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**Media Contact:**

Tianna Holder; [tholder@desertmuseum.org](mailto:tholder@desertmuseum.org); (520) 883-3073

**Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum receives prestigious accreditation  
from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums**

TUCSON, AZ—The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has announced that the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was granted accreditation by AZA's independent Accreditation Commission. Each application was evaluated by the independent Accreditation Commission and determined to meet AZA's standards for animal wellbeing, care, and management.

"Congratulations to the leadership and staff at the Desert Museum for attaining the global 'gold standard' in zoological and aquarium accreditation," said Dan Ashe, president, and CEO of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. "AZA's standards continuously evolve to reflect best practices in the zoo and aquarium profession, with a strong emphasis on animal care and wellbeing at their core. The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum has demonstrated a dedication to this exceptional level of care."

AZA accreditation includes a detailed application and a meticulous multiple-day on-site inspection by an independent team of zoological professionals. The inspecting team analyzes all aspects of the facility's operation, including animal care and wellbeing; veterinary care; staff training; educational programs; conservation efforts; financial stability; risk management; governance; and guest services. Detailed reports from the inspection team and the facility alike are then thoroughly evaluated by the Accreditation Commission. Finally, the Commission interviews top officials from the facility at a formal hearing, after which accreditation is fully granted, provisionally granted for one year, or denied.

A thorough review ensures that each facility has met and will continue to meet ever-rising standards. As a condition of Association membership, AZA facilities must complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years.

"Accreditation by AZA recognizes the Desert Museum's commitment to excellence in all aspects of our operation, as well as the hard work and expertise of our team," said Executive Director Hollie Colahan. "We are proud to be part of this professional community and thrilled to be awarded accreditation once again." The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was first accredited in 1983, and has continually maintained AZA accreditation since.

There are 240 AZA-accredited institutions and 14 AZA-accredited related facility members in 12 countries. For a complete list of accredited AZA facilities, please visit <https://www.aza.org/current-accreditation-list>.

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### **About the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**

Founded in 1952, the Desert Museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization widely recognized as a model institution for immersive and innovative interpretation of native plants and animals in their natural habitat. The 98-acre Desert Museum in Tucson, AZ is regularly recognized as a top-tier facility due to its pioneering approach to interpreting the complete natural history of a single region. It is a zoo, aquarium, botanical garden, art gallery, and natural history museum, all rolled into one. The mission of the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum is to inspire people to live in harmony with the natural world by fostering love, appreciation, and understanding of the Sonoran Desert. To learn more, visit [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org).

### **About AZA**

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, animal welfare, education, science, and recreation. AZA is setting the global gold standard, accrediting 254 of the top zoos, aquariums, and related facilities in 12 countries. Look for the AZA accreditation logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. The AZA is a leader in saving species and your link to helping animals all over the world. To learn more, visit [www.aza.org](http://www.aza.org).