



# news release

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## **Lubee Bat Conservancy receives prestigious accreditation from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.**

**Silver Spring, Md. (March 24, 2026)** – The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has announced that Lubee Bat Conservancy was granted accreditation by AZA's independent Accreditation Commission. Each application was evaluated by the independent Accreditation Commission and determined to meet AZA's standards for animal wellbeing, care, and management.

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

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

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

Lubee Bat Conservancy has been an AZA-accredited facility since 2005. The AZA inspection team cited several strengths, including Lubee's animal welfare program, conservation efforts, and significant facility improvements. Lubee Bat Conservancy Director Brian Pope said, "I am extremely proud of our staff and their efforts since the last AZA inspection in 2019 to ensure animal welfare remains at the highest standards, which is the foundation of everything we do. At the same time, we have made significant improvements to our facilities, grounds, and education

programs, while continuing to expand our conservation work, particularly with endangered species and community engagement. Attaining AZA accreditation is an extremely important achievement and reinforces our commitment to excellence in animal care, conservation, and education. This milestone reflects not only the dedication of our staff, but also the continued support of those who believe in Lubee's mission."

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

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### **About AZA**

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