

A DESCRIPTION OF OUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAMS

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On the premise that man has evolved from a more primitive animal to become the most sophisticated and able of all the species, we believe he must accept the idea of being responsible for the preservation and welfare of all other members of the animal kingdom. Even if you cannot agree with the above concept of evolution, you must admit that by virtue of his superior reasoning power, man must still accept this responsibility.

Modern zoos have accepted this responsibility and are playing a major part in the field of conservation. No longer are they content to just display unusual and rare animals; they have heeded the warning signals and are working with all the facilities they can command to counteract and divert the flood of disaster that lack of knowledge and irresponsibility have initiated.

The Los Angeles Zoo, aided by the volunteer members of the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association, is well to the fore in this tremendous undertaking. They realize that a zoo is less desirable than the animal's natural habitat. They also realize that in many cases the progress of civilization has either depleted or polluted the environment necessary for the subsistence of the animal; in some cases natural areas have been completely destroyed. As a result, the Los Angeles Zoo is providing animal exhibits as similar to the natural habitat as space and finances will permit, remembering that zoos may provide the only sanctuary available to many species.

A most active breeding policy is being maintained by displaying only intermingled sexes. New blood lines are introduced whenever possible. The birth rate at the Los Angeles Zoo is excellent. This is an excellent criteria of its policies and facilities. Experiments in artificial insemination of certain primates and birds of prey are being conducted. This has never before been attempted in zoos and, if successful, will add much toward assuring the continuation of endangered species.

The "No Feeding" policy introduced with the opening of the Zoo has proven most beneficial. The Los Angeles Zoo is the first major zoo to adhere to this. It facilitates the maintenance of a balanced, nutritional diet and eliminates the possibility of illness or death caused by the consumption of foreign objects, unsuitable foods, disease carrying publicly preferred tidbits. All diets are prepared in a fine, modern commissary, staffed by specially trained workers.

The Los Angeles Zoo Health Center is as antiseptically clean and well equipped as any good, small hospital. Here the veterinarian and his staff perform necessary operations, such as Caesarean sections, and carry on other medical duties as required. A quarantine center also exists for the confinement of newly acquired animals or the isolation of existent animals whenever the necessity for isolation is indicated.

The "living classroom" provided by our Los Angeles Zoo is one of the best possible ways to educate the youth and adults of today. Here we can not only provide basic knowledge of our furred, feathered and scaly friends, we can better explain the differences in their behavior and needs as related to "in the zoo" and "in the wild" habitats.

Enthusiastically encouraged and assisted by our Zoo director and his staff, the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association has for the past ten years, willingly assumed the responsibility for the provision of teacher guides and zoologically oriented education programs to over three quarters of a million persons in the greater Los Angeles area. We have provided them with the opportunity to learn to become the true conservationists of tomorrow by coupling idealism with practicality.

The education programs were initiated with the commencement of a volunteer docent program in March of 1965. Due to its immediate and overwhelming success, today over 200. Dedicated women conduct thousands of school children each month from throughout Southern California on tours of the Los Angeles Zoo.

The various tours offered are designed to augment the formal education program of each age group from second grade through the college level. All tour formats are planned jointly with the Education Committee and the professional Education Coordinator (a trained educator) of the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association. The Committee consists of

representatives from the County, City, private and parochial schools in the area, qualified Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association members, and members of the Zoo's professional staff. Every effort is made to serve as many teachers and classes as possible, keeping the number of children in each group limited in order to maintain a desirable Docent-to-child ratio.

Approximately 12,000 children a month visit the Zoo and participate in well-planned conducted tours which are tailored to fit their specific educational needs. As a result of this careful planning, the school systems have accepted the tours as a supplement to their regular education programs. Tours are scheduled by a staff tour consultant. When a tour is scheduled, the teacher receives preparatory material along with pictures of animals the class may see on its tour.

Programs offered by the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association using volunteers are:

1. Teaching tours in ecology, adaptation, endangered species, and primates.
2. Seventeen week course for the adult blind in "Zoology".
3. Reptile and Aviary teaching tours as requested by either young people or adults.
4. Specialized educational programs for children having mental and/or physical handicaps.
5. Regular school teaching tours in all areas of zoo for elementary and secondary school children.
6. Taxonomic tours for high school and college science classes.
7. Six-week workshops in basic zoology (taxonomic) on mammals, birds and reptiles. Fall, Spring and Summer for ages nine through fourteen. A Primate Workshop is also available.

8. Student volunteer training for ninth, tenth and eleventh grades. For service in the Children's Zoo, walk-through aviary and reptile house.
9. Primate teaching tours for high school and college science classes.
10. Fill speaking engagements as requested. (114 in 1972)
11. Animal behavior classes for secondary, high school and college classes.
12. In conjunction with the Los Angeles County School's Division of Special Education, we have developed a study guide for teachers of children with learning disabilities titled "Study Trip to the Zoo - Curriculum Supplement".
13. We have created three film strips now being distributed on a nationwide basis. "The Children's Zoo", "North American Animals to Know" and "African Animals to Know". A fourth, "South American Animals to Know" is now in the making.
14. A zoological workshop is presently being given in the Los Angeles Children's Hospital for Convalescent and Rehabilitation Center patients on a twice-a-month basis.
15. For the past three years an on going, slide-lecture program has been presented by our docents at Lathrop Hall. This is a County facility which cares for delinquent girls for ninety days prior to their release back into society. This program has proved to be one of the most effective rehabilitation aids ever provided at this institution.
16. Zoomobile, a semi-truck and trailer unit carrying representative specimens of birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals, visits City schools on a scheduled basis. Docent teachers are assisted by a qualified driver-keeper and pre and post visit. materials are supplies to classes.

17. A School Safari Unit featuring docents with coloured slides visit City, County, parochial and private schools.
18. In-service teacher training, for those teachers planning to use the zoo as an extension of their curriculum.
19. Career opportunity course for high school seniors involving twelve lectures and four field work activities.

The excellent training received by our Docents has been of utmost importance to the success of our education programs. The Docent provisional training class consists of seventeen intensive three-hour lecture sessions in basic zoology, emphasizing the three classes of animals (Aves, Reptilia and Mammalia) exhibited most frequently at zoos, with special emphasis placed on the orders of animals displayed at the Los Angeles Zoo. These lectures are prepared and presented by the Curatorial staff, assisted by qualified docents. A reference notebook is provided each Docent which contains pertinent orientation and zoological information; individual fact sheets on all animals exhibited at our Zoo which have been researched and prepared by Docents and approved by the professional staff are also included. In-depth seminars on reptiles, birds and mammals are provided for the Docents' continuing education and are conducted by the staff and qualified Docents.

In addition to the Docent program, the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association has several other ambitious educational services in operation. Four film strips (in sound and color) for use of elementary schools have been produced: "The Children's Zoo", "North American Animals to Know", "African Animals", and "South American Animals to Know", which are now being distributed on a nationwide basis. Two guide books have been published: the "Los Angeles Zoo Guide Book" and the "Children's Zoo Guide Book". The former is unique in that it is the first such guide book to become a part of the Library of Congress and also to be transcribed into braille (by the Pomona Valley Transcribers Guild) which enables blind children to tour the exhibits with greater ease, understanding and enjoyment. "Zooview", a magazine published quarterly, is provided to keep members of the Association informed of Zoo activities; it is also available to the general public.

A Research Assistance Committee, made up of especially qualified volunteers, is available for use by the professional staff of the Zoo for assignment such as translation of foreign language zoological papers.

HARNESSING THE RESOURCES OF THE ZOOMOBILE

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The Zoomobile, as an extension of zoo activities, has been around for a long time. The vehicles involved have been varied, to say the least. Every kind has been put into service from the ubiquitous station wagon, converted pickup trucks, vans, even in one case, a renovated hay-wagon. Generally the experience has been a rewarding one for all concerned even though it hasn't always been the easiest job to take proper care of the animals involved, plus plan lectures and create study materials necessary to making the visit worthwhile.

With the realization of today's zoos that education is their primary reason for existing, a renewed interest is taking place in developing the interdisciplinary, educational potential of zoomobiles that can, indeed, provide a much needed service to the schools of the community in which they are located.

As a result, today's zoos are taking a second, thoughtful look at the appearance and operation of their "other" face.

About a year and a half ago it was decided that the time was right to start a Zoomobile operation here in Los Angeles. One that would combine the strengths of the Los Angeles City School District through its Pettigrew Science and Animal Center; the Department of Recreation and Parks from whom the Center is leased; the Los Angeles Zoo and our own Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association.