

## **AZA Grants Accreditation to Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**

Silver Spring, Maryland (March 27, 2015) – The Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) today announced that the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was granted accreditation by AZA's independent Accreditation Commission.

“Only zoos and aquariums that meet the highest standards are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. “The community should take great pride in knowing that Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is a proven leader in the care and conservation of wildlife, and in inspiring people to take action to protect the natural world.”

To be accredited, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum underwent a thorough review to ensure it has and will continue to meet ever-rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association.

The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the institution's operation, including animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and other areas. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal hearing of AZA's independent Accreditation Commission, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied. Any institution that is denied may reapply one year after the Commission's decision is made.

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. AZA is the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and seven other countries. Look for the AZA accreditation logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in saving species and your link to helping animals all over the world. To learn more, visit <http://www.aza.org>.

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*Please contact Rosemary Prawdzik at Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum at 520-883-3070 for additional information about the facility, including special events and activities for visitors and its ongoing commitment to wildlife conservation and science education.*