



City of Santa Ana  
20 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701  
Staff Report  
April 21, 2025

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**TOPIC:** Santa Ana Zoo Staff Report

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**AGENDA TITLE:**

Santa Ana Zoo Staff Report.

**DISCUSSION**

**ANIMAL CARE**

1. Butterflies Return

Warmer weather is here and that means the butterflies are back in May! Guests can once again venture inside Flight - A Live Butterfly Experience. Explore a lush garden full of colorful foliage and flowers as hundreds of tropical butterflies flutter about you. Watch butterflies emerge from their chrysalis in the emergence chamber. Capture memories with multiple photo spots both inside and outside the habitat. Discover your new favorite butterfly species through observation and educational signage. The experience is included with zoo admission, but reservations are required to manage crowds and ensure everyone has a chance to visit the habitat. On the day of your visit, scan the QR code at the Zoo entrance or butterfly habitat to join the list.

2. Millipede Transfer

Giant African millipedes reproduce well in our care and we have been able to share millipedes with many zoos and aquariums in the United States and in New Zealand. In March, we made transfers of millipedes to OC Parks for Santiago Oaks Regional Park Nature Center and Georgia College & State University.

3. Hedgehog

We received one four-toed hedgehog from the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, Iowa. The hedgehog may be seen during public education programs and lives in a habitat behind-the-scenes in the Crean Family Children's Zoo. Hedgehogs are insect-eaters and not related to porcupines, which are a type of rodent.

4. Aviary Pond Renovation

The pond system in the Colors Bird Aviary was drained, mucked out, cleaned, and started up again. We last completed a full overhaul ten years ago and the pond

5. AZA Mid-Year Meeting

Zoo staff attended to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Mid-Year Meeting in Palm Desert in March. This is an opportunity to connect and collaborate with colleagues from around the country (and world). There was a strong focus on wildlife trafficking during the meeting because it is a pressing issue right now. Santa Ana Zoo is a member of the Wildlife Confiscations Network and more information is available here: <https://www.aza.org/wta-confiscations-network>

## EVENTS

### 1. City Nature Challenge

Join the Santa Ana Zoo and the Santiago Creek ECO Center for the 2025 City Nature Challenge! We need your help to document the amazing biodiversity in Orange County from April 25-28, then identify those observations from April 29-May 4.

Anytime you see or hear wildlife, take a photo or make a sound recording and upload it to iNaturalist. Participate from wherever you are, or join us for an in-person bioblitz. <https://www.santaanazoo.org/event/city-nature-challenge/>  
<https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2025-orange-county>

### 2. Brew at the Zoo

On May 10 from 5-8pm, this annual fundraiser brings beer lovers and animal lovers together. Explore the Zoo encountering animals, enjoying music, and sampling beer from a variety of craft breweries. Complimentary food tastings provided, and pub-style grub is available for purchase. Custom Brew at the Zoo glassware included with each admission. 21 & over only. <https://www.santaanazoo.org/event/brew-at-the-zoo/>  
<https://santaanazoo.ticketsauce.com/e/brew-at-the-zoo-2025>

### 3. Party for the Planet

On May 25 from 11-3pm, come celebrate with the Zoo! Party for the Planet combines Earth Day and Endangered Species Day with informational and activity stations for all ages. Discover a new species, learn how you can help conserve water and other resources, and connect with local organizations that are doing their part too! The Zoo will be full of fun activities, all included with Zoo Admission. Residents receive FREE general admission to the Zoo, proof of residency required.

### 4. Storytime at the Zoo

The zoo offers weekly storytimes on Sundays, Mondays, and Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m. at the Rip Ribble stage in the Crean Family Children's Zoo. Monday storytime – Leer Lunes - is bilingual in Spanish.

## OPERATIONS

1. **Hive Education and Community Hub Building**  
Plan check is complete for this project and we anticipate the bidding process beginning soon. This project will provide education and community meeting space, as well as a new dedicated entrance for education groups and a bus drop off zone to increase access and safety.
2. **Pathway Accessibility Project**  
This project will replace many existing dirt pathways with more accessible concrete pathways. The proposed pathways will still maintain an aesthetic that complements both the design and landscape of the facility. Construction contracts were awarded and we have completed the pre-construction meetings.
3. **Children's Zoo Updates**  
The renovated pond for the future alligator habitat in the Children's Zoo is functioning well and the adjacent buildings were recently painted. Updated interpretive signage is in process and additional buildings will be painted brighter colors in the near future, refreshing the buildings and area of the zoo.
4. **Tree Trimming**  
Annual tree trimming throughout the zoo has been ongoing and our landscape contractor is currently performing a four-year tree risk assessment. The tree risk assessment helps us evaluate hazardous trees and make pruning and management decisions. Proactive tree care enables us to manage windy conditions effectively, with limited downed branches and hazards.
5. **Wall Project**  
This wall will replace a failing fifty-year-old wood telephone pole fence at the north end of the zoo along First St. The new wall design is complete and has been submitted for plan check and review by Caltrans. The new, structurally sound wall will improve zoo security while reducing noise from First Street and the 5 Freeway onramp. The project will also improve mobility through the north end of the zoo via realignment of the wall-adjacent service road. We're currently going through plan check and the Caltrans process.
6. **Santiago Park ECO Center**  
The center is open Friday – Monday. Designs for the new exhibits inside the center are complete and currently in fabrication. We anticipate installation in early 2025 due to some manufacturer delays. The center was recently painted, and staff are offering programs, including Creekside Storytime on Mondays at 11:30 a.m., and ARTimals art programs on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. Program information is made available on the Zoo's Facebook and Instagram accounts.

7. ABC Public Notice

Zoo café Bean Sprouts received its Public Notice of Application to Sell Alcoholic Beverages from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. Bean Sprouts will start serving to guests this month. They will feature beer from Santa Ana River Brewing Company, in addition to other offerings.

8. Otter and Primate Trails

This project is under construction with contractor G.B. Cooke, and proceeding swiftly. Remaining tasks include installing stainless steel netting for the additional primate habitats and completing the indoor animal facilities. A large section of the construction fencing was taken down to open the area up.

## VOLUNTEERS

1. Volunteer Updates

The zoo welcomes volunteers as both individuals and groups. Additional information is available at <https://www.santaanazoo.org/volunteer-at-the-zoo/>.

## FUNDRAISING

1. Primate Forest

FOSAZ and City staff continue to work together on the capital campaign for the Primate Forest. FOSAZ and City staff are reviewing proposals for the roles of capital campaign manager and campaign consultant. This is the largest capital campaign we have embarked on for zoo improvements and will help us replace the oldest infrastructure in the zoo.

2. Zoofari 2025

Save the date for our annual black-tie gala fundraiser, Zoofari 2025 on August 16 from 5:30-11pm.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

No fiscal impact

## **EXHIBIT(S)**

N/A

Submitted By:

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Approved By:

Hawk Scott, Executive Director Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Agency