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To say that 2023 was a busy year would be an understatement. In addition to opening our fourth and largest facility, our organization was tasked with what would become one of the biggest life-saving missions in the history of captive-animal rescues. It was truly the largest rescue we have ever undertaken. With more than four decades of hands-on experience working tirelessly within the trenches of the Captive Wildlife Crisis, our Sanctuary is the leading large carnivore and wild animal rescue entity within the United States - and quite possibly in the world. As such, we have become extremely well known amongst law enforcement agencies as the go-to organization whenever there is a significant number of Lions, Tigers and other exotic animals that are in need of confiscating from a criminal case - or due to civil proceedings that have been brought forth by animal welfare entities.

So, when we received a call in February of this year from the Department of Justice (DOJ) concerning the Juan A. Rivero Zoo located in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, we knew whatever help was needed would involve massive amounts of air transport. As the discussion progressed, it became more apparent we were not only talking

*from our founder : PAT CRAIG*

about the Lions and Bears that were at the zoo – but actually ALL OF THE ANIMALS at both the zoo and nearby detention center.

The Zoo had over 60 species and sub-species of animals needing new homes. From a Gerbil to many Reptiles, Hoof Stock, Primates, Birds, Hippos, an Elephant, and a Rhino. Our facility in Keenesburg, Colorado took in the zoo's Lions, Bears, and even a Camel. For the hundreds of other animals our network of sanctuaries are not specialized to care for, our staff worked tirelessly to find new homes for each creature all across the nation. Many moving parts along with the help of so many individuals and organizations made this historic rescue a roaring success. In the stories and pages that follow, we invite you to learn more about this incredible process.

### ***Introducing The Wild Horse Refuge...***

In 2021, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began rounding up hundreds of Colorado Mustangs, sparking widespread concern and opposition from many Coloradoans, including thousands of Sanctuary supporters. The removal of these wild horses from their native habitat led to a flood of emails, calls, letters,

and social media messages expressing worry about the well-being of the Mustangs being held in Canyon City, CO. To address this crisis, the Sanctuary acquired a 22,500-acre property in Craig, Colorado, in January 2023.

However, the project was delayed due to heavy snowfall and the unexpected rescue mission in Puerto Rico. As spring turned to summer and the Puerto Rico rescue concluded, efforts to establish the Wild Horse Refuge in Craig intensified immediately. The former cattle ranch required extensive preparation, including repairing miles of fencing and constructing new facilities to receive and care for the wild Mustangs. By July, the first horses began arriving, ready to enjoy the 22,000+ acres of lush, rolling hills and abundant water sources.

Our newest and largest facility, The Wild Horse Refuge, will allow special visits from supporters through a “Founder” program for those directly supporting this new location (*similar to the program in southeast Colorado*). This

initiative enables people to purchase acres of land, helping to pay off the loan on the property. The Sanctuary hopes this program will pay off the new refuge's land loan within a few years, similar to the successful model used for the Springfield property.

The animals rescued by the Sanctuary, including these Mustangs, benefit greatly from the generosity and support of donors around the world. The continued dedication and contributions of supporters make a life-changing impact to nearly a thousand animals -enabling them to thrive in new, safe environments for the rest of their days. The Sanctuary expresses deep gratitude to all who care and contribute to this vital cause. 🐾

*Sincerely,*

Pat Craig,

*Executive Director*

## IN THIS REPORT

### **OUR PROGRAMS:**

ANIMAL RESCUE

ANIMAL CARE

EDUCATION

**ALL FACILITIES**

**FINANCIALS**





2010

**SPRING 2010**  
(5) Lynx (6) Bobcats  
rescued from WA

**SPRING 2010**  
(1) Bobcat  
rescued NE

**SPRING 2010**  
(1) African Serval  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2010**  
(5) Tigers  
(1) African Serval  
rescued from ID

**SUMMER 2010**  
(1) African Lion  
(1) Black Bear  
Rescued from OH

**SUMMER 2010**  
(1) Bobcat  
rescued from ID

**FALL 2010**  
(1) Wolf Hybrid  
rescued from MI

**FALL 2010**  
(2) African Lions  
rescued from CANADA

**FALL 2010**  
(1) Brown Bear  
rescued from CA

**FALL 2010**  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**WINTER 2010**  
(20) Black Bears  
(5) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from TX

**WINTER 2010**  
(1) Tiger  
rescued from WA

2011

**SPRING 2011**  
(1) Tiger  
rescued from MO

**SPRING 2011**  
(6) Shetland  
Sheep rescued from MO

**SUMMER 2011**  
(25) African Lions  
rescued from  
BOLIVIA

**FALL 2011**  
(4) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**WINTER 2011**  
(1) Coati Mundi  
rescued from CO

**WINTER 2011**  
(3) African Lions  
rescued from PANAMA

2012

**SPRING 2012**  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from IL

**SPRING 2012**  
(2) African Porcupines  
(2) Coati Mundi  
(2) Jackals  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2012**  
(2) Wolves  
rescued from OH

**SUMMER 2012**  
(1) African Lion  
rescued from  
CANADA

**FALL 2012**  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from CA

**FALL 2012**  
(2) Mtn Lions  
rescued from CO

**WINTER 2012**  
(51) Alpacas  
rescued from CO

**WINTER 2012**  
(1) Wolf  
rescued from CO

**WINTER 2012**  
(4) African Lions  
(4) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**WINTER 2012**  
(1) Ostrich  
rescued from CO

2013

**SPRING 2013**  
(5) Syrian Brown Bears  
rescued from WI

**SUMMER 2013**  
(1) Eurasian Lynx  
rescued from  
CANADA

**FALL 2013**  
(3) African Lions  
(4) Coyotes  
(1) Kit Fox  
rescued from  
MEXICO

**FALL 2013**  
(5) Black Bears  
(3) Kodiak Bears  
(3) Mtn Lions  
rescued from FL

**FALL 2013**  
(2) Wolves  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2013**  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**WINTER 2013**  
(5) Black Bears  
rescued from SC

**WINTER 2013**  
(3) Black Bears  
rescued from NC

2014

**SPRING 2014**  
(15) Grizzly Bears  
(6) Black Bears  
rescued from GA

**SUMMER 2014**  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from LA

**SUMMER 2014**  
(1) Emu  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2014**  
(1) Bobcat  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2014**  
(1) Mtn Lion  
(1) Black Bear  
(1) African Serval  
rescued from NY

**FALL 2014**  
(3) Black Bears  
rescued from NY

**FALL 2014**  
(6) Black Bears  
rescued from NY

**WINTER 2014**  
(3) African Lions  
rescued from  
URUGUAY

**WINTER 2014**  
(3) Black Bears  
rescued from AK

**WINTER 2014**  
(5) African Lions  
(3) Coyotes  
(2) Kit Foxes  
(1) Mtn Lion  
rescued from  
MEXICO

2015

**SPRING 2015**  
(2) Asiatic Bears  
rescued from TN

**SPRING 2015**  
(3) Black Bears (5) Wolves  
(1) Mtn Lion (1) Coyote  
(1) Kit Fox (4) Foxes  
(1) Bobcat (1) Siberian Lynx  
(1) Bengal Cat rescued from IA

**SPRING 2015**  
(3) Tigers (2) Black Leopards  
(1) Leopard (2) Mtn Lions  
rescued from OH

**SPRING 2015**  
(3) Syrian Brown Bears  
rescued from WV

**SPRING 2015**  
(1) Black Bear rescued from GA

**SUMMER 2015**  
(2) Ostriches rescued from NM

**SUMMER 2015**  
(1) African Lion  
rescued from MEXICO

**SUMMER 2015**  
(1) Black Bear rescued from PA

**SUMMER 2015**  
(1) Tiger rescued from GA

**FALL 2015**  
(1) Grizzly Bear rescued from FL

**WINTER 2015**  
(1) African Lion  
rescued from MEXICO

**WINTER 2015**  
(2) Syrian Brown Bears  
(2) Black Bears rescued from PA

**WINTER 2015**  
(8) African Lions  
(1) Mountain Lion  
(2) Bobcats (1) Coyote  
rescued from MEXICO

**WINTER 2015**  
(12) African Lions  
(4) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from SPAIN

**WINTER 2015**  
(1) Emu rescued from CO

**WINTER 2015**  
(24) Chickens rescued from CO

Continue...

# ROAD TO RECOVERY



2016

**SPRING 2016**  
(6) Tigers (2) African Lions  
(2) Jaguars (1) Leopard  
rescued from MEXICO

**SPRING 2016**  
(1) Bobcat rescued from KS

**SPRING 2016**  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
rescued from MN

**SUMMER 2016**  
(9) Syrian Brown Bears  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
(5) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**SUMMER 2016**  
(1) Tree Fox rescued from CO

**FALL 2016**  
(1) Bobcat rescued from CO

**FALL 2016**  
(2) African Lions  
rescued from IA

**WINTER 2016**  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
(2) Syrian Brown Bears  
(4) Black Bears (1) Wolf  
(9) Tigers (1) African Lion  
rescued from SD

**WINTER 2016**  
(2) Wolves (2) Black Bears  
(2) Syrian Brown Bears  
rescued from SD

**WINTER 2016**  
(1) Arctic Fox rescued from NE

**WINTER 2016**  
(1) Kit Fox rescued from CO

**WINTER 2016**  
(1) Asiatic Black Bear  
rescued from MD

**WINTER 2016**  
(4) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**WINTER 2016**  
(1) Arctic Fox rescued from NE

2017

**SPRING 2017**  
(2) Tigers  
rescued from MEXICO

**SPRING 2017**  
(3) Tigers  
(2) African Lions  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from ARGENTINA

**SPRING 2017**  
(3) Black Bears (1) Ostrich  
rescued from AL

**SUMMER 2017**  
(6) Black Bears  
rescued from GA

**FALL 2017**  
(1) African Serval  
rescued from NV

**FALL 2017**  
(1) Syrian Brown Bear  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from MI

**FALL 2017**  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from IN

**FALL 2017**  
(1) Wolf rescued from CO

**WINTER 2017**  
(19) Tigers  
rescued from OK

**WINTER 2017**  
(20) Tigers (3) Black Bears  
rescued from OK

**WINTER 2017**  
(1) Syrian Brown Bear  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from NC

**WINTER 2017**  
(3) Black Bears  
rescued from AL

2018

**SPRING 2018**  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from IN

**SPRING 2018**  
(1) Fox rescued from WY

**SPRING 2018**  
(2) Coyotes  
rescued from CO

**SPRING 2018**  
(1) Bobcat  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2018**  
(3) African Lions rescued  
from SOUTH KOREA

**SUMMER 2018**  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from ARGENTINA

**SUMMER 2018**  
(2) African Lions  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from OH

**FALL 2018**  
(1) Fox rescued  
from LEBANON

**FALL 2018**  
(10) Yaks  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2018**  
(4) Emu (1) Yak  
rescued from CO

**WINTER 2018**  
(1) African Lion  
(1) Tiger rescued  
from SAIPAN

2019

**SPRING 2019**  
(20) Call Ducks (4) Cavys  
(9) Ducks (11) Wallaroo  
/Wallabies/Kangaroo  
(3) Tortoises (3) Horses  
(9) Donkeys (10) Goats  
(4) Peacocks (6) Geese  
(1) Camel (1) Mini Horse  
(1) Llama  
(50) Miniature Pigs  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2019**  
(1) Red Fox rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2019**  
(6) Camels (3) Tigers  
(2) African Lions (4) Foxes  
(4) Lynx (2) Asiatic Blk Bears  
(3) Coati Mundi  
rescued from VA

**FALL 2019**  
(6) Grizzly Bears (4) Blk Bears  
(1) Mtn Lion  
(3) Spotted Hyenas  
(2) Tigers rescued from CA

**FALL 2019**  
(2) Wolves rescued from FL

**FALL 2019**  
(3) Spectacled Bears  
rescued from ARGENTINA

**FALL 2019**  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from TX

**WINTER 2019**  
(1) African Lion (2) Wolves  
rescued from CANADA

**WINTER 2019**  
(10) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from ARGENTINA

**WINTER 2019**  
(1) Llama (1) Kit Fox  
(3) Coyotes (2) Black Bears  
rescued from IA

2020

**SPRING 2020**  
(2) Mules rescued from IA

**SPRING 2020**  
(1) Asiatic Black Bear  
rescued from PA

**SPRING 2020**  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
rescued from TN

**SPRING 2020**  
(1) Tiger rescued from TX

**SPRING 2020**  
(2) Tigers (1) African Lion  
rescued from MD

**SPRING 2020**  
(12) Wolves rescued from CA

**SPRING 2020**  
(1) Cow rescued from CO

**SPRING 2020**  
(3) Tigers (4) African Lions  
rescued from MEXICO

**SPRING 2020**  
(1) Arctic Fox rescued from CO

**SPRING 2020**  
(6) Tigers rescued from FL

**SPRING 2020**  
(3) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from OH

**SPRING 2020**  
(1) Buffalo rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2020**  
(1) Coyote rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2020**  
(1) Llama rescued from IA

**FALL 2020**  
(2) Tigers (2) Black Bears  
rescued from TX

**FALL 2020**  
(5) Tigers (7) Felid Hybrids  
(2) African Lions  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from IN

**FALL 2020**  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from LA

**FALL 2020**  
(3) Tigers (3) African Lions  
(11) Wolves (1) Black Bear  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
rescued from OK

**WINTER 2020**  
(2) Wolves rescued from OH

**WINTER 2020**  
(1) Wallaby rescued from  
LEBANON

2021

**SPRING 2021**  
(14) Tigers  
rescued from OK

**SPRING 2021**  
(1) Mtn Lion (5) Grizzly Bears  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from IN

**SPRING 2021**  
(2) Tigers  
rescued from ARGENTINA

**SPRING 2021**  
(1) African Lion  
(2) African Servals  
rescued from GUAM

**SPRING 2021**  
(1) Felid Hybrid  
rescued from OK

**SPRING 2021**  
(24) Tigers (1) African Lion  
(9) Felid Hybrid  
rescued from OK

**SUMMER 2021**  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
rescued from OH

**SUMMER 2021**  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from LEBANON

**SUMMER 2021**  
(1) Wolf rescued from LA

**SUMMER 2021**  
(3) Wolves (1) Lynx  
(1) Coyote (2) Bobcats  
(5) Caracals rescued from OK

**FALL 2021**  
(1) Black Bear (3) Foxes  
rescued from MI

**FALL 2021**  
(1) Wolf rescued from LA

**WINTER 2021**  
(5) Bobcats rescued from MT

**WINTER 2021**  
(1) African Lion (2) Black Bear  
(1) Grizzly Bear Transfer from  
The Wild Animal Sanctuary TX

Continue...

ROAD  
TO  
RECOVERY



2022

**SPRING 2022**  
(1) Wolf  
rescued from LA

**SPRING 2022**  
(1) Tiger  
(2) Lions  
rescued from PA

**SPRING 2022**  
(1) Black Bear  
rescued from IN

**SPRING 2022**  
(2) Black Bears  
rescued from MT

**SPRING 2022**  
(1) African Lion  
rescued from OH

**SPRING 2022**  
(22) Asiatic Black Bears  
rescued from  
REPUBLIC OF KOREA

**SPRING 2022**  
(11) Wild Horses  
rescued from CO

**SPRING 2022**  
(4) Wild Horses  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2022**  
(6) Tigers  
rescued from GUAM

**SUMMER 2022**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from NV

**SPRING 2022**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from NV

**SPRING 2022**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from NV

**FALL 2022**  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
rescued from MI

**FALL 2022**  
(9) African Lions  
rescued from UKRAINE

**FALL 2022**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from NV

**FALL 2022**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from Sulphur UT

**WINTER 2022**  
(11) Wild Horses  
rescued from CO

2023

**SPRING 2023**  
(1) Tiger  
rescued from NM

**SPRING 2023**  
(7) African Lions  
(2) Black Bears (1) Camel  
(1) Goldfish (1) Gerbil  
(1) Pot Belly Pig  
*Puerto Rico Rescue Animals  
relocated to other facilities*  
(1) Chimpanzee  
(1) Two-toed Sloth  
(2) Andean Condors  
(1) African Elephant  
(1) White Rhino  
(2) Hippos  
(1) Donkey  
(1) Impala  
(1) Kangaroo  
(1) Marabou Stork  
(1) African Porcupine  
(1) Tarantula  
(1) Spectacled Owl  
(1) Great Horned Owl  
(1) Rainbow Boa  
(1) Green Anaconda  
(1) Yellow Anaconda  
(2) Burmese Pythons  
(1) Albino Burmese Python  
(4) Reticulated Pythons  
(2) Ball Pythons  
(1) Black Milk Snake  
(1) Alligator Turtle  
(4) Box Turtles  
(2) Leopard Gekos  
(2) Tupinambus Lizards  
(1) Australian Green Tree Frog  
(4) Rhesus Macaques  
(20) Lemurs  
(2) Coati Mundi  
(1) Ostrich  
(4) Emu  
(3) Zebra  
(2) Llamas  
(123) Red-tailed Boas  
(2) Corn Snakes  
(2) Leopard Geckos  
(1) Tree Frog  
(4) Ball Pythons

(14) Sulcata Tortoises  
(14) Soft-shell Turtles  
(51) Yellow-Belly/Read-eared  
Sliders  
(50) Caiman  
(1) Leopard Tortoise  
(2) Box Turtles  
(3) Patas Monkeys  
(2) Vervet Monkeys  
(1) Grey-crowned Crane  
(2) King Vultures  
(3) Spider Monkeys  
(1) Lungfish  
(2) Turkey Vultures  
(2) Raccoons  
(24) hedgehogs  
(8) rats  
(1) Capuchin Monkey  
(1) Marmoset  
(4) Baboons  
(95+) Barbary Sheep  
(80+) Mouflon Sheep  
(70+) Follow Deer  
rescue from Puerto Rico

**SPRING 2023**  
(2) Black Bears  
(6) Emus (1) Llama  
rescued from SC

**SPRING 2023**  
(2) Tigers  
rescued from CO

**SPRING 2023**  
(2) Cheetahs  
transfer from TWAS-TX to  
TWAS-CO

**SPRING 2023**  
(19) Wild Horses  
rescued from OK

**SPRING 2023**  
(26) Wild Hores  
rescued from AZ

**SPRING 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Grizzly Bear  
rescued from CA

**SUMMER 2023**  
(79) Wild Horses  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2023**  
(16) Wild Horses  
rescued from AZ

**SUMMER 2023**  
(22) Wild Horses  
rescued from AZ

**SUMMER 2023**  
(29) Wild Horses  
rescued from AZ

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2023**  
(29) Wild Horses  
rescued from AZ

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from NV

**SUMMER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2023**  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
rescued from KY

**FALL 2023**  
(2) Grizzly Bears  
born to rescued Grizzly  
rescued from OH

**FALL 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

**FALL 2023**  
(11) Wild HorseS  
rescued from CO

**WINTER 2023**  
(1) Serval  
rescued from VA

**WINTER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from NV

**WINTER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from WY

**WINTER 2023**  
(1) Wild Horse  
rescued from CO

ROAD  
TO  
RECOVERY



In 2023 the Sanctuary was home to over 900 large exotic animals – making us the largest carnivore sanctuary in the world – and that number is constantly growing due to our dedicated efforts to save the lives of what seems like a never-ending stream of animals needing to be rescued.



In 2023, we were able to rescue 730 animals from across the United States and internationally representing over 72 species and sub-species from all over the world. Of those rescued, 23 came to the Sanctuary in Keenesburg. 7 are now at home at The Wild Animal Refuge. 701 we found homes for at other Sanctuaries and facilities.



Animal rescues take an extraordinary amount of time, resources, and dedication. In 2023, our team drove over 33,000 miles on rescue operations within the United States, using over 5,300 gallons of fuel. Leading up to their release, we do everything in our power to ensure that each obstacle faced by these animals is overcome so that they can have the best life possible.

Rescuing these animals is the first step in their journey at The Wild Animal Sanctuary. Some live up to 30 years of their lives in our care. They come to us from all different stages of life and often with medical complications from their previous life before they were rescued that require long term care.



*International and Domestic air travel Rescue stats:*  
23,000 miles flown, to one US territory and 16 states in the US.



**ZOOLOGICO DE  
PUERTO RICO**  
DR. JUAN A. RIVERO  
MAYAGÜEZ, P. R.

Opening date 1954

*Dr. Juan A. Rivero Zoo, officially named the Dr. Juan A. Rivero Zoo of Puerto Rico, also known as the Mayagüez Zoo, was a 45-acre (18 ha) zoo located in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, owned by the Government of Puerto Rico and operated by the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources. It was named in honor of Juan A. Rivero, its first director. It was Puerto Rico's only zoo and had an extensive collection of animals and plants from all continents.*

# JUAN A. RIVERO ZOO RESCUE A TERRITORY APART

## THE CHALLENGE...

With more than four decades of hands-on experience working tirelessly within the trenches of the Captive Wildlife Crisis, our Sanctuary is definitely the leading large carnivore and wild animal rescue entity within the United States - and quite possibly in the world. As such, we have become extremely well known amongst law enforcement agencies as the go-to organization whenever there is a significant number of Lions, Tigers and other exotic animals that need to be confiscated as part of a criminal case - or due to civil proceedings that have been brought forth by animal welfare entities.

As many people may remember, it wasn't long ago when we were called upon to be the lead organization working on the numerous "Tiger King" raids that were carried out when both the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) sought to end the terrible trade involving Tiger Cubs and many other species of big cats. There were a number of unsavory characters running questionable operations in different states across the U.S., and we were challenged with managing the removal of the animals found at each facility.

Each raid was a success and ended up freeing the animals from their purpose driven reproductive confines, as well as getting them to various accredited sanctuaries where they would no longer be exploited. The majority came to our two facilities within Colorado, while the remaining animals went to more than a half-dozen facilities in other states.

Even though there were hundreds of animals involved with the Tiger King rescues, the removal and transportation efforts were spread out over a two-year period and were based within the continental United

States. The logistics of these rescues were daunting for sure, but since we remained within the U.S. border, we were able to utilize ground-based transportation for each relocation.

Unfortunately, when it comes to foreign rescues like those that we have carried out in other countries such as Lebanon, South Korea, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, Romania and even Mexico, we have to rely on airlines for both staff and animal transportation. This not only increases the costs involved, but also adds lots of paperwork, permits and bureaucratic red tape.





| Dilapidated Zoo entrance 2023.

So, when we received a call in February of this year from the Department of Justice (*DOJ*) concerning the Juan A. Rivero Zoo located in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, we knew whatever help was needed would involve air transport. As the discussion progressed, it became more apparent we were not only talking about the Lions and Bears that were at the zoo – but actually ALL OF THE ANIMALS AT THE ZOO!

This story had actually begun clear back in 2017, since we were initially contacted by the Puerto Rico Governor’s Office to come remove the Lions, Bears and other large carnivores that were there at the time. That decision was based on the Zoo having been in decline since 2012

and had received so many USDA complaints and citations that they had decided to close the Zoo.

Back then, we agreed to help and come rescue those specific species, but the officials never mentioned any other animals leaving besides the one Elephant they had. “*Mundi*” the Elephant had been there for decades, and they had decided to send her to a Sanctuary in the US mainland as well.

Unfortunately, right before we were set to go and transport the animals in the fall of 2017, the island was hit by two hurricanes within a very short period of time. The first, Hurricane Irma, was disruptive but not terrible. However,

the second, Hurricane Maria, was absolutely devastating!

As such, both our plans, and Carole Buckley’s (*from the Elephant sanctuary*), were stopped in their tracks. Neither of us could continue with our animal relocation efforts at that point due to the sheer number of people that were in need of help, as well as the vastly crippled infrastructure that remained on the island.

As months passed, it became apparent the Puerto Rican government had decided to keep the zoo going since they had received a promise for significant FEMA money to help rebuild the zoo. They informed us that our contracts to remove the animals were no longer valid.

Fast-forward to February 2023, the DOJ was now telling us the zoo had never been able to secure any of the promised funding, nor make any improvements at all. Instead, the Zoo had simply continued to decline year after year.

According to reports from numerous sources, hundreds of animals had died since 2017 and the animals remaining there at this time were in terrible shape. At this point, everyone was convinced there was no time left and the animals needed to be saved – even if that meant the DOJ would have to go in and seize the zoo and start prosecuting government officials and anyone else that might be complicit in this case.





| Puerto Rico Zoo Tiger euthanized due to poor health prior to our arrival.

For our part,  
we would need to:

1. Go to Puerto Rico with a team of Veterinarians to evaluate the Zoo's remaining animals to see if they were healthy enough to make the trip to new homes within the United States mainland.
2. Travel back to our home base in order to work non-stop contacting other sanctuaries and potential placement homes for the specific animals that our Sanctuary would not be able to take.
3. Go back to Puerto Rico and begin the massive process of transferring animals to their new homes.
4. Rescue as many animals as our own facilities could receive.

As crazy as it sounds, in a very short amount of time it became evident this rescue would involve over 700 animals and would need to be completed within a three-month period!

As planned, the first phase of this operation involved us traveling to Puerto Rico with a team of veterinarians and medical technicians, as well as our operations and logistical personnel. We needed to see the facilities in question, as well as assess the animals to see if they were healthy enough to be relocated.

Once we established all but one or two of the animals could make the trip, we spent the next few weeks seeking placement for the dozens of species that were involved. This was a major challenge, as some of the species were the type that are extremely hard to find homes for.

For example, many monkeys would need to go to species-specific sanctuaries, but nearly every facility we contacted was full and had no room for additional rescues. Others dealt



| Neglected Mountain Lion in Puerto Rico Zoo - 2023.

with incredibly unique animals such as Rhinos, Hippos and Elephants, so finding a properly licensed facility that also had space would be nearly impossible.

Adding to the challenge, most of the facilities who agreed to accept animals had restrictions pertaining to medical testing for certain diseases and many other stringent requirements. This meant we would have to send a team of doctors back to Puerto Rico for an extended period in order to perform a litany of testing and associated procedures.

This rescue operation was going to represent a massive logistical challenge, as well as require highly coordinated shifts of manpower to come and go from the island in a manner that would prevent individuals or groups from becoming overworked, and burned out. Thankfully, we were able to enlist the help of a few other entities, which could potentially help us alleviate some of the workload.

Through the addition of multiple government and private industry partners we were able to reach a point where we knew we could successfully carry out this very important mission.

THE ZOO...

As anyone familiar with zoos might imagine, there was a point in time where the Juan A. Rivero Zoo had an extensive collection of animals. Yet, starting as far back as 2012, the Zoo began experiencing serious financial challenges.

With the Island's economy beginning to falter, it was only a matter of time before the Zoo's funding began to falter as well. Less money meant less paid employees... as well as lower pay for the employees that were able to remain working there.

Unfortunately, it wasn't long before accusations of corruption and the misappropriation of funds started to surface

among the many people and entities who were monitoring the zoo's situation. This only added to the problems that were affecting the Zoo's ability to operate.

Year after year USDA animal welfare inspectors had no choice but to charge the zoo with serious failures in animal care procedures and facility operations. These serious problems continued to worsen as time went by, so naturally, the Zoo's future began to look very bleak.

Yet, whether the end of the Zoo was near, or not, fate stepped in and absolutely canceled any chance of the Zoo improving. In September of 2017, Puerto Rico was suddenly hit by two

hurricanes within a 12-day period.

Thanks to Hurricanes Irma and Maria, the zoo was heavily damaged by fierce winds and heavy rain. The island's power grid was also destroyed, leaving the animals and most people without power for more than 11 months. Some power supplies, like the Zoo's, were never reconnected when the Island's system was restored due to the prohibitive cost of running new lines to remote or difficult areas.

Thus, in February of 2018, the USDA and Zoo Officials came to an agreement which involved the surrender (*cancelation*) of the zoo's exhibition license. This meant the zoo would no

longer be able to host guests or have visitors to the facility, which in turn, would also mean the zoo would be losing additional income.

In the months and years that followed hurricanes Irma and Maria, there was a point where FEMA had offered money to not only help with the island's overall repairs, but also for the zoo itself. 6.2-million Dollars was pledged to go towards revitalizing the zoo, but unfortunately, the funding was never employed for that purpose.

As had happened so many times before, government officials and other parties

with a stake in the zoo began to disagree over where, how and when the money might be spent. However, they did initially spend \$700,000+ dollars to hire an architectural firm to reimagine the zoo... but after the plans were unveiled, nothing ever happened to turn them into a reality.

Of course, the zoo was in bad shape due to the hurricanes, but it also continued to decline year after year since there was no ground maintenance or overall upkeep of the facility. By the time we went to see the facility for the first time earlier this year, it looked eerily similar to scenes from the movie Jurassic Park.

The overgrowth of plants, as well as the deterioration of man-made buildings and the basic infrastructure dominated the landscape, and there were obvious issues related to the daily operation of the facility. With no official grid-supplied power, the zoo had tried to survive by operating numerous generators.

Yet, one by one the generators had begun to fail and eventually had to be abandoned. There were two or three units the zoo tried desperately to keep operating - such as the one running the commissary where all the animals' food was stored. Another unit,





| Tsavo the male African Lion - 2023.



### *Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

which also happened to be the largest generator on the property, supplied the main office and guard shack with power for a few hours per day.

However, most of the animal buildings and key areas remained without power, which of course left many animals having to pay a heavy price in the sweltering heat. The African Lions were a good example, since their indoor housing area was a like a concrete sweat box.

Their building's lack of power meant the numerous fans which had been installed to help circulate the hot, humid and stale air were useless as they sat completely idle.

The most obvious issue revolved around an established protocol where only one set of keys was available for the caretakers to use. Not only was there only one set for more than a dozen people to share... but in addition, only one caretaker at a time could take the set and go about doing their work.

This evolved into one caretaker using them for an hour or so, then being forced to hand them over to the next person in line. As such, very little was done for each set of animals since each keeper had to get in and out of their assigned area very quickly.

We were told by the Zoo's management this practice was put in place because the keepers could not be trusted to have their own set of keys. This seemed odd at first, but the longer we were there, the more obvious the reasoning became.

Simply put, the reason for so many animals dying on a regular basis seemed to be very evident and hinged on two things. One was a lack of funding to operate the zoo in a manner that would fully protect the animals... and two was the general disconnect with the island's population that seemed to be extremely pervasive.

Not being inspected by the USDA on a regular basis for more than 5+ years, combined with not being open for visitors and being held to a certain level of public transparency relating to the care of the animals definitely seemed to not only create, but also maintain a false sense of adequacy.

Nearly every single employee that we spoke to at the zoo was thoroughly convinced they were doing a stellar job of caring for the animals. The numerous ones we talked with during our 6+ weeks of being there 12-14 hours a day - 7 days a week - in all areas of the zoo were at a loss to understand why we or anyone else thought there were any issues at all. Nearly all were perfectly happy with the overall care

of the animals and the implementation of quality veterinary care.

So even though animals were sick and dying on a weekly basis, and we, along with the DOJ, US Fish & Wildlife and USDA agents implored zoo caretakers to help transition the animals in a safe, quiet and calm manner – not only did they refuse, they even held an official Union meeting to vote in favor of banning members from helping!

Although the odds were stacked against him, there was one caretaker that stood up to the others and openly agreed with the accusations of inadequate care. Sadly, he was shunned, verbally accosted, and even threatened by his fellow coworkers. We admired his courage to hold strong against the overwhelming pressure, and for his choice to stand in defense of the animals.

So, when it came time to begin preparing the animals for transport, and even more so on the days when we were actually moving animals, the zoo caretakers actively began to interfere with our efforts to calmly load animals into their transport crates. Between racing around in their all-terrain vehicles and yelling at the top of their voices, they were doing whatever they could to stop our progress, even if it meant the animals were being aggressively accosted and scared.



| Shelter and enclosure still in disarray seven-years after Hurricane Maria.



In 2023, we had over 19 full-time Animal Keepers on staff to care for over 900 rescued animals.

The Sanctuary operates on 1,214 acres of land in Weld County, Colorado. Operations include:

- 🐾 1 Operations Office
- 🐾 1 Business Office
- 🐾 1 Veterinary Clinic
- 🐾 1 Lion House
- 🐾 1 Tiger Compound
- 🐾 1 Rest Area/Snack Bar
- 🐾 1 Nutrition Center
- 🐾 1 Education Center
- 🐾 1 Welcome Center



In 2023 The Wild Animal Sanctuary delivered over 2.1 million gallons of water and 3.1 million pounds of food to our rescued animals. Utilizing multiple refrigerated trucks with three full-time drivers, the Sanctuary picks up food from over 75 food sources across Colorado's Front Range.



Our natural large acreage habitats are a critical component in addressing the overall physical and psychological needs of our rescued animals.

.....

In 2023, our Operations Team built and/or improved 3 large scale habitats at The Wild Animal Refuge for our growing population of rescued animals! These include 3 new big cat habitats, for our Refuge residents.

.....

At our Keenesburg facility, 2 new habitats were built for big cats.



We added 22,450 acres dedicated to Wild Horses in Craig, CO.

.....

In 2023, our Operations Team planted over 150 trees and thousands of seeds at The Wild Animal Sanctuary!

.....

Our expansive Wild Animal Refuge has 9,752 acres bringing the acreage total of all three facilities to 33,416 acres! In addition to these facilities, our Wild Animal Sanctuary- Texas has an additional 41 acres and over 70 additional rescued animals under our care.

## THE DETENTION CENTER...

In addition to the terrible conditions that existed at the Zoo, there was another horrendous facility located on the island that was called “*The Detention Center.*” It was supposed to be more of a wildlife rehab facility but ended up becoming a virtual death camp as far as we were concerned.

Even though its name sounds bad enough... the actual composition of this operation was far worse. Located in a remote jungle area about half-way from the capital city of San Juan, and the other end of the island where the city of Aguadilla is situated, this Puerto Rican government facility was being operated by agents from the Division of Natural Resources (*DNR*).

Although it was not affiliated with the Zoo in any way, many of the captive animals being held within the confines of this facility were wild and exotic species. Monkeys, Alligators, Caiman, Snakes, Birds and Turtles filled every available cage that was crammed inside of its tiny border.

Referred to as “*Cambalache*” by many, which was a reference to the forest areas that surrounded this facility, it was theoretically a wildlife waystation and/or holding facility for confiscated or surrendered exotic pets... and was also a place where injured native animals could be taken when found by island residents.

We originally knew nothing of this facility at the beginning of this rescue but were soon told that it would be important for us to help relocate all of the animals residing there as well. The challenge seemed a little odd at first, especially since it was not connected to the zoo in any way, but once we visited the facility with our team of Veterinarians and saw how desperate the situation was, we wholeheartedly agreed to help.



*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

Seeing large 4' x 8' plywood boxes filled with hundreds of giant pythons, boas and other snakes piled on top of each other... as well as rows of tiny cages filled with monkeys, raccoons, coati mundi, parrots, giant turtles and even alligators... we were absolutely mortified by the overwhelming lack of compassion that existed. It was very obvious this facility was completely underfunded and also being run by security guards and not animal caretakers.

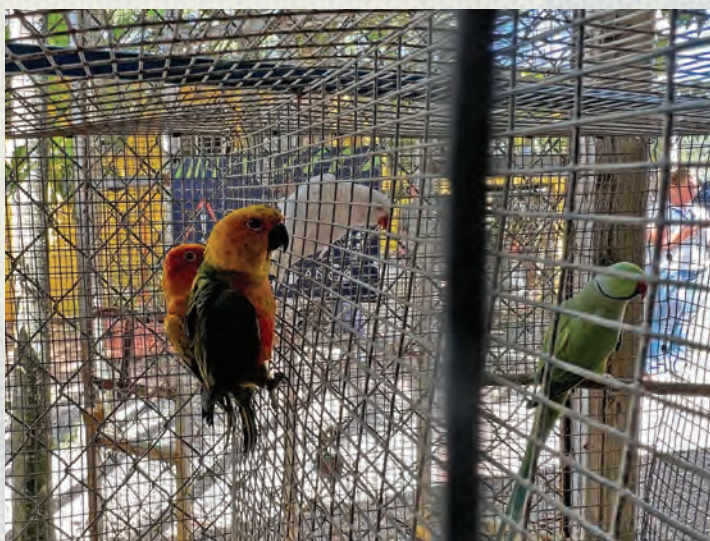
The reality of the situation was the island had a feral population of Rhesus Monkeys that had become established after nearly 150 of these monkeys had escaped from a laboratory years earlier. All attempts to catch and even eradicate them had failed, so it was a common event for the DNR to receive a call from homeowners saying they had a wild monkey in their home that was stealing food and threatening the occupants.

In addition, there was also a major snake problem that was very similar to what has been happening in the state of Florida, as Boa Constrictors and Reticulated Pythons are over-running the island. And finally, escaped or released pet alligators and caiman have also flourished within the endless ponds, lakes and waterways that populate the island's interior.

As such, there is a daily influx of these and many other creatures that come into the Detention Center - but rarely ever leave. Those that do are either native birds like hawks or owls that have had time to mend... otherwise, the only others who leave are the ones that die and need to be buried or magically disappear.

Regardless, this facility was a complete nightmare and the animals living there truly needed to be helped. Yet, accepting this challenge meant we would be adding another 350-400 animals to the list of ones that were living at the Zoo.

All told, we would be looking at rehoming more than 700 animals!







### THE ANIMALS

From as far back as 2012 there has been significant controversy surrounding the zoo and its overall care of the animals. From enrichment issues related to highly social and intelligent creatures such as the Chimpanzees and a lone Elephant, to the uncontrolled births and deaths, which included African Lion cubs that were born and then soon died under highly suspect circumstances.

Death became a regular occurrence at the zoo over the years and continued to remain a pervasive issue even when we were called in to remove the animals. Poor diets, restricted caretaker access and many other internal operational issues contributed to the deaths that we were exposed to.

Even a lone male Mountain Lion was allowed to suffer from a cancerous growth on his elbow to the point where he needed to be humanely euthanized after our veterinary team was able to visually assess his vastly deteriorated condition. Others, like Mikey the male Black Bear whose

female partner had recently died prior to our arrival, was found suffering in a small cage buried behind a wall of thick overgrowth.

Laying in a bed of concrete road base material used as flooring, Mikey was suffering from numerous conditions, the worst of which included severe arthritis and an ulcerated eye that needed medical attention. Barely able to wake and rise to the occasion of our first visit, it was incredibly evident that he needed pain management on a full-time basis.

Yet, he and so many other animals were left to deal with blatantly painful issues, while many more died from undetected illnesses due to a lack of regular medical testing and checkups. There was no doubt that the entire population was in danger and needed to be removed as soon as possible.

The zoo had a set of iconic animals the public were definitely focused on, which included a female Chimpanzee named Mara, and a female Elephant named Mundi. Others, such as the Rhinoceros named Felipe, and the



| Mikey the Black Bear laying in a bed of concrete road base material at the Puerto Rizo Zoo, Feb 2023.

| Chimpanzee, Mara, sitting alone with her mini “Wilson”.



#### *Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

Hippopotamuses named Pipo and Cindy were also celebrities, but admittedly, to a lesser degree.

Regardless, upon our arrival to begin the removal process, it quickly became evident how the entire island was split between those who believed the zoo should be renovated and re-opened... and those who realized there were countless facility issues and blatant problems with animal care, which meant the only humane option would be to have the animals removed and rehomed elsewhere.

Yet, there were two animals that occupied the leading roles in nearly every bit of controversy both on and off the island. Mundi the Elephant, and Mara the Chimpanzee were the virtual rockstars of the zoo – at least to the majority of Puerto Rico Zoo enthusiasts. Yet, as much as everyone loved these two iconic animals, they were both seen in a somewhat different light.

Being a highly intelligent creature, as well as closely related to humans, Mara seemed to garner an overwhelming concern for her personal welfare while Mundi was more of the cornerstone of the Zoo's foundation so-to-speak. This meant most people were very concerned about Mara's social and biological needs and wanted to see her relocated to be with other Chimpanzees. On the other hand, Mundi seemed to garner a more significant role in most people's eyes and was thought to be the key species that represented the Zoo's stability and future viability.

It seemed nearly everyone who was in favor of keeping the zoo open believed that as long as Mundi remained on the island the zoo would eventually be brought back to life. On the flipside, there were just as many people who believed Mundi's departure would help bring an end to the widespread abuse once and for all.

With the elevated concern for these two animals, we immediately wanted to get Mara relocated as quickly as possible, since this would not only resolve the general concerns that many people had for her physical and mental welfare... but would also signal the beginning of the public's perception that the Zoo really was going to be emptied in the near future.

Given Mara was the first iconic animal to be scheduled to leave the island, we knew her departure would generate some controversy. However, we had no idea how crazy things would get as the date for her departure drew near.

The first thing we noticed was how there were terrible information leaks somewhere within the Zoo's management and medical staffing, as just days before her scheduled departure, nearly every detail of Mara's transportation plan was leaked to the public. Only a few key personnel knew of the plan to fly Mara off the island prior to the leak, so we had a pretty good idea of the person that was responsible.

Yet, to help protect Mara, we purposely created an alternate plan to sneak her off the island the night before the date that was previously leaked. When we needed to share this information, we made sure only three key people knew of the change.

Just when it seemed the plan was going to work and help us avoid the massive demonstrations that would be carried out by protesters – one of the three key people let the Zoo's Veterinarian in on the plan. Within minutes of that taking place, the entire island was talking about the change on numerous social media platforms.

By then we had no way to alter the plan as the airplane was already at the airport ready to fly Mara to her new home in Indiana. Thus, within the next few hours we ended up with hundreds of protesters outside the Zoo's entrance waiting



|Mara inside her transport crate traveling to the airport.

to interfere with the official police motorcade that was going to escort her to the airport.

As expected, the minute the motorcade began exiting the zoo in the middle of the night, it was besieged with dozens of protestor vehicles who surrounded our line of vehicles and then began aggressively cutting in front of the truck carrying Mara. As if that wasn't crazy enough, they also began interjecting their vehicles between both the federal and local police vehicles as well.

People were hanging out of their vehicles yelling and screaming and waving shirts and other clothing along with the Puerto Rican flag. All of this chaos was streamed live by a number

of the protesters as some sort of self-absorbed proof of their commitment to the cause.

Unfortunately, the security detachment assigned to the motorcade was more or less overwhelmed by the chaotic movements and irrational behavior of the protesters, so there was little they could do to stop the incursion. Thankfully, as crazy as the event was, we were able to keep the motorcade moving and reached the airport without damage to Mara's vehicle.

Going forward, we realized how important it would be to restrict critical transportation information to a very select group of key personnel and to also ensure they refrained from sharing any details with others who might enable our transports to be compromised again.

*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

Unfortunately, to a certain degree, we had to continue practicing bait and switch techniques to help alleviate the impression that we were not willing to share these details with government officials and other key players who felt they were entitled to this level of information.

Yet, no matter who we excluded or gave misleading information to, the leaks continued to take place every time any bit of information was shared. Finally, it became necessary to stop all critical transport information from being given to anyone other than the DOJ and US Fish & Wildlife agents assigned to the case.

Our next major airlift involved the African Lions and Black Bear, Mikey, as well as a second Black Bear that was being kept at a Science Exposition facility located in San Juan. Years

earlier this educational facility had operated a zoological section along with their numerous science exhibits, but had since closed the animal attraction and were now asking us to give their lone male Black Bear named "Ossy" a home as well.

Along with the Lions and Bears we also took the Zoo's single female Dromedary Camel, Dasani, on the same direct non-stop flight to Colorado. Additional direct flights to specific locations in the USA became a regular occurrence going forward as we moved from one section of the zoo to the next.

| Lions, Camel, Kangaroo, Porcupine and Stork in the jet's cargo bay.





*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*



|After the Zoo closed its doors to the public several years back, the Zoo profited by using Mundi the Elephant as a prop for private birthday parties and other events.

|Mundi, the Elephant inside her enclosure where she lived alone for more than 35 years.



*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

Once the Chimpanzee, Lions, Bears, Camel and a few other animals were off the island and safely adjusting in their new homes, we needed to turn our attention to the Mega Vertebrates. Of course, finding professional Elephant, Rhino and Hippopotamus movers was not an easy challenge.

Thankfully, we were able to locate an Elephant transporter who had a wide variety of species-specific transport crates for Elephants. He was experienced in the unique field of pachyderm transportation and relocation and had worked on a regular basis with a company called Atlas Airlines.

Thankfully, Atlas happened to have an enormous jet that was not only large enough to accommodate a massive Elephant crate... but also had the weight carrying capacity to accommodate the Rhino and Hippos on the same flight!

In addition, Carol Buckley, the founder and Executive Director of Elephant Aid International (EAI), and the Founder and Director of the Elephant Refuge North America (ERNA) - which is located in Attapulgus, GA - flew down to Puerto Rico to spend 9-days helping to train and condition Mundi to load into her special transport crate.

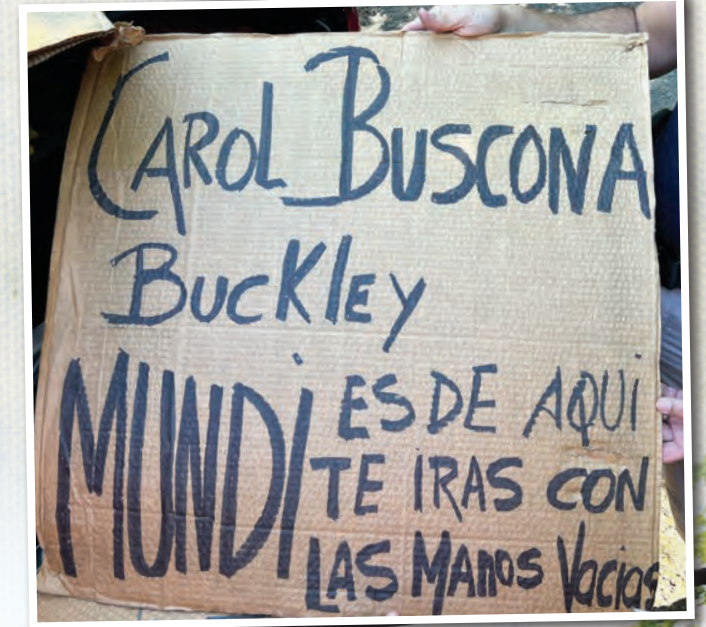
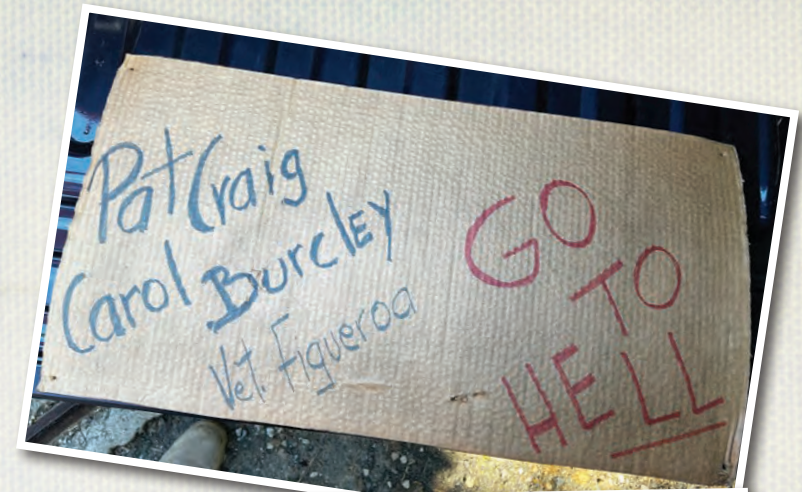
As weeks passed leading up to Mundi's departure, the pro-stay and pro-leave factions began to battle - both virtually on the internet, as well as physically in real life. Protesters were camped outside the zoo daily, and both Pat Craig and Carol Buckley became their favorite targets for slander and vilification.

As evidence of their blatant slander tactics, the two fences that stretched in opposite directions from the Zoo's front gate were covered with

handmade billboards, signs and graffiti - most of which contained personal messages damning Pat and Carol to Hell and/or otherwise attempting to insult them in any manner the protestors could dream up.

As the days remaining before Mundi's scheduled flight to freedom grew short, terrorist-like tactics began to be employed. From masked intruders sneaking into the zoo through thick underbrush... to voices being heard in the dense jungle adjacent to Mundi's exhibit on a number of occasions.

In other instances, numerous drones descended from the sky above to blatantly harass Mundi. Naturally, both the sound they made and their close proximity absolutely terrified her, so there truly seemed to be no end to what the "keep Mundi on the island" faction was willing to do.



*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

One example of their desperate attempts to thwart Mundi's daily conditioning to load in and out of her travel crate involved an island-wide social media summons that rallied people to come in droves to the zoo's perimeter fence so they could clank, bang and beat metal pots and pans together in an attempt to scare Mundi. Thankfully, the Puerto Rico government, as well as USDA-OIG and US Fish and Wildlife Service agents quickly responded by ordering the zoo to be surrounded with law enforcement personnel to help keep participants from getting anywhere near the zoo.

However, the attempts to interfere with Carol and Mundi continued, as the very next day things took a turn for the worse. When Carol went to feed Mundi in the morning, she noticed a white residue around the edges of Mundi's mouth. Carol also noticed that Mundi's skin was red and irritated in those same areas.

It became apparent that Mundi had eaten something caustic, and the substance had burned the skin near the edges of her mouth. When Carol looked around Mundi's enclosure, she found small amounts of the same white substance on some freshly cut branches that were lying in the moat near the edge of Mundi's exercise yard.

This area also happened to be very close to the part of the jungle where some of the masked intruders had been seen, as well as where the voices were heard. At that point, Carol recalled that many days earlier one of the guards had reported finding empty boxes of rat poison near a tree.

At the time no one could find evidence of where the contents had gone or who had left them there. Yet, finding these boxes in general was very peculiar since the Zoo's pest control program had not been active for a number of years. Given there was a chance the poison might have been meant for Mundi, the veterinarians gave



**Milagros Ospina Salinas**  
**Diana Emma desde**  
**mañana a cualquier hora**  
**con ollas y metales a**  
**hacer ruido frente a los**  
**portones del zoo, así**  
**Mundi se pondrá**  
**nerviosa y se refugiará**  
**en su área de descanso.**

Translation: "Starting tomorrow at any time with pots and metals to make noise in front of the zoo gates, so Mundi will get nervous and will take refuge in her rest area" - Milagros Ospina Salinas-2023

Mundi a thorough exam at the time. Mundi showed no indications of being poisoned, so at that point, everyone had to assume the empty boxes were unrelated to her situation.

Of course, once the powder incident occurred, no one could connect the two incidents without investing more time into the specific brand of rat poison that had been found, and what that product would normally look like. Yet, what mattered most at that point was to ensure Mundi wouldn't become ill from ingesting whatever the white substance was.

Thankfully, Mundi's massive size was likely her best defense, since whatever the unknown substance was, must not have been an elephant-sized dose. Thankfully, the unidentified substance caused no further problems for her.

However, at this point everyone realized there were people out there who felt it was perfectly OK to physically harm Mundi in order to halt her departure. As crazy as that sounds... that was the harsh reality we were facing!

With just three days left before Mundi and the other pachyderms were set to leave, Carol was now feeding, watering and gently working with Mundi on a constant basis to protect her mental and physical wellbeing. She had spent the last six nights sleeping in a camper van parked next to Mundi's enclosure, so quite literally, the two ladies were just a stone's throw from each other on a 24-hour a day basis.

At the same time Carol was working with Mundi... Pat and Monica Craig were similarly caring for the two Hippos, Cindy and Pipo, as well as Felipe the male White Rhino. This hefty trio required the same special care and attention as Mundi - but quite thankfully - they were not the target of malicious attacks such as the ones being perpetrated against Mundi.

In a final desperate act, just two days before the scheduled airlift, someone from the opposing faction was able to sneak into the Zoo again and hit Mundi in her rear end with some sort of projectile (*most likely a BB gun pellet*) while she was standing in her crate peacefully eating a handful of carrots.

In response, Mundi immediately jumped up and flew backwards out of the crate at full speed! She then began to run



| Carol Buckley working with Mundi.

around her enclosure with her trunk in the air trumpeting and her tail swishing in the air!

She spent the next few hours alternating between calming down, and then getting agitated again. This behavior definitely seemed to be connected to an irritation that remained somewhere near her back end.

From time to time, she would go over to the rough-surfaced wall of her concrete house and lean into it as if she were trying to rub the spot where the projectile hit. Understandably, Mundi spent the last two days of her time on the island avoiding the transport crate.

*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

She was very confused by the incident and her trust in Carol was now shaken. Although she eventually realized Carol was not at fault, she obviously believed the crate itself had something to do with the assault – which is exactly what the opposition group (*and assailant*) had intended.

So even though Carol was able to calm Mundi and get her to a point where she trusted her again... as the saying goes – an elephant never forgets. Quite simply, Mundi felt the crate was not to be trusted anymore.

On the day of the move, Carol spent many hours talking to Mundi and trying to convince her that it was perfectly safe to enter the crate. To Mundi's credit, out of her respect for Carol, she actually tried to enter the crate a few times.

However, with each initial step across the threshold, Mundi's memory of the incident would come rushing back and overwhelm her desire to comply. Thankfully, we were able to get Mundi loaded with the help of a world-renowned elephant veterinarian who had been brought in to help calm Mundi's nerves if a situation like this ever presented itself. With the help of an exceptionally light sedative, Mundi's fear of the crate quickly subsided.

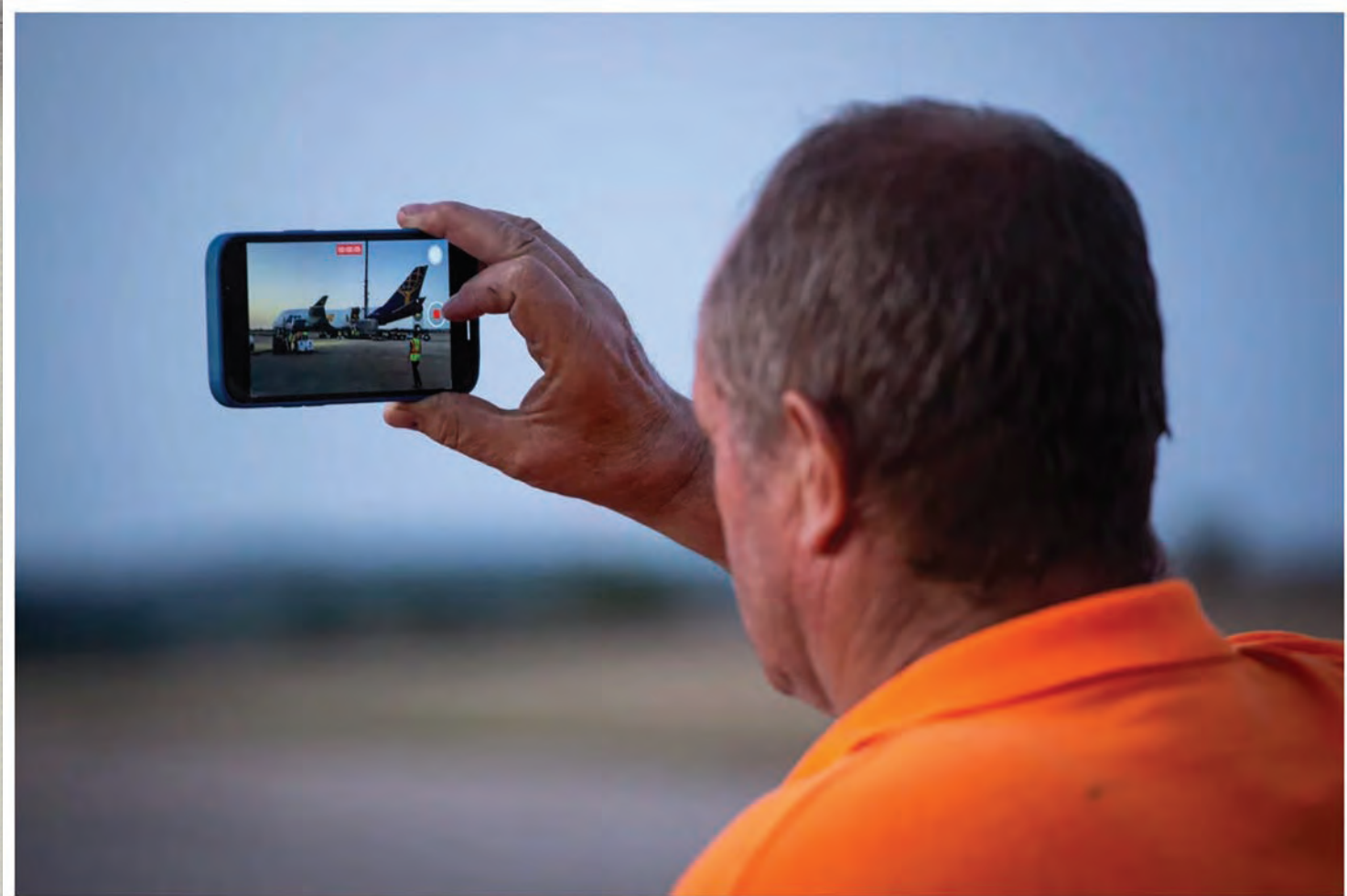
This change in attitude allowed us, along with the expert team of elephant transporters to gently guide her into the crate. With her new warm and fuzzy outlook on life, Mundi became comfortable in the belief that whatever happened just days earlier, was no longer an issue.

Mundi was now showing signs of being calm and very comfortable within the crate, so Carole and the transport/medical team kept her well fed and showered with loving praise. Although it was now close to midnight, it wasn't long before the crate had been lifted by a massive crane and set onto a waiting heavy transport truck.

| JJC Crew securing Mundi's crate.







Pat Craig, director of the Wild Animal Sanctuary in Colorado, which was charged by the U.S. Justice Department with coordinating the evacuation of more than 300 animals from Puerto Rico's zoo to sanctuaries across the U.S.

Erika P. Rodriguez for NPR

*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

The battle was now over, as the opposition forces had lost. Mundi and her fellow mega vertebrates were now on their way to the airport and within hours would be airborne and on their way to Florida.

To the credit of the Islanders who really did love Mundi, and truly understood that it was in her best interest to leave Puerto Rico, the road leading to the airport was lined with thousands of people (*at 1:00 AM in the morning*) who came to say goodbye and wish her well. Between the cell phone lights that beamed in the hands of those recording her passing...and the flickering glow of cigarette lighters that occasionally filled the voids between... it was a truly inspirational sight to be seen.

After such a terrible battle leading up to her departure, it was heartwarming to finally see a unified display of love and affection.

As Mundi and her companions lifted off the runway and began disappearing over the western horizon, we did exercise a sigh of relief. Yet, with hundreds of animals still waiting for their turn in this process, we had little choice but to regain our focus and head back to the Zoo for another day.

With the largest of animals taken care of, there were many smaller animals that were waiting for their chance to escape the Zoo. Of course, when we say "*smaller*" that would include everything from Camels, Zebras, Donkeys, Llamas, Impalas, Fallow Deer and Barbary and Mouflon Sheep.

There were also numerous primate species, which included Ring-Tailed Lemurs, Capuchin Monkeys, Vervet Monkeys, Patas Monkeys, Spider Monkeys, Rhesus Macaques, Marmoset Monkeys and Baboons... and a large assortment of birds ranging from Andean Condors to Eagles, Vultures, Owls, Hawks, Cranes, Storks, Ostrich, Emus and a wide assortment of Parrots.

With our rescue mission involving two separate facilities and approximately 700 animals, we knew we would not be leaving the island anytime soon. Just trying to keep each species accounted for, as well as staying in touch with all of the sanctuaries and other facilities that had pledged homes for them, was a monumental challenge.

Beyond that, there was a significant amount of medical testing and paperwork that was associated with every animal involved, both for the respective facilities taking them, and for the airlines that would be shipping them.

Since wild and captive Monkeys can carry a wide variety of infectious diseases, we were facing two major challenges with regard to their relocation. On one hand, we would need to catch each one in order to obtain a sample of their blood (*to send out for testing*)... and on the other hand, we would need to inoculate them and castrate any males that happened to be in the mix.

One of the major challenges involved a large group of Ring-Tailed Lemurs being kept inside of a dingy concrete building. Unfortunately, the building also happened to be sitting on a small mound of earth that was surrounded by water.

Looking at the structure with its steel bar prison-like windows, it quickly became apparent there was no official boat or professionally made water fording device available to reach this island. Instead, we observed two plastic 55-gallon drums and a handful of planks that were tied together - which their keepers were obviously using to access the Lemurs.



*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

Apparently, on days when they would make an effort to feed or check on this cache of Ring-Tailed darlings, they would use a rope to pull the makeshift raft back and forth across the pond's stagnant and debris-filled water.

With no other viable solution at hand, we were forced to incorporate the same homemade craft in our own effort to ferry crates and staff to and from the island. With little room for anything more than a single occupant, it required a steady hand and good balance to make each crossing with added cargo.

Thankfully, a few staff members from Black Beauty Ranch (*an accredited HSUS sanctuary*) had come to specifically help with wrangling these seemingly small creatures. Yet, as expected, when we began to systematically remove the nearly two dozen highly athletic occupants, the catching/crating process quickly began to resemble the sight of popcorn popping inside of a large glass container!

Yet, by allowing numerous staff to stand still inside the captive space, we were able to let the Lemurs calm down and gently grab them one at a time. With such big eyes, it was easy to see how the dingy space was no challenge for the eyesight of these highly adaptive creatures.

With the entire group captured and placed within a quarantine area – and their being part of the non-human primate subcategory - they also needed their blood to be tested. Additionally, we needed to surgically alter all the males before allowing them to leave the zoo.

With some females having newborn babies clinging to them, the need to implement birth control measures was obvious – especially since the population had been growing exponentially for many years with zoo veterinarians doing nothing to address the issue.

Altogether, with more than 50 primates involved in this rescue operation, we had to implement special health safety practices and protocols





### *Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

during the entire time we were handling these animals, as well as when we were cleaning their crates and cages, due to the highly transmissible disease factor. Adorned in hazmat suits and face shields, everyone looked like they were completely out of place as they walked about in the jungle setting.

Protection was very important even when steam cleaning or carrying out any of the other dozens of care and maintenance duties that were associated with this segment of the operation. Thankfully, once the last of the primates were flown to Chicago – which was a set of four large Baboons - and were driven to their new home at Peaceable Primates in Indiana, that was the last of the high intensity handling protocols at the zoo.

Of course, zoonotic disease mitigation remained a priority with our management team as we continued to help the many other species found at both locations in Puerto Rico, but everyone was glad the primates had safely transitioned to their new homes without incident to either the humans or non-human population during the process.

Like most zoo collections, each species that was being held at the zoo were, for the most part, kept as singles, pairs or in small collections. Yet, between the Zoo's Sheep and Deer herds... and the incredible number of Reptiles that were being held at the Detention Center... we did have our hands full when it came to finding homes and transporting these higher concentrations of animals.

Adding to the challenge was the fact that the Zoo's three display areas for ungulates were not only inadequate, but also broken down and in complete disrepair. Thus, when it came to theoretically herding these animals into areas where they could be managed, caught and/or handled in any manner – there was practically no infrastructure that could assist with this kind of need.

It was also fairly obvious there would be no way to safely catch the hoof stock without risking life and limb, both on their part and ours as well. With their natural flight instincts still very much intact, most would injure themselves by running into fences, walls or abutments if we were to attempt any type of physical capture.

Many possible alternatives existed, such as netting, darting or building massive new corral infrastructures with restrictive chute systems. Yet, with the excessive heat and their nervous demeanor, it was quite possible we could still encounter individuals dying from stress alone.

The issue of not having any kind of infrastructure to manage the movement of grouped animals was also an issue at the Detention Center. There, we knew there was going to be a large number of sharp-toothed Reptiles with no real system to give us any kind of protected access.

Upon our arrival to start the capture and loading process, we were told there were a number of medium size Caiman – which are similar to Crocodiles and Alligators – that were located in a pool somewhere inside the compound.

We were able to identify a very small concrete pool built adjacent to one of the buildings that housed their bird population. This seemingly innocuous pool resembled what many people might refer to as being a “kiddy pool” since it looked like four or five children was all this little pool could accommodate.

However, as we began to investigate the contents of the quaint little pool, it turned into what most everyone there would soon consider to be the official gateway to Hades!

We say this, due mostly to the sheer level of disbelief and horror that overtook everyone involved with the challenge of emptying this particular pool of its resident population! What initially seemed like a shallow pool of water that might hold a dozen or so Turtles and maybe five

*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

or six small Caimans... slowly but surely turned into an 8-hour ordeal with literally more than a hundred Reptiles being liberated from the bowls of this water-laden beast!

With the help of professional reptile experts from the Carapace Conservation Center in California, as well as a one of HSUS's expert herpetologists and a handful of military veteran volunteers, we began to extract the dozen or so Turtles that were visibly floating at the surface of the pool. Yet, each time we would extract the ones coming up for air... another dozen would quickly come to the surface for their chance at catching a quick breath.

Fifty-some Turtles later, we felt like we had finally begun denting the pool's overall population. However, as we began to catch one large Caiman after another, we realized the same thing was happening with this set of sharp-toothed creatures.

We finally reached a point where everyone agreed it would help to start draining the pool, since we had already extracted a couple dozen Caiman and were now starting to find large soft-shell Turtles. With no way to empty the pool via a drain at the bottom, we began bailing water out with plastic buckets.

With four people operating catch poles and circling the 8' by 12' pool, we were able identify more soft-shell Turtles and Caiman as the water level began to drop. Yet, just as the group would start to verbally state they there was nothing left, another Reptile would suddenly appear.

It was starting to seem impossible that so many creatures could have been in this small space – let alone be surviving. Sadly, evidence of how they were able to survive without being fed on a regular basis started to come to light, with many of the Caiman that were being pulled from the deeper depths arriving at the surface with missing appendages.

To our disbelief, each of the ones that had unwillingly surrendered an arm or leg as food for his or her fellow occupants had somehow healed while living in a zero-light situation and being fully submersed under the weight of so many other creatures. Yet, when we finally reached the bottom layer of the pool where the thick green pungent water was beginning to disappear (*which also happened to be no more than a total of five feet deep*) – we came to a thick black layer of sludge that seemed impenetrable.

It quickly became obvious the hard impacts we were experiencing each time we tried to penetrate this layer with a pole or shovel, we were actually hitting a dense layer of bones. This is where all those who had not survived ended up.

Judging by the sheer density of the mass, we were talking about hundreds of lives having been lost. Regardless, we had to complete the work we had set out to do, as countless other Reptiles and animals were still waiting to receive our help in leaving this godawful place.

As we moved on to the two large plywood boxes with hundreds of snakes piled within, we left one person behind at the pool to finish emptying the small amount of skanky sludge that remained. Our hope was the guards who worked at this facility would clean out the remains of the less-fortunate ones who had become interned at the bottom of the pool (*once we left*), but to our surprise... more Reptiles started to unearth themselves from below the layer of bones!

Incredible, simply incredible! This concrete pool had to have some sort of curse and magical powers at the same time – as it was nearly impossible for a hundred-plus animals to have somehow fit into this space – let alone survive!

And now, we had the last few tenacious survivors finding the strength to crawl from the depths in an effort to not be forgotten or left behind. With renewed strength, two of the team members who had struggled for hours extracting





*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*



| One of many 14' Snakes.

the original survivors went back to help liberate these incredibly lucky souls!

Although we were now focused on the myriad of giant 6-foot to 14-foot-long Snakes that filled the two plywood bins, we couldn't help but talk about the unbelievable nature of the pool as Reptiles would be randomly carried past us on their way to a cluster of specially constructed crates that were waiting outside of the complex.

The first thing that became a challenge with the Snakes was deciding which head belonged to which body. All we could see was a mass of intertwined Snakes – all of which could easily kill and consume a small human child if they wanted to. And, in fact, most of them could easily kill one of us with their incredibly strong grip if they simply chose to do so.

Regardless, one by one each Snake was untangled and delicately withdrawn from the box.

Once outside and carefully inspected by our team of veterinarians, they were placed inside pillowcases and then taken to the unique crates that we had built for them as well. When all were finally extracted and safely tucked away, we realized we were just one Snake short of the staggering count of 130!

There were literally hundreds of pounds of Snakes – and when added to the Reptile weight – we were now ready to ferry more than one thousand pounds of Reptiles to the airport where a FedEx jet was patiently waiting.

However, we still had two Emus to catch and load, as well as a Raccoon, a Coati mundi, and an assortment of large Sulcata Tortoises that were sporting damaged shells. After being dumped in the wild as former pets, each had been struck by a car or truck as they attempted to cross one of the narrow roads that saturated the island.



Although we felt victorious when we finished loading all of the crates onto the numerous semi-truck trailers that had initially carried our crates to the Detention Center, we had no choice but to also let out a sad and depressing sigh due to the Rhesus Macaques that were going to remain behind. As hard as we had tried, there just were no more sanctuaries or private facilities in the United States that could take the final dozen Monkeys that were living there.

Since there had been the previously mentioned laboratory escape, and a thriving wild population was in place, there was a constant stream of these Monkeys coming into the Center on a monthly basis. And, to add insult to injury, there was now a recent government confiscation of more than 1,000 of these same Monkeys within the United States.

Sadly, another lab supply company had committed to importing more than 3,000 of these Rhesus Macaques from China, which they intended to sell to research laboratories within the U.S.. However, they failed to gain critical authorizations for this purpose, so now, the fate of the first 1,000 Monkeys that had landed on U.S. soil were hanging in the balance - all while

we were still in Puerto Rico trying to save a tiny handful.

With no place for even a few of these Asian Monkeys to go, we were baffled as to how was the government going to find permanent care for more than a thousand. As sad as it seemed, the story for our Monkeys was not over, and we could only hope a viable solution for them would soon be found.

Like so many sanctuaries that cater to other species, primate sanctuaries are almost always full. So, with the number of wild Rhesus Macaques on the island of Puerto Rico growing on a constant basis, there really is no solution for them on U.S. soil.

*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

It's obvious that Puerto Rico needs to find a way to fund a special effort to fix their problem or the future for these Monkeys – as well as many residents on the island - will start to look bleak. Their uncontrolled breeding will eventually reach a point where so many Macaques will be running loose on the island that both children and adults will start to get hurt – which in turn will cause hundreds of these Monkeys to suffer as well.

Thankfully, for some, we were able to find them a home at Black Beauty Ranch (BBR) in Texas. As a HSUS operated sanctuary, BBR had the land, manpower and resources to help, and we are extremely grateful for the home they gave to the Detention Center Monkeys, as well as a few other Monkey species from the zoo.

With all of the Reptiles, Monkeys, Lemurs and other assorted animals, such as two Llamas, a Pot-Belly pig and two Fishes, headed in the same direction... we were able to organize a spectacular airlift that flew to Dallas, TX with 296 animals on board! Oddly enough, a small segment of those animals included eleven Lemurs that were heading to Hawaii.

Yes, soft sandy beaches and cool ocean air awaited nearly a dozen Lemurs, as they rested

overnight at our sanctuary located in Boyd, TX. Since there were no flights that flew directly from Puerto Rico to Hawaii, we needed to send this group to Texas so they could then hop on a second flight going to Hawaii.

However, similar to human efforts at finding viable connecting flights, we were unable to find a flight going to Hawaii that would match up with the arrival time of their flight from Puerto Rico. This meant the Lemurs would have to wait until the next day to catch a flight to Hawaii.

Thankfully, our Texas sanctuary facility is located just twenty minutes from Dallas airport, so the Lemurs were able to go there for a convenient medical check, crate cleaning, feed and water change and comfy overnight rest. The following morning, they reboarded a new flight that took them to their permanent home at Three Ring Ranch – an accredited animal sanctuary located on the Hawaiian Islands.

With a large percentage of the animals at the Detention Center and Zoo now safely removed and in their new respective homes, we needed to start working on a number of smaller groups and unique individual animals like the Sand Hill and African Grey-crowned Cranes, as well as Zebras, Patagonian

Maras and a wide assortment of Parrots.

Yet, although we had been lucky with all the extensive testing we did for diseases in relation to the Monkey species... the Zebras were not as fortunate. Apparently, a tick-borne disease on the island was of great concern, so after drawing blood samples from the three zebras and receiving positive test results that indicated infection, we had to change the location of their final placement.

Given they were infected, they would not be allowed to transition to the states. Thankfully, there were a few licensed USDA facilities within Puerto Rico that could potentially give the zebras a new home where they would not only receive good care, but also be inspected by the USDA on a regular basis.

Working with the USDA and Fish & Wildlife agents, a licensee was chosen and subsequently provided the Zebras with a new home on the island. In similar fashion, the Sheep and Deer herds were also given a new home on the island for the same reason.

With all of the animals finally out of the Zoo, and nearly all out of the Detention Center, we were able to rejoice in knowing the many years of suffering and abuse was finally over.



THE PLAYERS...

There is no doubt that our Wild Animal Sanctuary bore the brunt of the work and expense related to this rescue. There was no funding or financial assistance provided for this mission, so we paid for the transport costs associated with every animal that left the Zoo and Detention Center.

In addition, numerous Sanctuary staff members took turns going to Puerto Rico in shifts to both enable and participate in this massive rescue effort. There were no days off or personal recreation time, as there were far too many animals' lives hanging in the balance.

Hundreds of transport crates needed to either be shipped to the island or built on site and dozens of people had to work tirelessly preparing them for each unique species that would soon utilize them for transport to their new homes. From the 19,000-pound Elephant crate that was provided by Stephen Fritz and his amazing team of professional Elephant movers... to the tiniest

container that was purchased at Walmart to hold a single Goldfish who had been long forgotten inside a dark and dingy abandoned aquarium room - every crate needed to be exactly the right fit and finish for the animal that would soon occupy it for a predetermined amount of time.

Many veterinarians and technicians traveled to Puerto Rico to help evaluate, test and prepare animals for transport. Two additional island-based veterinarians, along with staff at their associated clinics, also helped us treat sick animals that were suffering from neglect. Everyone was there to help the animals and there was no end to the number of sacrifices everyone made on their behalf.

A group of military service veterans came as well, bringing their love for animals and desire to help. Most notably, there were officials from the Department of Justice, the US Attorney's Office, the USDA, and US Fish & Wildlife Service who worked day and night to ensure every animal was officially represented and very well protected.



| Monica Craig keeping "Cindy" wet, cool and comfortable

They provided unending support and made many personal sacrifices to ensure the animals were well cared for and supported in every way. They never wavered from their commitment to help us with this mission, and we remain eternally grateful for their support.

Private companies such as JJC Enterprises assisted with the transport of challenging animals like Mundi the Elephant, as well as her mega vertebrate cousins, the Hippos and Rhino. They were truly amazing in utilizing their massive cranes for lifting Mundi's empty crate - which weighed 19,000 pounds when empty - as well as gently lifting it while she was inside and weighing nearly 26,000 pounds!

They also supplied the dozens of semi-trucks, forklifts and manpower required during the loading and unloading process - with dozens and dozens of crates needing moved with each segment of animals we transported to the airport.

Probably the most challenging was the process of getting Mundi and her crate loaded into the massive jumbo jet that was ready and waiting on the airport tarmac.

This involved the art of finessing her enormous crate into the aircraft with only 1.5" of clearance to spare! The amazing logistics team from JJC was able to meet the challenge head on and succeeded where all other crane and moving services would have easily failed.

From the other incredibly generous people and entities, which included the folks at Disney Animal Kingdom who provided the highly specialized Rhino and Hippo transport crates... to White Oak - which is a very unique facility in northern Florida that is a world-leader in captive Rhinoceros breeding and care - who sent a team of Rhino experts to assist with the preparation and transport of Felipe the Rhino... we were truly blessed to have so many experts assisting us with each of the very unique species at hand.





*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

The Humane Society of The United States (HSUS) and Humane Society International (HSI) also helped provide manpower in the form of a few key staff members coming to Puerto Rico, as well as helped us in finding a number of homes for animals in other facilities – including their own accredited sanctuary in Texas.

Others, such as the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) and “Best Friends Animal Sanctuary” in Utah, also helped find and provide homes for a number of animals, as did “Foster Parrots”, “MAARS” and “Oasis” bird sanctuaries. Primate facilities such as “Primarily Primates”, “Peaceable Primates” and “Jungle Friends”, as well as the Indianapolis Zoo (with their new 53-million-dollar International Chimpanzee Center) assisted with other difficult to place primate species.

Incredible non-sanctuary veterinary services were provided by a number of world class medical professionals, which included Rebecca Richard DVM who operates the Predator Healing Project, and Jim Oosterhuis DVM from the San Diego Zoo - as well as Emily Brenner DVM from the White Oak Conservation Center. Additionally, two amazing local veterinarians that work in private practices on the island helped us on numerous occasions with everything from treating animals that were neglected by the Zoo’s own veterinary staff or were needing medical tests and health certification documents.

These dedicated professionals, along with numerous technicians and other medical assistants provided a wide variety of services while working alongside the Sanctuary’s own veterinary staff. Together, they evaluated, treated and processed hundreds of animals in a very short amount of time.

Their commitment to the welfare of animals was unsurpassed and we were very fortunate to have

their help. We only wish they could have been given access to the hundreds of animals that perished in previous years due to the lack of proper oversight and care - as these medical professionals would have given anything for the opportunity to have helped them as well.

Although there were plenty of zoo personnel and private security guards that were fighting the zoo closure process and were a big part of the overall problem we experienced... there were a few unbiased caring individuals who truly did want to help the animals. Being on the island for months and going to the zoo on a daily basis, these individuals gave us hope that not every person working at the Zoo was ill-mannered and crass.

Seeing their smiling faces and hearing the compassion in their voices each time we encountered them was very refreshing. This was exceedingly true due to the overwhelming negativity that flourished amongst the rest of the Zoo’s staff and contracted help.

We were also very grateful for the Department of Justice’s on-island personnel, who faced a daunting task with immense pressure coming from all directions. Their commitment to helping the animals and supporting our work to do the same was priceless.

Although everyone was calling for certain Puerto Rican citizens and government officials to be prosecuted for the horrific injustices that had occurred over the past decade or more... these stalwart legal representatives knew the path to salvation for the animals would require a different approach. Lives were hanging in the balance and swift and decisive legal actions needed to be carried out in order to enable our rescue mission to move forward.

By making a deal with the Puerto Rican government that put the welfare of the animals ahead of any sort of lengthy drawn-out legal battle,



| Activist groups “Puerto Rico Sin Zoo” and “Vinculo Animal PR” demanding justice.

the DOJ was able to give us full and complete access to the Zoo. Although the Detention Center was not part of the legal processes, both the Puerto Rican government and the DOJ recognized how important it would be to save the lives of the animals living there were as well.

The entire process of us being there removing animals caused unending friction for nearly every agency involved, but throughout the entire process, everyone was able to keep the end goal in sight. Like so many others experienced, once Mundi left the island, the palpable anxiety that was so pervasive lessened. All of the distinct entities were then able to rest much easier knowing she was safe and happily resting at her new home in Georgia.

So much opposition was given toward preventing Mundi from leaving the island, as well as going to the sanctuary in Georgia, that it made her amazing success story all that much better. With EAI’s elephant cameras streaming online 24/7, the entire world was able to see how well Mundi integrated with the Elephants already living there – as well as how she began to thrive on social and physical levels.

The love she has for her new friends and her new home filled with grass, trees, ponds and lakes is undeniable. It truly is Shangri-la for her and her fellow sanctuary mates, so everyone who understands the very real and tangible advances she has made could not be happier!

| After 35 years in solitude, Mundi meets "Bo" for the very first time at Elephant Refuge North America.



Bo

Mundi

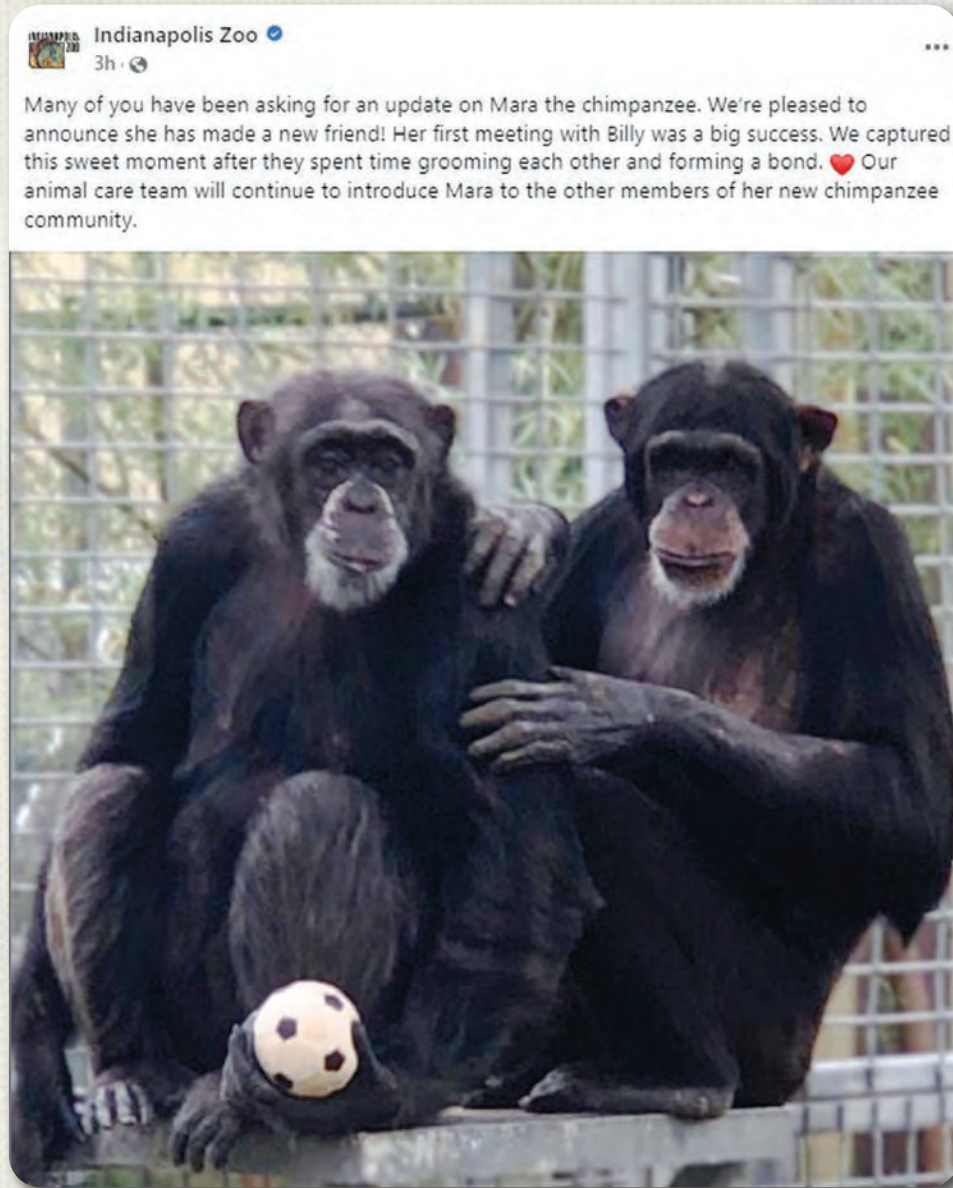
THE OUTCOME...

Thanks to your support and that of countless other compassionate people, we were able to respond to this monumental crisis. In one of the largest zoo closures to ever take place within the United States and its associated territories, together, we succeeded in saving hundreds of animals' lives!

Thanks to the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office in Puerto Rico, who took the initiative to pressure the Puerto Rican Government into agreeing to permanently close the Zoo, there are now more than 700 animals alive and well today. The vast majority were able to fly to new amazing homes that were waiting for them here within the states... while a select number of invasive and/or diseased species remained on the island.

Thankfully, those were transported to appropriately licensed facilities where they will be cared for and inspected regularly. They too were lucky to leave the Zoo and Detention Center, as the only alternative was death.

Had no one cared about the welfare of every amazing creature at these locations, their fate would have been to continue suffering until the very last



animal died. Given the death rate that was clearly established over a number of years, there was absolutely no time to waste!

Sadly, animals were dying on a weekly basis even while we were present and fighting to save each and every one of them. Our hearts were torn with each animal's passing, and we knew that every minute counted toward the successful removal of every other animal that was threatened by the gross lack of proper care.

Now that nearly every animal has left the island, we finally found a spare minute to create this special edition of our beloved newsletter. We would like to apologize for the extended absence in communication, but we hope you can now understand why we could not afford to divert our focus - even for a few minutes.

| "Pipo" and "Cindy" at West Texas Wildlife Preserve enjoying their expansive water habitat.



*Below is a list of the animals that were part of this monumental rescue mission. Although the numbers are staggering, everyone involved worked extremely hard to ensure these animals were given a new lease on life.*

1 Chimpanzee  
1 Two-toed Sloth  
2 Andean Condors  
1 African Elephant  
1 White Rhino  
2 Hippos  
1 Camel  
1 Donkey  
1 Impala  
7 African Lions  
2 Black Bears  
1 Kangaroo  
1 Marabou Stork  
1 African Porcupine  
1 Tarantula  
1 Spectacled Owl  
1 Great Horned Owl  
1 Golden Eagle  
1 Bald Eagle  
1 Rainbow Boa  
1 Green Anaconda  
1 Yellow Anaconda  
4 Burmese Pythons  
1 Albino Burmese Python

4 Reticulated Pythons  
2 Ball Pythons  
1 Black Milk Snake  
2 Alligator Turtle  
4 Box Turtles  
2 Leopard Gekos  
2 Tupinambus Lizards  
1 Australian Green Tree Frog  
4 Rhesus Macaques  
20 Lemurs  
2 Coati Mundi  
1 Ostrich  
4 Emu  
3 Zebra  
2 Llamas  
123 Red-tailed Boas  
2 Corn Snakes  
2 Leopard Geckos  
1 Tree Frog  
4 Ball Pythons  
14 Sulcata Tortoises  
16 Soft-shell Turtles  
51 Yellow-Belly Read-eared Sliders

50 Caiman  
1 Leopard Tortoise  
2 Box Turtles  
3 Patas Monkeys  
2 Vervet Monkeys  
1 Grey-crowned Crane  
2 King Vultures  
3 Spider Monkeys  
1 Lungfish  
2 Turkey Vultures  
1 Vietnamese Pot Belly Pig  
1 Goldfish  
2 Raccoons  
24 Hedgehogs  
8 Rats  
1 Capuchin Monkey  
1 Marmoset  
1-Sandhill Crane  
4 Baboons  
1 Gerbil  
105 Barbary Sheep  
89 Mouflon Sheep  
85 Follow Deer



Reina



Bo Mundi Tarra

| Mundi loves using the red Georgia clay as a natural fly repellent.

There is no doubt that your love and compassion made this rescue possible, as all of our hard work and devotion to the animals would not have been enabled without the vast amount of funding that was needed.

The costs associated with saving this many lives was definitely substantial, and yet, you were willing to help us meet every one of the challenges and demands that were unavoidable.

Thank you for caring... and thank you for supporting our mission to help those who cannot help themselves! Together, we are able to truly make a difference in this world!

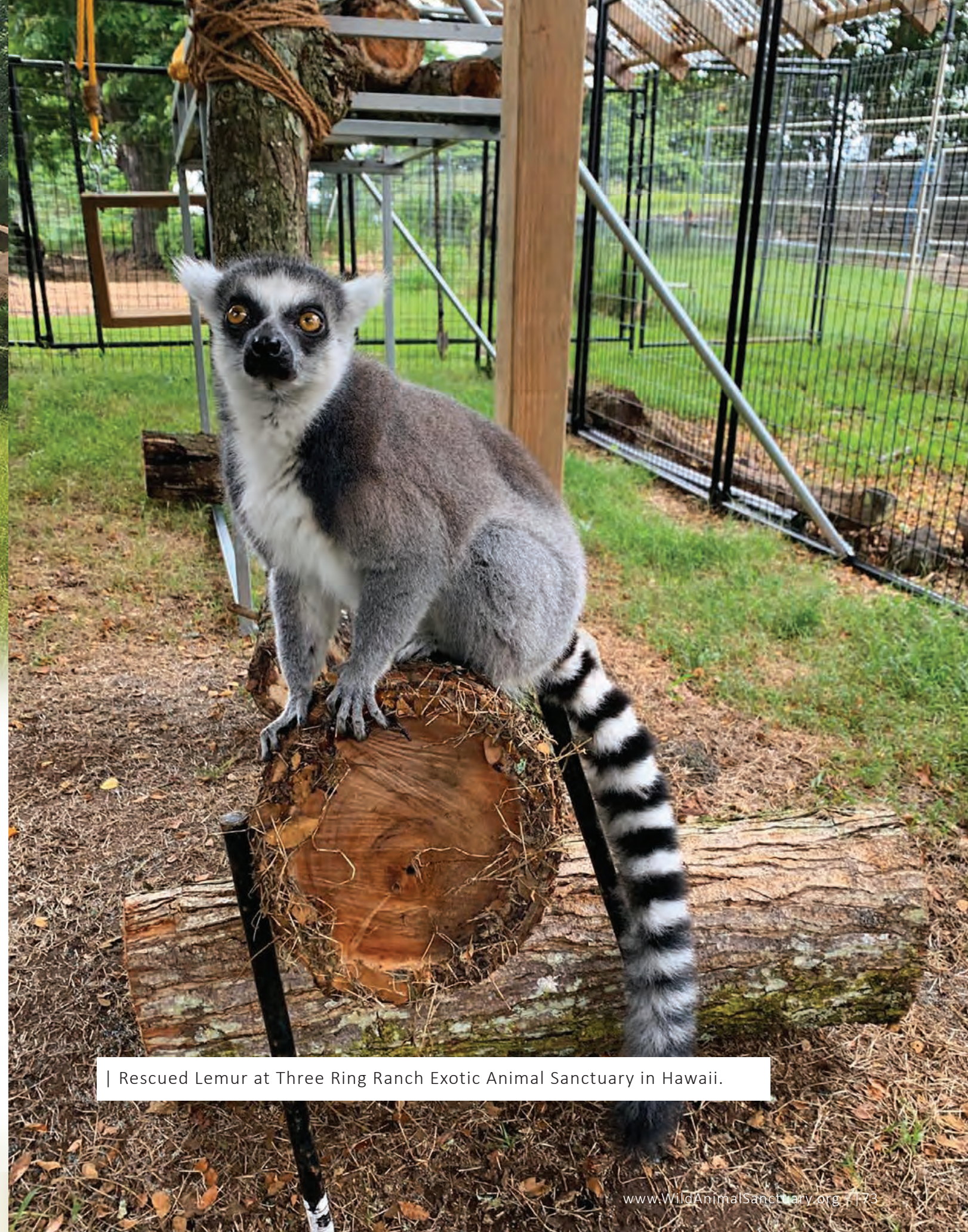
Although the mission is now complete, we still have work to do. Without doubt, very soon we will have no more animals in need of rescue.

However, this monumental mission depleted the normal financial reserves that we keep for emergency situations. Although you and everyone who cared

enough to help with the initial costs of this mission gave willingly, we really do need your help again in order to restore our normal operating budgets.

In addition, we continue to need more support for our daily operations, so please consider helping us today, as we truly do need your help! Your support is what enables everything we do and we are always incredibly grateful for any amount you can give.

Thank you again for caring about these precious animals! 🐾



| Rescued Lemur at Three Ring Ranch Exotic Animal Sanctuary in Hawaii.



*Puerto Rico Rescue... Cont'd*

| Rescued African Lions, Tsavo and Maya enjoying their large acreage habitat at The Wild Animal Sanctuary in Keensburg, Colorado

Tsavo

Maya



## PROGRAM REVIEW

In 2023, the Sanctuary had over 150,000 visitors!

Our Animal Ambassadors presented 35 virtual and in-person speaking engagements in 2023 to promote the Sanctuary and educate the public about the Captive Wildlife Crisis.



### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



We had 136 dedicated volunteers in 2023 that provided much needed support to our staff in caring for our rescued animals.

Our volunteers gave over 26,000 hours of work valued over \$650,000 helping the animals in 2023.

.....  
Our volunteers split their time equally between Animal Care and Education. Volunteer work includes but is not limited to Cleaning- Bathrooms, bear tubs, compound, pens, education center, grounds. In our Carnivore Nutrition Center, volunteers help with preparing animal diets. On the walkway, volunteers talk with visitors and help guide people along the habitats to learn about the animals and the work that we do to rehabilitate them.





# HANK THE TANK

## Gets A Rare Reprieve

Our dedicated readers will undoubtedly know that for almost 44 years now, The Wild Animal Sanctuary has rescued carnivores from deplorable conditions in all forms across the globe. Though where these animals once resided may vary greatly, all of them have one shared aspect in common: *Captivity*.

Out of the hundreds of rescued carnivores we care for, nearly every one of them was born and raised in a captive situation. Even so, it is not uncommon for us to be asked about the rescue of animals born in the wild. The message usually comes from a concerned citizen reaching out on behalf of an animal they've read about or saw first-hand in their neighborhood. A quick internet search reveals our organization cares for the species in question, so they often assume we are able to help. The truth of the matter is – we simply can't. The Sanctuary has zero jurisdiction when it comes to wild-born animals, as here in Colorado, that authority falls

entirely under Colorado Parks and Wildlife. The management of wild populations coexisting with the ever-encroaching human population is certainly a difficult course they have to navigate on a regular basis. Perhaps the most controversial species regarding this problem is the Black Bear in search of food, eventually landing right in someone's driveway or backyard (*and often closer*). Bears that break into homes and businesses are soon thereafter labeled a "nuisance" animal. This term addresses the fact that these Bears have developed a Bear-burglary-habit. Once they've learned this behavior, most will unfortunately continue to do it as long as there are individuals who fail to apply the proper care in bear-proofing their property.

In most states, it is then up to the Division of Wildlife to govern these situations. They may relocate the "nuisance" Bear far from the scene of the crime, but many return to seek out what has already been identified as easily accessible food. Additionally, relocating is not always feasible as it may just displace the situation to be repeated elsewhere. It is at this juncture the bear is euthanized to prevent additional property destruction, as well as the potential for human injury or death. In short, as human populations move further into Bear territory, it is the Bear that pays the price. Literally, hundreds of wild Bears are euthanized each year – which most could have been saved if greater care had

been administered to not attract them anywhere near human dwellings.

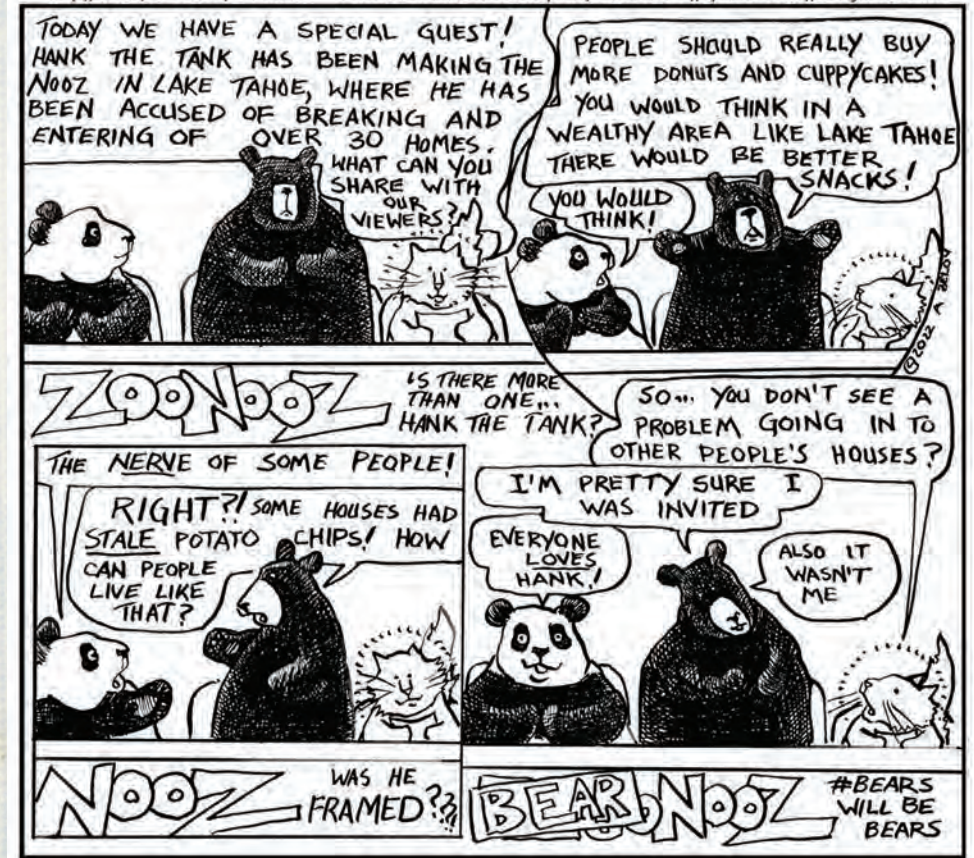
In early 2022, one wild-born Black Bear located in Lake Tahoe began garnering national headlines – in part because of a viral photo that depicted how large and rotund the male black bear was, and in part due to its internet-bestowed nickname: "Hank the Tank".

Although the Bear was later discovered to be female, it continued to be referred to as "Hank" at the time. Originally accused of breaking into as many as fifty homes between Nevada and California. DNA tests would eventually debunk this number, as it turned out other Bears were responsible for some of the break-ins. However, at least 21 incursions were confirmed to be her doing, which is no small feat! Known to California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as Bear 64F, she was closely monitored with a tracking collar.

Over time, Hank achieved a rare kind of "celebrity status" which eventually brought fans and supporters all across the nation to her defense. This widespread following became instrumental in helping convince CDFW to seek out an alternative to putting her down. As a rare exception, permission was granted for Hank to

### Your Brain on Pandas

<http://www.yourbrainonpandas.com> From the Institute of Contemporary Panda Satire //by Anne Belov //All rights reserved



be rehomed at our Wild Animal Refuge in southern Colorado. This kind of wild-to-captivity solution is highly frowned upon due to the unrealistic message it sends to the public, and due

to the nearly impossible mathematical equation this kind of solution supports. Referring back to the hundreds of Bears that are killed every



*HANK The Tank... Cont'd*

year there is simply no way for every state that has wild Bear populations to offer this kind of last-minute reprieve. Not only would it be impossible for our sanctuary and other similar facilities to take in and care for that many Bears each year – but it would also send the wrong message to the very people who need to be more responsible with regard to managing unnatural Bear attractants.

Of course, we are extremely thankful this rare exception was made on Hank's (*now Henrietta*) behalf, and that she was given a second chance in life. As such, she now had an opportunity to come live with other Black Bears in one of our 230-acre forested habitats!

Upon her capture in California, TWAS quickly dispatched a transport team to collect Henrietta and bring her to The Wild Animal Refuge the

following day. Henrietta would now have a new forever home, as well as a new name and a fresh start, as it were.

After spending a brief period inside an acclimation enclosure located within the Bear habitat, Henrietta was able to be released. She now receives a world-class diet, has ample space to explore, and has other Bears to socialize with. She even has her own swimming tank (*pun intended*).

Yet, perhaps most important of all, is that her temptation to raid human domiciles no longer exists. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are delivered daily courtesy of her much-loving animal care team!

As a side note, while initially agreeing to take Henrietta in, we learned of another facet of her unprecedented tale. It seems Henrietta had given birth to three cubs several months prior to her being captured. Once mobile, Henrietta's "*accomplices*" had little choice but to participate in some of the house break-ins. Hoping they can unlearn what their mother inadvertently taught them, CDFW made the choice to enter the cubs in a California-based wildlife

rehabilitation program with the goal of returning them back to the wild. This option was the best choice for the cubs, since no one believed they had become habituated to human foods, and they had their whole life ahead of them.

Of course, this option was not available to Henrietta, as her instinctual survival mechanism had become habituated to human food sources. The bottom line was, we either took her in, or she would be killed.

Regarding Bear territory property owners – we believe they truly do have an obligation to become more diligent in regard to directing bears away from their property - and not toward it – as that is the only way Bears less fortunate than Henrietta will have a chance at surviving.

As for Henrietta, we want to thank the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for carefully handling her situation, and we are also grateful to Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado Department of Agriculture for their one-off approval to allow her entry into Colorado.

We additionally want to thank Governor Jared Polis and First Gentleman Marlon Reis for their support toward ensuring she had an opportunity to be relocated to a safe and appropriate sanctuary setting.

Everyone involved truly helped save her life through a momentous display of compassion. The abundant love and overwhelming desire to spare her life spurred a reprieve that unfortunately less than 1% of "*nuisance*" Bears ever receive.

Henrietta found a new, beautiful home that most wild-born "*nuisance Bears*" will never see, so please join us in educating others about wild Bear protocols. Let's keep wild bears alive in the wild! 🐾



| Henrietta captured by California F&G



Henrietta



**THE WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY  
(a Non-Profit Corporation)  
STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	Animal Care/Op	Refuge	Wild Horse Refuge	Education	Rescue	Total Programs	Administration	Fundraising	2023 Total Functional Expenses
<b>Personnel</b>	\$ 3,364,101	\$ 575,424	\$ 22,065	\$ 1,335,508	\$ -	\$ 5,297,098	\$ 1,060,726	\$ 264,463	\$ 6,622,287
<b>Community Outreach</b>	-	-	5,000	40,737	-	45,737	-	-	45,737
<b>Animal Care/Maintenance</b>	11,567,246	194,608	-	16,768	50,081	11,828,703	-	-	11,828,703
<b>Food/Merchandise Expense</b>	-	-	-	471,331	-	471,331	-	-	471,331
<b>Program Supplies</b>	353,470	211,908	450,157	109,861	15,705	1,141,100	8,436	74,819	1,224,355
<b>Contract/Professional Svcs</b>	228,290	13,199	202,311	372,901	1,182	817,882	98,807	564	917,253
<b>Communications</b>	33,897	9,991	5,095	1,317,118	5,986	1,372,087	31,559	800	1,404,446
<b>Office Expense</b>	74,608	10,277	127,268	197,536	10,050	419,739	76,217	284,020	779,976
<b>Travel/Transportation</b>	248,468	106,845	18,342	24,149	2,019,225	2,417,030	-	-	2,417,030
<b>Staff Development/Donor Cultivation</b>	4,684	400	38,700	25,003	500	69,288	5,545	21,663	96,496
<b>Occupancy</b>	197,499	76,392	1,025,438	694,846	-	1,994,176	8,238	6,486	2,008,900
<b>Depreciation</b>	1,105,812	817,010	231,719	591,397	54,082	2,800,021	43,178	8,785	2,851,984
<b>Insurance</b>	310,610	5,571	-	-	772	316,953	15,783	-	332,736
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,488,686</b>	<b>\$ 2,021,625</b>	<b>\$ 2,126,095</b>	<b>\$ 5,197,156</b>	<b>\$ 2,157,583</b>	<b>\$ 28,991,144</b>	<b>\$ 1,348,489</b>	<b>\$ 661,600</b>	<b>\$ 31,001,233</b>



**THE WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY  
(a Non-Profit Corporation)  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
December 31, 2023**

**ASSETS**

	<u>2023</u>
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 1)	\$ 4,676,247
Cash - Restricted (Note 1)	67,310
Investments (Note 1)	71,206
Inventory (Note 1)	335,904
Prepaid expenses (Note 1)	279,777
Other current assets	1,264,306
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>6,694,750</u>
<b>Property and Equipment</b>	
Property and equipment - at cost (Note 1)	60,196,238
Less: accumulated depreciation	(17,781,960)
<b>Net Property and Equipment</b>	<u>42,414,278</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>\$ 49,109,028</u>

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts payable	\$ 170,906
Accrued liabilities	107,352
Current portion of long-term debt	546,685
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>824,943</u>
<b>Long-Term Debt (net of current portion)</b>	<u>19,509,114</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>20,334,057</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Without donor restrictions	24,528,258
With donor restrictions	4,246,713
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>28,774,971</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u>\$ 49,109,028</u>

**THE WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY  
(a Non-Profit Corporation)  
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	<u>2023</u>		
	<u>Without Donor Restriction</u>	<u>With Donor Restriction</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<b>Revenue and Support</b>			
Contributions	\$ 11,145,608	\$ 8,097,338	\$ 19,242,946
Special event revenue	552,454	-	552,454
Less: direct event expenses	(150,717)	-	(150,717)
In-kind donations	11,066,053	-	11,066,053
Other income	3,663,652	-	3,663,652
<b>Net assets released from restrictions:</b>			
Satisfaction of program restrictions	8,097,338	(8,097,338)	-
<b>Total Revenue and Support</b>	<u>34,374,388</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>34,374,388</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Animal care	17,488,686	-	17,488,686
Refuge	2,021,625	-	2,021,625
Wild Horse Refuge	2,126,095	-	2,126,095
Education	5,197,156	-	5,197,156
Rescue	2,157,583	-	2,157,583
Administration	1,348,489	-	1,348,489
Fundraising	661,600	-	661,600
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<u>31,001,233</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,001,233</u>
<b>Change in Net Assets</b>	3,373,155	-	3,373,155
<b>Net Assets, Beginning of the year</b>	<u>21,155,103</u>	<u>4,246,713</u>	<u>25,401,816</u>
<b>Net Assets, End of the year</b>	<u>\$ 24,528,258</u>	<u>\$ 4,246,713</u>	<u>\$ 28,774,971</u>



**THE WILD ANIMAL SANCTUARY  
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
For the Year Ended December 31, 2023**

	<u>2023</u>
<b>Cash Flow from Operating Activities:</b>	
Change in Net Assets	\$ 3,373,155
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by (used in) operating activities:	
Gain (Loss) on sale of assets	(1,000)
Unrealized gain on investments	(13,428)
PPP Loan forgiveness	-
Depreciation	2,851,984
Change in:	
Other assets	(235,378)
Inventory	(123,779)
Prepays	1,322,452
Accounts payable	(2,604)
Accrued liabilities	7,088
<b>Net Cash Provided By (Used in) Operating Activities</b>	<u>7,178,490</u>
<b>Cash Flow from Investing Activities:</b>	
Purchases of property and equipment	(19,643,466)
Purchases of investments	(262,542)
Proceeds from sale of investments	363,321
<b>Net Cash Used In Investing Activities</b>	<u>(19,542,687)</u>
<b>Cash Flow from Financing Activities:</b>	
Proceeds from long-term debt	13,647,706
Payments on long-term debt	(475,842)
<b>Net Cash Used In Investing Activities</b>	<u>13,171,864</u>
<b>Net Increase (Decrease) In Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	807,667
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents, Beginning of the year</b>	<u>3,868,580</u>
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents, End of the year</b>	<u>\$ 4,676,247</u>



THE WILD ANIMAL  
*Sanctuary*

1946 County Road 53

Keenesburg, CO 80643

303-536-0118

[information@wildanimalsanctuary.org](mailto:information@wildanimalsanctuary.org)

[www.WildAnimalSanctuary.org](http://www.WildAnimalSanctuary.org)