

PRESS RELEASE

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Update on fire at Woodland Park Zoo

SEATTLE—The 200 animals that were evacuated yesterday, December 15, during a fire at Woodland Park Zoo are safe and secure and have been relocated to animal buildings throughout the zoo. There were no injuries to staff or visitors.

For video of staff taking care of the animals, visit: <https://youtu.be/OgvoNqHp82Y>.

For photos, visit the zoo's blog: <http://bit.ly/onezoo>.

The fire occurred late afternoon in the Night Exhibit, a building that had closed in 2010. Seattle Fire Department and the zoo's Emergency Response Team responded. Smoke spread to the adjacent Day Exhibit where about 200 animals—a variety of reptiles, amphibians and a tree kangaroo—call home.

Under the vigilance of the Seattle Fire Department (SFD), the zoo's animal care staff entered the building to evacuate the animals from the Day Exhibit. Wearing respirator masks for protection from high carbon monoxide levels, staff entered the smoke-engulfed building in pairs while under observation by SFD's medical team. Animals, including venomous snakes and dwarf crocodiles, were swiftly transported in warm vehicles to eight locations on zoo grounds. The zoo's Animal Health team performed health assessments on as many animals as possible and continued the assessments today.

"The safety of our animals, guests and staff is our number one priority. Our animals are in good condition and we have an action plan for their interim care until the Day Exhibit can be safely re-occupied. Meanwhile, we'll continue to keep a vigilant eye on each animal, and support our staff involved in their care," said Nancy Hawkes, PhD, Woodland Park Zoo's general curator. "The efforts our staff took to save these animals and their commitment and teamwork were heroic. They put themselves in harm's way to save these animals. We are so grateful to the amazing support from SFD who put their lives at risk every day, and to the outpouring of support from our community."

While the Night Exhibit has been closed to the public for nearly seven years and has no longer housed animals, a special room in the basement was used for turtles hibernating in the winter. The cause of the fire remains unknown but SFD has indicated the fire was initiated in the building's basement. "Sadly, it is highly likely that six turtles hibernating in this room have perished in the fire," said Hawkes.

People who would like to help support the zoo's recovery efforts are encouraged to donate to the zoo's reptile and amphibian care: www.zoo.org/donate.

The zoo's WildLights holiday festival will resume tonight, Friday, at its normal time of 5:30. Visit www.zoo.org/wildlights.

Winter hours: 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. Visit www.zoo.org for more information and how to become a member.

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