Fort Worth Zoo

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Backgrounder

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**Fort Worth Zoo**

The Fort Worth Zoo is the oldest zoo in the state of Texas.

Opened in 1909, the zoo contained only one lion, two bear cubs, an alligator, a coyote, a peacock and a few rabbits. The zoo has now become a nationally ranked attraction and houses 5,000 native and exotic animals, including more than 500 animal species and a world-famous reptile collection, the Fort Worth Zoo supports over 31 wildlife conservation projects around the globe.

From 1909 to 1991, the zoo was a city-owned facility. It was a long-standing tradition by the city of Fort Worth to collect money from the community to continue purchasing animals for the facility. In 1939 a non-profit organization, the Fort Worth Zoological Association, formed to raise additional funds to help acquire more animals.

The zoo eventually faced a decrease in city support, a decline in attendance and demands for repairs to animal housing. The Association assumed management of the zoo in October 1991 and since then, has raised more than $20 million from private entities, foundations and corporations for improvements to the zoo and new exhibits.

In 1992, the zoo hosted a grand re-opening and introduction of two new exhibits. Since 1992, the zoo has opened 16 new exhibits, essentially creating a new zoo. Positive public reaction has made the Fort Worth Zoo the most popular attraction in the Dallas/Fort Worth area.