

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **SF Zoo Aids Heroic Sea Turtle Rescue in Texas**

*Thousands of Cold-Stunned Sea Turtles Affected by Frigid Storms*

**SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. — February 18, 2021 —** As Texans endure the devastating conditions brought on by loss of power amid frigid temperatures, a mass casualty to the weather anomaly are sea turtles that live along the Texas coast. Thousands of “cold-stunned” sea turtles have been rescued from freezing waters since the onset of the storms for life-saving rehabilitation at area wildlife centers and aquariums. Today, San Francisco Zoo & Gardens has pledged its support of this heroic sea turtle rescue and additional support of the Association of Zoo & Aquariums’ Employee Relief Fund, to aide those employees that work in zoos and aquariums affected by this terrifying winter storm.

“The images of the hundreds of cold-stunned sea turtles lying motionless was such an unreal sight, and we felt we needed to do something to support the incredible efforts being made by the Sea Turtle, Inc. organization and others,” said Tanya M. Peterson, CEO and Executive Director of San Francisco Zoological Society. “Fortunately, through the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), a coordinated effort was established to enable us to help.”

AZA is hoping to raise at least \$50,000 to support what is likely the largest sea turtle cold stunning event in Texas history. AZA’s SAFE program (Saving Animals From Extinction), has designated 21 species to save from extinction, among these are sea turtles, some species of which are considered critically endangered.

Since sea turtles are cold-blooded and not able to regulate their body temperature, a weather event like this causes them to lose their ability to move, though they are awake. The result can be fatal as they can drown. The hope is that their body temperatures normalize for their eventual return to the wild.

“We truly thank those who have gone above and beyond to help save these amazing animals, and the effort to save them is on-going” said Peterson.

To support the sea turtle rescue efforts through AZA, visit: <https://www.aza.org/donate-to-aza>

### **About San Francisco Zoo & Gardens**

Established in 1929, San Francisco Zoo & Gardens connects people to wildlife, inspires caring for nature and advances conservation action. An urban oasis, the Zoo & Gardens is home to more than 2,000 exotic, endangered and rescued animals representing more than 250 species as well as seven distinct gardens full of native and unusual plants. Located at the edge of the Pacific Ocean where the Great Highway meets Sloat Boulevard. SF Zoo & Gardens is currently closed to the public due to COVID-19. Visit [www.sfzoo.org](http://www.sfzoo.org) for more information.

## 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 the accrediting body for the top zoos and aquariums in the United States and 12 other 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).



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