

# American Humane Certified™ Zoos & Aquariums

Verifying excellent animal welfare  
at leading zoological facilities



**AMERICAN★HUMANE**  
FIRST TO SERVE®



American Humane is **the world's largest certifier of the welfare and humane treatment of animals.** Founded in 1877, American Humane has been at the forefront of virtually every major advance in animal protection and is first to serve wherever animals need rescue, shelter or security.

Animals in the wild now face the "Sixth Mass Extinction," in which human activities are damaging habitats and causing species to go extinct up to 100 times faster than normal. The best zoos and aquariums across the globe today are conducting vital conservation and education programs to save Earth's extraordinary species.

Increasingly, however, people are seeking assurance of the humane treatment of animals under human care. This demand led to the creation of the American Humane Certified™ program for zoos and aquariums so that the public's focus is on what matters – the wildlife, rather than noisy detractors who seek to stop progress.

Fewer than 3 percent of zoological institutions worldwide are accredited. While industry-affiliated associations offer programs for broad accreditation of business practices, **American Humane Certified™ is the only genuinely independent, third-party certification effort solely devoted to the humane treatment of animals in zoos, aquariums, and other conservation organizations.**

The American Humane Certified™ program offers three levels of transparent and credible assurance:

- **Uniquely Qualified, Trusted Humane Organization:** American Humane is the world's largest certifier of animal welfare, *protecting more than 1 billion animals* around the globe with the most recognized, credible and respected humane programs. These include the world's largest farm animal welfare certification program and the historic "No Animals Were Harmed®" film certification.
- **Comprehensive Welfare Criteria Developed by Top Experts:** The program is built on comprehensive welfare criteria informed by an unmatched, independent *Scientific Advisory Committee* made up of highly respected experts in animal welfare, animal science, behavior and animal ethics, including renowned animal ethicists Dr. Joe Howell and Dr. Bernard Rollin.
- **Independent Verification:** Implementation of these rigorous welfare measures are verified by independent auditors with extensive zoological expertise in animal science and welfare.



## Benefits of being designated as American Humane Certified™ by the world's most effective, global animal welfare organization:

- Spotlight institutional commitment to excellence in animal welfare.
- Join the fastest-growing humane certification program in the zoological world.
- Maximize engagements with an increasingly ethics-conscious public.
- Gain positive media exposure and public/private support.
- Use science-based assurances to deflect unsubstantiated, blanket misinformation by animal rights zealots.
- Showcase welfare practices informed by the top names in animal science, animal welfare and animal ethics.
- Work with the world's only genuinely independent, third-party program solely dedicated to animal welfare.

## Indicators of Positive Welfare

The American Humane Certified™ assessment is **animal-centric** with the goal of confirming good welfare and humane treatment is provided consistently to all animals in Humane Certified™ zoos and aquariums.

Focusing on individual animals and small groups of animals, welfare indicators are designed to be species-specific and include metrics that are directly and indirectly measured. Direct information includes aspects of welfare that are observable or measurable in the animal(s) being assessed while indirect information is obtained from discussions with animal care staff and/or supervisors and from facility protocols and animal records.

***The standards and audit tools verify diverse aspects of animal welfare and humane treatment, including many indicators of well-being such as:***

- Physical appearance
- Appropriate individual & group behaviors
- **Positive interactions** between animals & their conspecifics & caretakers
- Ability to self-separate
- Physiological metrics
- Appropriate activity levels and *use* of spaces
- Disease & mortality
- Record-keeping practices
- **Environmental** parameters (lighting, shade, temperature, sound, etc.)
- Environmental, behavioral and cognitive enrichment
- Staff knowledge & training
- **Veterinary** procedures
- Husbandry training
- Breeding programs
- Choices for animals to participate, or not
- **Safety** measures for animals and the public
- Nutrition needs
- Food quality & safety protocols
- Consideration of diurnal and seasonal environmental patterns
- Veterinary **health** plans to recognize & treat adverse medical trends
- Handling of animals in **educational** and interactive programs
- Emergency protocols
- Training staff on animal interactions
- Use of **positive reinforcement** in husbandry & training
- Transparency & openness of daily operations & **animal care**

## Core Principles

In addition to examining the key indicators of animal welfare, American Humane's program is founded upon three essential, non-negotiable criteria that must be met for the audit to proceed. Significant weight is placed on these essential criteria which underlie the entire audit process. Failure to meet these non-negotiable requirements will result in failure of the audit.

### Mandatory Pass Checklist:

#### 1. No Observations of Animal Abuse

Observations of willful acts or signs of abuse will automatically result in failure of the audit.

#### 2. Appropriate Health Plan and Implementation

A veterinary/health plan (i.e. preventive medical care) must be in effect. If a plan does not exist one should be developed and implemented prior to the On-Site Assessment. Failure to provide such documentation and confirmation of a health plan will result in audit failure.

#### 3. Staff Conduct that Promotes Animal Welfare

Staff must be aware of the facility's protocols and procedures and at all times must conduct themselves in a manner that promotes animal welfare.



## How the Certification Process Works



### ■ Pre-Audit Application

Requires information on animal collection size and diversity, husbandry staffing and practices, training and enrichment practices, record-keeping systems, veterinary care programs, emergency protocols and animal programs.

### ■ On-Site Assessment

Independent auditors evaluate the welfare of both individual and groups of animals. On-Site Assessments typically take between 1-6 days with a team of 2-5 auditors who possess expertise directly related to the facility's animal collection.

### ■ On-Site Assessment Summary Report

This report provides an assessment welfare score, an overall summary of the findings, observed examples of good animal welfare and areas for improvement, as well as details of auditors' observations for each animal and exhibit area assessed.

### ■ Corrective Action Plan

American Humane seeks to verify excellent welfare and, when necessary, raise the effectiveness of animal care from good to excellent. If warranted, therefore, a facility may need to draft a Corrective Action Plan in order to achieve certification. Upon approval of the Corrective Action Plan, American Humane awards the facility the American Humane Certified™ designation and seal of approval.

### ■ Certification Announcement

American Humane works closely with the newly certified facility to coordinate a public announcement about achieving designation as an American Humane Certified™ facility.

## Who Are the Auditors?

American Humane contracts with auditors who are expert in their field, independent from American Humane and are not currently employed by a zoo or aquarium – allowing for a truly independent, third-party certification.

**American Humane’s auditors have decades of experience studying and assessing animal welfare including veterinary medicine, life support systems, enrichment and training as well as public programming related to animals and the environment.**

## Certification Term

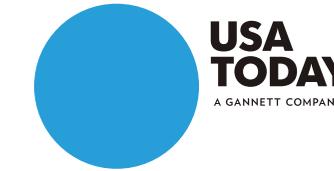
The certification term is five years. An annual report will be requested during the five-year span to keep American Humane apprised of the status of any corrective action plans and any occurrences or events related to animal welfare. After an institution achieves American Humane Certified™ status, open and proactive communication is required regarding the ongoing welfare of animals in the institution’s care.

## Other Benefits: Powerful Tools to Promote Conservation and Public Understanding of Animals and Animal Issues

Earning American Humane Certified™ designation allows zoological institutions to spotlight their independently verified, science-based evidence of the good care they provide. The designation also effectively combats growing activist arguments while reassuring millions of visitors that the welfare and humane treatment of their animals is priority number one.

American Humane Certified™ institutions can enlist American Humane as an active ally in promoting and protecting the work being done by the best zoological institutions. Additionally, institutions in American Humane’s network benefit from our assertive advocacy and sophisticated, wide-ranging slate of powerful platforms including:

- **Commanding News Coverage:** American Humane generates some 150,000 animal-related media pieces each year reaching hundreds of millions of people worldwide, and aggressively promotes and defends the excellence of American Humane Certified™ zoos and aquariums through news coverage, television and radio appearances, op-eds, letters to the editor, social media, satellite media tours, magazines and newsletters targeted to animal lovers and more. Because we care for animals, we believe the work of good zoological facilities deserves effective promotion and vigorous protection.



## How zoos and aquariums can help save 1 million species from extinction

**It’s time for everyone who cares about preserving animal life to rally behind zoos and aquariums that act as modern arks of hope for many species.**

TIME

FORTUNE



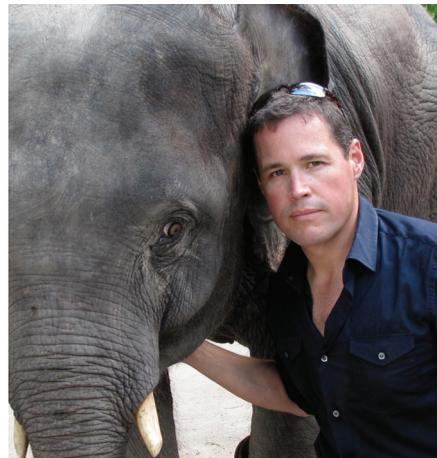
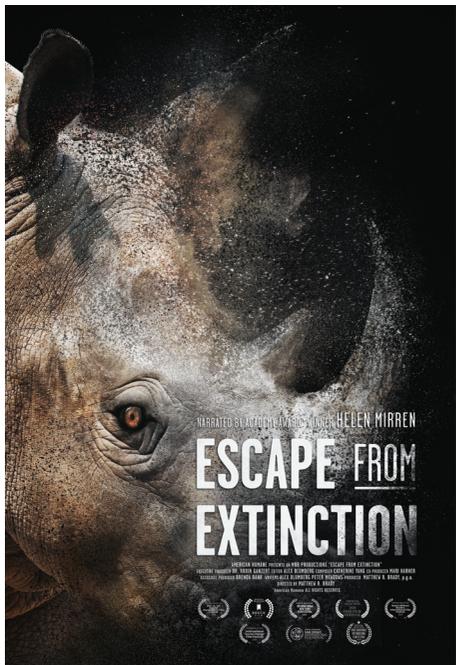
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PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW™

LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

San Antonio Express-News

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL



Jeff Corwin, Wildlife Biologist, Conservationist and TV Personality

- Government & Legislative Affairs Support:** Our government and legislative affairs team is well-connected, knowledgeable and dynamic in forwarding solutions for a wide array of animal issues. Our team can help analyze and advance positive initiatives and fight those not in the best interests of animals; and, forcefully advocate for the humane conservation of animals in American Humane Certified™ zoos and aquariums.
- TV & Radio Campaigns:** American Humane produces major, award-winning television and radio public service campaigns that reach large audiences with powerful perspectives on the role of animals in our lives. Our spots supporting zoos and aquariums with conservationist Jeff Corwin and zoologist Jack Hanna have aired more than 70,000 times on TV and radio stations across the country, creating 1.2 billion actual Nielsen-tracked views. Together, these campaigns generated broadcast coverage that would have cost \$8.6 million.
- Award-Winning Documentary:** American Humane's inaugural feature-length documentary *Escape from Extinction* shines a vitally important spotlight on the critical efforts of leading zoos and aquariums across the globe as they race against the clock to save one million species on the verge of a catastrophic mass extinction. Narrated by Helen Mirren, this award-winning film is widely available to rent or own digitally throughout North America, Australia, and the U.K.

- School Campaigns:** To foster the next generation of animal lovers who support the conservation of magnificent and disappearing species in zoos and aquariums, American Humane has partnered with the publishers of the popular *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books to create a series of books featuring the good works of American Humane Certified™ zoos and aquariums and distribute them to schools across the United States free of charge. *Humane Heroes* (Vol. 1) won the national 2020 "Teachers' Choice Award for the Classroom" from *Learning Magazine*. These books, accompanied by companion curriculum, are refreshed regularly with stories from new certified institutions.
- Wide-Reaching Advocacy Videos:** We produce wide-reaching, high-quality advocacy videos on the importance of the work being done by zoos and aquariums, generating millions of views. Our four most recent videos were seen by 6.5 million people and one strategically targeted video on Mystic Aquarium's research on Beluga whales captured the attention of 160,000 influentials including government officials in positions to help secure support for their vital work.

Through these techniques and tools, American Humane provides a powerful array of proactive measures designed to preserve and protect zoological organizations that do so much to preserve and protect the animals with whom we share the Earth.



Dr. Robin Ganzert, President and CEO, American Humane



## For More Information

For more information on the *American Humane Certified™* program for zoos, aquariums, nature and conservation centers or other zoological facilities, please contact:

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[www.AmericanHumane.org](http://www.AmericanHumane.org)

American Humane is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt charity. Our tax ID/EIN is 84-0432950.

