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## At the Zoo

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nature and our world," plus visiting a zoo is a fun and affordable way for families to spend time together.

Besides encouraging memberships, the society also works to create several fundraising opportunities for the zoo that are open to the entire community. Fundraisers include recurring events such as the "Brew at the Zoo" beer tasting event for adults set for March this year, a Star Wars Day "May the Fourth Be With Zoo" celebration, and "Hear Me Roar: Pride Night at the Zoo" celebrating Gay Pride Month in June. This year will also see some additional programs, including "Game of Thrones" Sundays mid-April through May for adults, and a "Jack, Sally, and Sandy Claws - at the Zoo" event in December for all ages.

A gala "Feast With Beasts" preview party showcasing the new Chihuahuan Desert Exhibits is planned for Aug. 24, and the society will be part of the "Earth Day at the Movies" showings of "Lion King" at July 19-20 at Alamo Drafthouse.

Volunteers for the society not only play a major part in the special events, but also — with training — help with everything from animal handling, to working with tech or horticulture.

El Paso Zoological Society members get free admission to the zoo during regular hours, and discounted admission to zoo camp and some of the zoo's special events. Neuert said in addition to free admission, members get a 10 percent discount in the zoo's gift shop, for food purchases, and for the rides on the African Star Train and Endangered Species Carousel.

"Members can skip the lines with free and easy access to Boo at the Zoo, Party for the Planet, and Santa at the Zoo," she said.

Zoo membership also gains free or discounted entry to more than 150 zoos and aquariums across the country, including Albuquerque, Dallas, San Antonio, Houston and more," she said. The reciprocal arrangement applies to Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) affiliated attractions.

El Paso Zoological Society annual membership levels range from "Spider Monkey" (one adult) for \$50 to "Critter Club" group members for two adults, up to five children, plus two one-day admission tickets for \$125. Military discounts are offered, and zoo memberships can also be purchased as gifts but are non-transferable. Membership levels and information are available at [elpasozoosociety.org](http://elpasozoosociety.org).

## ALAMEDA ZOO

Alameda Park Zoo in Alamogordo, N.M. is the oldest zoo in the Southwest, established in 1898. Zoo Manager Bud Wiser said the 12-acre zoo hosted 80,000 guests last year from all over the country and beyond.

Many of its 250 exotic and indigenous animals have come from other zoos or rehabilitation organizations.

Recent improvement projects include the creation of new monkey enclosure, with current work on a new parking lot and parking lot lighting. Their Education Center has also recently been renovated.

"In that past few years we've added a really nice walk-through aviary, and we have our monkey exhibit now with Capuchin and Patas monkeys," Wiser said, adding they cohabit an environment with crested porcupines.

Some of the regular events at the zoo include reptile presentations hosted by the nonprofit educational group the Island of Misfit Morphs the first Sunday of each month.

Wiser said another interesting thing about the zoo is its history, as it was built as a zoo park for train travelers to enjoy.

The zoo is in Alameda Park, 1321 North White Sands Blvd., and is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Information: (575) 439-4290, or on Facebook at Alameda Park Zoo-AFOTZ

## CAMPS & CLASSES

El Paso Zoo educates more than 350,000 visitors each year, including thousands of students via field trips. Among its most popular educational offerings are spring break and summer zoo camps.

"Zoo Camp activities will include behind the scene tours, conservation activities, art projects learning about our zoo animal care, and so much more," Volunteer Coordinator Toni Lopez said. "The El Paso Zoo is the perfect environment to explore the wonders of nature and animals."

Camp discounts are available for Zoological Society members and families of military.

Lopez said the zoo also seeks volunteers age 16 and older who "love animals, nature and kids" to work with the summer camps and spring break events.

"Come and help by checking in mem-

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## ZOO DOO RAISES DOUGH

One unique way people can help the zoo is by purchasing Zoo Doo for their gardens. Zoo Doo is a partnership of New Green Organics, Wonder Eco:Nomics and El Paso Zoo that creates a "composted blend of herbivore manures from the El Paso Zoo mixed with food scraps, leaves and woody products." Its purpose is "to promote better use of organic waste and educate El Pasoans about regenerative techniques and how they can benefit individuals and our community as a whole."

The Zoo Doo Farm is in Vinton, Texas. People can learn more about the process via regenerative workshops; education videos are coming out soon.

Zoo Doo helps prevent thousands of pound of animal waste from ending up in city landfills, and helps promote healthier plants by "improving aeration, root penetration and water retention," thanks to the biodiversity in its fertilizer, according to the product's description.

Ten percent of the proceeds from the composts sales benefit the zoo. The product is available by the cubic yard wholesale for pick up through New Green Organics at 637-9235 or [zoodoop.com](http://zoodoop.com).