



-For Immediate Release-

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Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo Honored with Prestigious AZA Accreditation and Two Education Awards

Bridgeport, CT – Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo is proud to announce that it has received accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) independent Accreditation Commission at this year's Annual Conference in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. While attending the annual conference, Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo won two competitive AZA Education Awards.

Twice a year, the AZA Commission reviews accreditation applications from top zoos, aquariums, and related facilities worldwide. At this year's Annual Conference, 33 facilities earned accreditation. The process includes a detailed application, a multi-day inspection by an independent team, and thorough evaluations of animal care, safety, education, conservation, and more. After reviewing inspection reports, the Commission interviews facility officials before granting, provisionally granting, or denying accreditation. AZA facilities must complete this process every five years as part of their membership requirements.

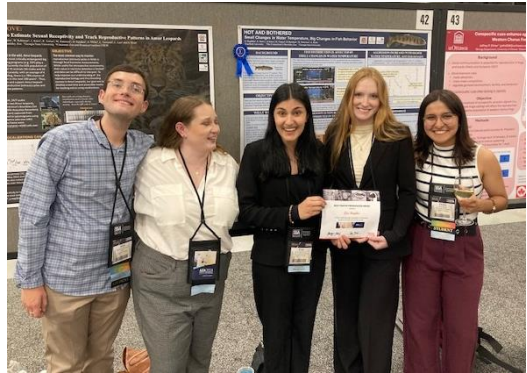


“Congratulations to Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo for meeting our rigorous standards and achieving Association of Zoos and Aquariums accreditation,” said Dan Ashe, President, and Chief Executive Officer at AZA. “Earning accreditation is a mark of excellence and a testament to Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo's unwavering commitment to the highest standards of animal care and conservation. Your dedication not only enhances the lives of the animals you care for but also sets a precedent for excellence in the zoological community.”



In addition to being accredited, Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo proudly took home an Educational Award for the second year in a row. The zoo's Cool Blue Bridgeport program was honored with the “Education Award – Significant Achievement.” Cool Blue Bridgeport allows zoo educators to deliver free climate change programming to students in Bridgeport Public Schools and welcomes Bridgeport residents to the zoo free of charge every Saturday during the school year. The program is in partnership with the City of Bridgeport and provides residents and student the opportunity to participate in free climate change programming at the zoo on those Saturdays.

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo is also thrilled to announce that its RIZE (Research, Internships, and Zoo Education) program, in collaboration with Fairfield University, won top honors at the AZA Poster Competition during this year's international conference. Fairfield University student Elia Haghbin's poster, titled Hot and Bothered: Small Changes in Water Temperature, Big Changes in Fish Behavior, earned First Place/Blue Ribbon Honors in the Conservation Track. This prestigious competition featured over 80 posters from more than 100 entrants across the United States, Canada, and beyond, with themes ranging from animal welfare to conservation. Winning in this highly competitive field underscores the excellence of the RIZE program and its commitment to advancing zoo-based research and education.



Jim Wharton, CEO of Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo stated, "We are incredibly honored to receive AZA accreditation once again, and to be recognized for our educational programs and community outreach efforts. This achievement is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team, who strive every day to provide the highest standard of care for our animals and engage with the community through meaningful conservation and education initiatives. Winning the Education Award for the AZA Poster Competition and our Cool Blue Bridgeport program, which directly benefits local students and residents, reinforces our mission to make a lasting impact, locally and globally."

For more information, visiting hours, and other zoo attractions, please visit www.beardsleyzoo.org.

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About Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo

Connecticut's only zoo, celebrating 102 years, features 350 animals representing primarily North and South American and Northern Asian species. Guests won't want to miss our Andean bear, maned wolves, Mexican gray wolves, and red wolves. Other highlights include our Spider Monkey Habitat, and a new prairie dog exhibit. As an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and participant in its Species Survival Plan (SSP) programs, the non-profit Zoo is committed to the preservation of endangered animals and wild habitats. Tickets can be purchased on the [Zoo's website](http://www.beardsleyzoo.org).

About AZA

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 12 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 www.aza.org.