



-For Immediate Release-

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Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo Announces Fall Appeal: Mission to Refresh, Revitalize, and Reimagine Rainforest Habitat

Bridgeport, CT –November 4, 2024– Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo announces its fall appeal with a major fundraising initiative to revitalize its beloved World Tropics Building, an immersive South American rainforest exhibit that has captivated visitors since 1992. Originally opened as the Bird and Mammal Building, the exhibit was reimagined three decades ago, offering guests a glimpse into one of the planet's most diverse and vital ecosystems. The Zoo seeks to raise \$200,000 to update and enhance this iconic space, ensuring it remains a premier experience for visitors and a supportive environment for nearly twenty endangered and threatened species, including Golden Lion Tamarins, Two-Toed Sloths, and Howler Monkeys.



The revitalization project aims to meet the evolving needs of both the Zoo's resident species and its visitors by creating an even more engaging and immersive exhibit experience. "Our rainforest exhibit has been a central feature at the Zoo for over 30 years, inspiring guests to appreciate the diversity and beauty of tropical rainforests," said CEO Jim Wharton. "With community support, we can make upgrades to enhance habitats and improve both animal welfare and guest experience, ensuring the rainforest remains a vibrant educational destination for years to come."

Funds raised will be allocated to a series of critical improvements:

- **Introducing New and Diverse Species:** Expand the rainforest's biodiversity to provide additional educational opportunities.
- **Upgrade Lighting:** Create a more dynamic experience for visitors while promoting animal well-being.
- **Restore Walls and Glass:** Refresh the space to reflect the lush, tropical aesthetic of a true rainforest.
- **Enhance Plantings:** Increase natural foliage to enrich the environment for animals and visitors.

Many enhancements will improve animal welfare in ways unseen by the public but are vital for the exhibit's health and longevity.

The World Tropics Building is also home to important conservation milestones, including the births of endangered ocelot kittens through artificial insemination, the care of the oldest known Howler Monkeys in the country, and successful breeding programs for Golden Lion Tamarins. Each milestone highlights the Zoo's commitment to conservation and animal welfare, as well as the importance of preserving biodiversity.

Rainforests are beautiful places where plants and animals work together to maintain the delicate balance and beauty of their habitat and offer guests a unique chance to experience the sights, sounds, and sensations of these vital habitats. "This project demonstrates the Zoo's continued commitment to improve and advance animal welfare practices as well as our guest's experience," added Wharton.

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo invites the public to join in this effort to refresh and renew the World Tropics Building, making an impact on wildlife conservation, and creating an unforgettable experience for generations to come. Donations can be made online at beardsleyzoo.org/appeal by contacting the Zoo directly.

For more information, visiting hours, and other zoo attractions, please visit beardsleyzoo.org.

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About Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo

Connecticut's only zoo, celebrating 102 years, features 350 animals representing primarily North and South American and Northern Asian species. Guests won't want to miss our Andean bear, maned wolves, Mexican gray wolves, and red wolves. Other highlights include our Spider Monkey Habitat, and a new prairie dog exhibit. As an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and participant in its Species Survival Plan (SSP) programs, the non-profit Zoo is committed to the preservation of endangered animals and wild habitats. Admission tickets can be purchased on the [Zoo's website](https://beardsleyzoo.org).