

Pursuit of Excellence

Dear Colleagues,

This month in *Connect*, we highlight the importance of animal health and wellbeing. From individuals to populations, in Association of Zoos and Aquariums facilities and in the wild, from zoo-based research to collaborating with health professional in other fields, animal wellbeing is the foundation of our profession. The unifying thread that ties it all together is science, the engine that drives our continual pursuit of excellence in animal care.

As we explore various stories of animal health and wellbeing in this month's issue, we learn what it means to the professionals doing this work daily.

- It means being both a clinician and a scientist.
- It means caring for individual animals, in addition to working together to improve veterinary medicine across the globe.
- It means caring for animals throughout their entire lives, whether through population planning, investing in the opportunity for each animal to live a rich and full life, or humane planning for each individual's end-of-life care.

Within AZA, there is a multitude of professionals devoted to ensuring each animal is healthy and thriving, whose research and experience become part of our larger collective scientific knowledge. In this vein, a key tool that AZA members have at their disposal is ZooMonitor. Created by Lincoln Park Zoo, this app is freely available to all AZA member institutions. It helps record the behavior of animals, supports organizations engaging in animal behavior research, aids in internal decision-making to enhance animal wellbeing, and facilitates research between organizations. To learn more, go to zoomonitor.org.

As you read the articles in this month's issue, it's important to note that animal health and wellbeing isn't just something we like to highlight—it defines who we are. As AZA facilities, we celebrate our core conservation tenet of advancing the health of animals in the wild by utilizing the science and knowledge that allows animals to thrive in our care. We demonstrate and advance our commitment to wellbeing through the 12 Guiding Principles in AZA's Strategic Framework for the Wellbeing of Animals (<https://www.aza.org/about-animal-wellbeing>). The way we continue to hold ourselves to the highest standards and use science and collaboration is a key strength of our profession and a huge point of pride. WE are AZA!



LISA NEW
AZA Board Chair
Chief Executive Officer, Dallas Zoo



Correction

In the January *Connect*, we ran the wrong photo with the announcement of Dr. Katie Hall joining the Minnesota Zoo in Apple Valley, Minn., as director of animal behavior and wellbeing (page 42). This is Dr. Hall. We apologize for the error.

Connect

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