

# PRESS RELEASES

Friday  
NOV

5

2021

## MEDIA ALERT

NICOLLE GOMEZ RACEY, VP OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

### Several Species at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium and The Wilds Receive COVID-19 Vaccinations

SHARE THIS : f t v i

The Animal Health team at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium has completed the first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for some of its high-risk animals; approximately, 110 animals were vaccinated. Last week, the Animal Health care team at The Wilds started giving the COVID-19 vaccine to cheetahs, the animals at highest risk. Other animals with increased risk of COVID-19 due to contact with humans will be vaccinated as well, including Bactrian camels, giraffes, and others.

The Animal Health teams at both locations prioritized which species received the vaccinations first, including great apes (gorillas, orangutans, bonobos) and big cats (lions, tigers, leopards, cheetahs). The selection of species is determined by scientific information about animals that have shown COVID-19 symptoms or illness that has been shared among the zoological veterinary community.

The two-shot vaccine was administered over three weeks at the Zoo, and the same timeline will be followed at The Wilds.

To date, there have been no reports of any animals at the Zoo or The Wilds who have tested positive for COVID-19.


"Many of the animals in our care have routine vaccination programs. Zoo animals are vaccinated for diseases similar to domestic animals – canids and felids get the same vaccines as dogs and cats, zebras are vaccinated like horses, and great apes receive many of the same vaccines as humans (for instance, the flu vaccine)," said Dr. Randy Junge, VP of Animal Health at the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium.


Some animals like lions, polar bears, elephants, cheetahs, and hyenas are trained to receive vaccinations and participate in blood collections voluntarily. Having animals trained for injections or blood collections means that the veterinary staff does not have to sedate the animals only for the injection.



"This is a win-win situation for the animals and staff because it is a positive experience and reduces stress for both. This is an excellent example of how incredible bonds and positive reinforcement training allow keepers and the Animal Health team to provide the best care and treatment to all the animals under our care," said Dr. Priscilla H. Joyner, Director of Animal Health at The Wilds.

Both Dr. Joyner and Dr. Junge agree, with multiple variants of COVID-19 identified in the U.S., vaccination is one of the best tools their teams have to safeguard the animals in their care.

The coronavirus vaccine, created by Zoetis, used at the Zoo and The Wilds is specifically made for

**IMBEZI BAY** animals, not people.





COLUMBUS ZOO AND AQUARIUM

2021 ARCHIVE

2020 ARCHIVE

2019 ARCHIVE

2018 ARCHIVE

2017 ARCHIVE

2016 ARCHIVE

2015 ARCHIVE


2014 ARCHIVE

2013 ARCHIVE

2012 ARCHIVE


2011 ARCHIVE

2010 ARCHIVE

**BECOME A MEMBER**

Family Plus \$224

Family \$164

 **PURCHASE A MEMBERSHIP**

**JULY 2 - 10**

**MILITARY FAMILY FREE DAYS PRESENTED BY BOB EVANS FARMS**

**9:00 AM - 6:00 PM**

**JULY 17 - 18**

**EARLY MEMBER MORNINGS PRESENTED BY WENDY'S®**

**8:00 AM - 9:00 AM**

[VIEW OUR OFFICIAL EXPERIENCE PARTNERS](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Sitemap](#)

**(614) 645-3400**



**4850 POWELL RD, POWELL, OH 43065**  
© Columbus Zoo and Aquarium – All Rights Reserved