly 27,000 students and 6,000 adults through our school programs and over 2,000 youth during zoo camps. A new record was set for the number of private client events totaling 640 that included 112 weddings, 159 holiday parties, 266 corporate events and 101 birthday parties. We held 156 special events onsite setting another record reaching nearly 245,000 attendees. During the 27th anniversary of ZOOLIGHTS, we welcomed over 186,000 visitors to gather under the glow of over 7,000 strands of lights. Again, setting another attendance record. We delighted visitors with 109 conservation parades and more than 4,200 Wilder Moments helping to create cherished memories for over 240,000 visitors that will last a lifetime. We told wildlife stories in new and beautiful ways through interpretive updates, including the redevelopment of Wild Canada, inspiring connections between people, wildlife, and the land. And we gave back to our community by nearly doubling our ZooShare admission through the Calgary Fee Assistance program, providing over 31,000 low income Calgarians with affordable access to your zoo.

Conservation is at the heart of what we do. In 2023, we continued our vital conservation efforts, both locally and globally, through 18 collaborative conservation programs, aiding 27 species-at-risk in their journey towards recovery and sustainable existence.

From reintroducing threatened species to the wild to empowering communities to safeguard natural resources, these efforts have not only made a tangible impact on the environment and its inhabitants but have also served as an inspiration for future generations. We released our largest cohort of head-started burrowing owls to date of 26 owls that included the 100th head-started owl of the program.

We translocated and rewilded 432 head-started northern leopard frog tadpoles. There were 17 Vancouver Island marmots born at the Archibald Biodiversity Center that we transferred to our partners at the Marmot Recovery Foundation for future release and 13 marmots from litters born with us in 2022 were released into the wild last year. We released 40 greater sage-grouse into the wild in Alberta and Saskatchewan. There were 2 whooping crane chicks born and raised at our Wildlife Conservation Centre that were transferred to the International Crane Foundation for release into the Eastern Migratory population. Internationally, some other notable achievements in 2023 included the highest monthly hippo count recorded in the Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary with 55 hippos being sighted in Ghana. We joined our partners in celebrating the first honey sales through the Eburu Natural Forest Honey Cooperative in Kenya and supported the establishment of 14 wildlife clubs in forest adjacent primary schools at Mount Kenya.

Here at your zoo, we provided exceptional care to over 4,000 animals across 112 species as we welcomed some incredible new births, including the western lowland gorilla infant, Okabe, and red panda cubs Anshu and Aahana. We wished fond farewells to those heading on new adventures, including North American river otter, Fergus and we said heartfelt goodbyes to some beloved members of your zoo family, including red panda, Dusk, Masai giraffe Emara, and African lion Aslan. We also warmly welcomed many new arrivals from other accredited zoo's, including two, once orphaned, now charismatic polar bears, Baffin and Siku, who joined us from Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg.

On December 1st, 2023, we unveiled Wild Canada our largest re-development project in your zoo's history. Spanning more than two years, the vision for the project was to create an immersive uniquely Canadian experience that fostered connections between visitors, wildlife, and the land, igniting a renewed sense of hope for the future. Emphasis was placed on the infusion of genuine Indigenous viewpoints, woven together in a vibrant tapestry of creativity and heritage. Our commitment to conservation is not only evident in the immersive habitats but also in the ripple effect it will have on our visitors, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the well-being of our planet and the incredible wildlife we share it with.

Your zoo is proud to be accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, also referred to as AZA, signaling to our peers and visitors from around the world that we are committed to upholding the highest standards across every aspect of our operations. AZA member institutions, like us, are required to repeat the accreditation inspection process every five years to ensure we are upholding the continuously evolving standards, incorporating best modern zoological practices in animal welfare and management, and embracing modern AZA philosophies. For us, that time is now. This week, AZA accreditation inspectors will spend several days inspecting every area of your Wilder Institute and Calgary Zoo, including our two offsite facilities. Our animal management and care, veterinary medicine, conservation and science, education programs, safety policies and procedures, security, governance, physical facilities, guest services, and the quality of our staff will all be evaluated. We are confident that we are ready and will achieve reaccreditation.

In other AZA news, we are proud to be hosting the AZA 2024 Annual Conference this September in Calgary. It has been almost 50 years since the AZA Conference was held in Canada – the last one was in 1975. It is an honor to have been selected to host over 2,000 of our colleagues and industry peers at the largest gathering of talent and expertise of the zoo and aquarium community.

As we embark on the journey towards our centennial celebration in 2029, we do so with hearts full of hope, minds open to new possibilities, and a steadfast commitment to shaping a future where your

Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo continues to shine as a beacon of hope for a wilder future. The first half of 2024 has seen your zoo team working hard to finalize our new strategic plan, including a plan for habitat and experience redevelopments that will transform your zoo.

I am incredibly proud of all your zoo has achieved in 2023 and I want to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to our staff, volunteers, donors, community members and Board of Directors.

Thank you for supporting wildlife conservation!

Merci,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Lanthier', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Clément Lanthier
President and CEO
Wilder Institute/Calgary Zoo

