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2015 Zoo Attendance Breaks All Records

Photos available for download at <http://bit.ly/FWCZ2015Photos>

Adorable baby animals, new exhibits, and a birthday celebration helped the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo set a new attendance record in 2015.

A total of 618,498 guests visited the zoo in 2015, exceeding the previous attendance record of 614,666, set in 2009 when the African Journey exhibit first opened.

This figure includes 590,649 people who visited during the regular zoo season of April 25-October 11, and 27,849 guests who attended the Wild Zoo Halloween in 2015.

The zoo celebrated its 50th birthday in 2015 and welcomed many baby animals, including a reticulated giraffe and an endangered Sumatran orangutan. Phase 2 of the \$7 million Australian Adventure renovation project opened, featuring tropical fish and sharks in The Reef, and touchable stingrays at Stingray Bay.

Also in 2015, the zoo was named the 7th Best Zoo in the United States and the 20th Best Zoo in the World by TripAdvisor, with rankings based on customer reviews.

"We thank our entire community for your support during this record-breaking season," said Zoo Director Jim Anderson. "I'm proud of our staff for serving over 600,000 guests as we work to fulfill our mission of connecting people with animals."

The zoo is operated by the non-profit Fort Wayne Zoological Society and receives no tax funding for operations. Ticket sales, membership sales, concessions, other earned revenue, donations, and sponsorships comprise the zoo's operating budget.

The zoo is the largest tourist attraction in northeast Indiana. About one in five zoo visitors comes from outside of Indiana. Forty percent of zoo guests are from Allen County. For more than 90% of out-of-town zoo guests surveyed, the zoo was their main reason for travelling to Fort Wayne.

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About the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo: The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo's mission is to connect kids and animals, strengthen families, and inspire people to care. The zoo is northeast Indiana's largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests annually. The zoo received the 2015 **TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award**, was named the **#7 Zoo in the United States** and the **#20 zoo in the world** by TripAdvisor, was voted **Indiana's #1 "Gotta-Do Summer Attraction,"** and is consistently named one of the nation's **Top Ten Zoos for Kids** by national media outlets.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing more than \$80,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 91 endangered species and taxa. The zoo was named Northeast Indiana's **Sustainable Business of the Year** in 2014.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The zoo's operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations.

The zoo is closed for the season and will reopen April 26, 2016.

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