

At a Glance



> Why Zoos and Aquariums Are More Important Than Ever

When the Vancouver Aquarium opened in 1956, the planet was losing one or two species a year. Today, largely as a result of human activities—habitat encroachment and degradation, climate change, poaching and overfishing—the world loses two to three species each day. Yet, this dramatic and accelerating loss of biodiversity hardly seems to register in the public's consciousness.

While we can debate the causes, what we do know is that if people don't care about the accelerating loss of biodiversity, they and the governments that represent them won't take action to reverse this dramatic trend.

This is where zoos and aquariums come in. Zoos and aquariums play a critical role in our society by the unique way that they contribute to education, research and conservation. No other organization or institution can spark affective relations between humans and nature like zoos and aquariums.

Where once many saw their role as simply exhibitors of animals, today accredited zoos the world over share the fundamental belief that, as stewards of the animals in their care, they also have a responsibility to protect the planet's biodiversity through engagement, conservation and research.

Canadian accredited zoos and aquariums are part of a global community behind some of the most remarkable conservation success stories, bringing species such as the Black Footed Ferret and the Vancouver Island Marmot back from the brink of extinction.

CAZA's accreditation standards are grounded in two important principles: that aquariums and zoos must be guided by the highest values in animal care, and that they have a vital role to play in supporting species conservation—a role that has never been more important than today

Zoos and aquariums can be the catalyst that inspires a new generation of conservationists to carry out more research, rehabilitate more habitats, reintroduce more species and educate more people. CAZA-accredited institutions study, protect, and heal the animals in their care, striving to understand their physiology and decode their behaviours, while fostering an eventual new cohort of scientists and conservationists to continue this important work.

What is CAZA

Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) is a private not-for profit organization founded in 1975 representing the leading zoological parks and aquariums in Canada.

CAZA does not grant or rescind operating licences or license the keeping of animals by zoological institutions. In Canada, the granting of licences is the purview of provincial and/or municipal governments.

CAZA's mission is to promote the continuing evolution of Canadian zoos and aquariums as ethical agencies of recreation, education, conservation, and science. It does this through a comprehensive and evolving framework of standards and policies based on global best practices as well as a code of professional ethics grounded in community values.

CAZA often partners with governments and animal welfare agencies such as the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) by providing training for inspectors as well as expert assistance in investigations and in the rehoming of exotic animals.

Over 12 million people visit our accredited member institutions each year. For more information visit: www.caza.ca

