

# Wildlife Health Centre

## A State-Of-The-Art Health Care Facility



Our new state-of-the-art Wildlife Health Centre was purpose-built to respond in every way to the needs of our wildlife and provide the public increased visibility of the Zoo as a wildlife conservation centre of excellence. For the design of the new facility, the Toronto Zoo engaged Toronto architects Diamond Schmitt Architects in partnership with DesignLevel Inc., an architectural firm specializing in animal healthcare facilities. These partners worked in close consultation with Zoo staff to ensure that the facility addresses our precise range of needs. The design includes leading-edge sustainable construction techniques, materials and technology. The new space will be easy to maintain in a hygienic state and provide ample room for treating animals, housing patients for post-operative care, and running modern diagnostic and research equipment – the first of its kind in Canada!

- **Clinical Areas**

The clinical areas of the new building will significantly improve the diagnostic and treatment process for the Zoo's animals. These new areas – mainly laboratories, surgery and treatment rooms – will be larger, modernized, more efficiently organized, and include state-of-the-art equipment, including digital x-rays and ultrasounds.

- **Veterinary Offices**

Plans include additional space for improved office facilities for our veterinary staff.

- **Viewing Gallery**

The new upgrade will include a viewing area, open for special tours, which will enable visitors to witness the veterinarians and veterinary technicians and researchers at work.

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- **Wildlife Holding Areas**

The wildlife holding areas were designed to meet the particular needs of the various animals in our care. The holding areas allow for more privacy and include individual outdoor space to ensure that animals that need to stay at the hospital for treatment and recovery are housed in the best conditions possible. They will provide areas for post-surgical care. The Wildlife Health Centre has 30 holding areas that have been designed to hold animals of all sizes.

- **Reproductive Labs**

The Toronto Zoo is a leader in reproductive research and assisted reproduction for wild species. The new reproductive laboratories will expand our current programs to meet the increased demand for reproductive cell storage, hormone analysis and research. The new labs are also home to the “bio bank”, a series of liquid nitrogen tanks that house the genetic material of more than 50 endangered species – mainly their sperm and cells – to preserve genetic diversity.



Wildlife Health Centre's Reproductive Lab



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## Supporting Education and Conservation Efforts

As a leader in conservation and species preservation methodologies, the Zoo has developed a much broader mandate over the years. Our programs support research initiatives in areas such as reproduction and wildlife education, and reinforce fundamental messages about wildlife health care, optimal husbandry, and proper nutrition.

- **Preventative Care**

A healthy zoo begins with preventative care. The Toronto Zoo spends a lot of time and resources on preventative care – reducing the number of animal illnesses and emergencies. Preventative care includes routine check-ups, vaccinations, bloodwork, fecal and urine analyses, diagnostic imaging and neonatal care. We train our animals to voluntarily participate in these procedures. Nutrition is an integral part of preventative care, so we work closely with Wildlife Nutrition staff to create a specialized diet for each animal, unique to each season and life stage. From the tiniest fish to the largest polar bear, we can care for most of the Zoo's wildlife here – but we also make regular house calls on site.

- **Nutrition Research**

In 1974, Toronto Zoo was the first zoo in North America to employ a full-time nutritionist and, to date, remains the only zoo in Canada to do so. The Wildlife Nutrition Centre (WNC) has developed balanced diets to ensure the optimal health and wellbeing of a wide variety of species. Like the Reproductive Physiology Centre, the WNC is also divided into two components that work together seamlessly to improve animal health and care: the Food Production Unit and the Nutrition Research Unit.



Wildlife Health Centre Public Viewing Gallery

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- **Reproductive Program**

The Toronto Zoo is the only zoo in Canada with a full-time Reproductive Physiologist and a dedicated production lab. Through the Zoo's research and practice of assisted reproduction programs, we have established an international reputation as a conservation leader with staff expertise in reproductive biology. Our experience includes success in assisted reproduction techniques in animals such as the wood bison, Bactrian camel, and giant pandas. Our renowned breeding and reproduction programs focus on a variety of species such as the Puerto Rican crested toad, Vancouver Island marmot, black-footed ferret, giant panda, Blanding's turtle, and eastern loggerhead shrike.

Our new Wildlife Health Centre was constructed with the space necessary to house these important projects and will provide plenty of laboratory space for staff to conduct research. In addition, rooms will be outfitted with new technologies and equipment that will allow the Zoo to advance efforts in this area and provide essential insight in the area of species restoration and preservation.

- **Wildlife**

The knowledge and guidance provided by zoos is highly valued by conservationists in the field. Government agencies increasingly recognize the value of captive rearing and "headstarting" programs. These organizations look to the Zoo as a model for wildlife care, treatment, breeding and wild release. Our new facility will allow us to continue to provide these required services and expand our efforts in these areas.

- **Education**

The Toronto Zoo collaborates with various colleges and universities on a variety of programs and research projects. These strong partnerships allow for the pooling of resources on important topics, and serve to encourage various students and researchers to work with the Zoo in related areas of interest.

The new Wildlife Health Centre will also support the Zoo's public education efforts by providing private tours that illustrate the vital behind-the-scenes work of the Zoo's wildlife science specialists. Visitors will see conservation research being carried out and can witness the compassionate consideration given to each animal to ensure its well-being.

- **Research**

Where would a giraffe with a tummy ache go at the Zoo? To the Wildlife Health Centre of course! The brilliant staff here is made up of veterinarians, technicians, animal keepers and an administrative clerk, who work together to maintain the health of all the animals at the Toronto Zoo. Anything from diet arrangements, handling of animals, quarantine and disinfection, to major surgeries and veterinary research, all takes place at the Wildlife Health Centre, improving animal care and conservation, every day.

- **As of June 26, 2017**

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