

# At a Glance



## > CAZA's Priorities

CAZA seeks to connect people to nature through the animal collections of the accredited zoo and aquarium community across Canada. Institutions accredited by our association share core values about the care and welfare of their animals, as well as their role as stewards of a natural world increasingly under threat by human activity. They nurture, protect and care for more than 100,000 animals—representing some 2,000 species—and help connect over 12 million visitors each year to the natural world. Zoos and aquariums play a critical role in our society by the unique way that they build bridges between an increasingly urban environment and nature. No other organization or institution can spark affective relations between humans and nature like zoos and aquariums.

But helping people establish connections with animals and nature and educating them about the threat posed by unsustainable human activities is only one aspect of the critical role zoos and aquariums play in modern society. Conservation, scientific research and animal welfare go hand in hand with raising awareness about the condition of the planet and its inhabitants. For this reason, CAZA has identified all of these disciplines as key priorities.

### Conservation & Science

Habitat loss, invasive species, pollution, population growth, resource over-exploitation, and climate change—all of these human-induced activities are responsible for the loss of countless species at unheard-of accelerated rates. Canada's accredited zoos and aquariums participate in some hundreds of conservation research projects, partnering with universities and colleges around the world. Beyond their species conservation efforts, accredited zoos and aquariums improve our knowledge and understanding of the world around us by observing, collecting and analyzing information about animals in human care. Our growing knowledge in fields like animal nutrition, reproduction, physiology and psychology is improving our ability to manage and conserve wild populations. Meanwhile, people-related research focused on the interaction of visitors, animals and staff offers valuable insight, and informs programs devoted to education and increasing environmental awareness.

### Animal Welfare

Our first concern is the welfare of the animals in the care of our member institutions. Our zoos and aquariums are recognized the world over for their approach to animal care, and their professional conduct standards have also been incorporated into legislation and regulations of many Canadian municipalities and provinces. To become and remain a CAZA member, zoos and aquariums must commit to upholding a rigorous Code of Professional Ethics and respect policies concerning the care, welfare and use of their animal collections, including our latest on the *Use of Animals in Educational Programming*.

### Engagement & Education

CAZA believes that we all have a part to play in protecting the natural world. By providing opportunities to millions of zoo and aquarium visitors annually to come face to face with and learn about wildlife, CAZA believes these connections motivate individuals to do their part to protect the environment and everything in it. Learning opportunities in zoos and aquariums range from a casual visit where interpreters are often on hand to impart insights into the animals, to formal education programming often developed in collaboration with schools and school boards. CAZA member institutions also engage the public regularly through outreach programs that take the zoo and aquarium to receptive audiences that might otherwise not have the opportunity to interact with their animals.

### 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](http://www.caza.ca)

