



ADVANCING
CONSERVATION
THROUGH
**EMPATHY FOR
WILDLIFE**

World Wildlife Conservation Day Toolkit

December 2023

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ACE for Wildlife Joint Initiative on World Wildlife Conservation Day

The Advancing Conservation through Empathy for Wildlife (ACE for Wildlife) Network's vision is a "conservation-minded society motivated by empathy towards all life." One of the goals of the Network's Conservation Action Committee is to coordinate joint conservation action campaigns to maximize our impact. Based on Network feedback, the committee selected December 4 - World Wildlife Conservation Day as the focus of our second Joint Initiative.

The committee is providing this toolkit to help Partners celebrate this day without having to reinvent the wheel. Our hope is that by collaborating, we will both extend our reach and help share the workload. We suggest any of the following messaging and actions, but it will be up to Partners to determine what level of involvement they want to have in this joint initiative. This is not a required activity, but with more participants, the greater reach and impact we can achieve together.





What is World Wildlife Conservation Day?

World Wildlife Conservation Day (WWCD) resulted from a pledge by the U.S. State Department to protect wild animals by encouraging protections for species all over the world and has occurred every December 4 since 2012.

Since WWCD really could touch on all that accredited zoos and aquariums do, we decided to focus in particular on responsible consumerism and sustainable holiday shopping for our WWCD templates and resources as they not only can be used on December 4, but also throughout the holiday season.

This toolkit includes:

- Suggestions for utilizing empathy practices in conservation action activities and messaging;
- Templates for handouts to use at WWCD events; and
- Links to examples from Network Partners, other zoos and organizations working on related topics.





How is This a Joint Initiative?

In this first year, the Conservation Action Committee made recommendations and WPZ staff compiled resources and suggestions for ways to enhance what Partners are already doing. Depending on the level of interest, we may try to do something more coordinated in future years. Please give us your feedback if you have suggestions and let us know if you make use of any of these resources (empathy@zoo.org).





Suggestions for Empathy Practice Informed Actions Partners Can Take

Framing:

- Share a sustainable gift idea paired with a critically endangered animal. Tailor to whatever endangered animal(s) your organization has on site. Tell the story of zoo animals: highlight unique characteristics, how they help their ecosystem, and how looking for goods with, for example, sustainable palm oil can help their cousins in the wild.
- Utilize hashtags tied to this day like... #wildlife, #conservation, #wild, #WorldWildlifeConservationDay, #WorldWildlifeConservationDay2023, #WildlifeConservationDay, #WildlifeConservation, #sustainableholidays

How to measure?

Number of animal - sustainable gift ideas shared, number of attendees at booth/program and/or likes/views/shares on social media posts





Modeling Actions:

- Write a blog post with information from accompanying briefs on the day, share what your zoo/aquarium is doing to support wildlife conservation, how audiences can participate.
- Sell sustainable products in your gift shop and use it as a place to talk about the value of buying local goods (or those produced by indigenous communities) in supporting conservation and protecting habitats.
- Share social media postings from other organizations talking about these issues.

How to measure?

Identify ways your organization models conservation behaviors now and then count if you increase any modeling behaviors at the end of 2024; number of sustainable products sold, number of WWCD posts/likes/shares





Increasing Knowledge

- Share success stories of endangered species recovery to instill hope.
- Pitch a story to local news in honor of WWCD like [Zoo Boise](#) with video on what the zoo did/will do during WWCD.
- Create/share posts/blog/videos on ways to give homemade gifts, sustainable wrapping, etc.
- Highlight different products to avoid or to purchase with less environmental impact.
- Share this guide to help consumers avoid [greenwashing](#).

How to measure?

This should be used in combination with other practices, so see other categories for suggestions of measurement

Providing Experiences and Practicing:

On site:

- Encourage zoo members/guests to take a pledge, for example: pledge to give sustainable gifts or reduce packaging or to become informed about exotic pets before purchasing them as gifts (e.g., [How to Support Efforts | Not a Pet](#)).
- Hold a family/kid sustainable gift making event (or share community events that do this).
- Host a recycling drive at the zoo (e.g., burned out holiday lights, ECO-CELL for recycling old phones and technology) at the end of December (promote at WWCD).
- Offer gift wrapping with sustainable options on site or offer lessons/workshop on wrapping gifts with fabric or other sustainable options.



Providing Experiences and Practicing:

Off site:

- Encourage sustainable holiday shopping - avoid unsustainable palm oil, no animal testing/ingredients, etc.
- Provide ideas for sustainable holiday shopping (see pages 9 and 10).
- Sustainable gift wrapping:
 - Gifts can be put in stockings without being wrapped, or hide around the house to be found as a scavenger hunt.
 - Use paper bags decorated by children, newspaper or reusable gift bags.
 - Avoid wrapping with glitter, foil or plastic.
- Switch to low energy holiday lights.
- Apps for sustainable holiday food:
 - [Cheyenne Zoo palm oil scanner app.](#)
 - [Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch app.](#)



How to measure:

Number of people to sign a pledge or petition, number of people responding to a survey about an event, number of tagged posts, number of participants in events





Activating Imagination/Perspective Taking

- Share book recommendations (and/or sell books in gift shops) for kids that are about animals' perspectives/conservation.
- Make an animal craft of an endangered zoo/aquarium animal to give as a gift to family members; include sharing about the animal while kids are crafting.
- Story time with adopt an animal gift program.

How to measure?

Number of books sold, number of animals adopted

Social Media Example

Today is World Wildlife Conservation Day. Please help [Insert name of endangered animal(s) at your organization with picture] by giving sustainable gifts like experiences, baked goods, homemade items. [Mention how this animal is impacted by ocean plastic, deforestation or something else related to unsustainable gifts]. These kinds of gifts mean less waste and create memories that last.





Sustainable Gift Ideas:

Donations

Donations are a great way to give on behalf of someone while benefitting a good cause. You can donate in the name of a family member or friend to an environmental nonprofit, local zoo or aquarium or another social cause you are passionate about.

Give a Membership

Memberships are a gift that can keep on giving without the added waste. Memberships could include:

- Art museums;
- Your local zoo or aquarium;
- Community supported agriculture boxes; and
- Wellness centers or group fitness.

Experience Gifts

Everyone wins with an experience gift! Create memories while wasting less by giving experiences like:

- Concert tickets or sports games;
- A trip to an arboretum; and
- Treat someone to a nice meal out or at home.





Environmentally Conscious Gifts

There is a huge market for gifts that minimize packaging or contain safer ingredients for yourself and the planet. These are a little more on the practical side, but your eco-conscious friend will be happy! Possibilities include:

- Shampoo and conditioner bars;
- Reusable cotton rounds;
- Baggu bags;
- Wildlife tracking bracelets;
- Beeswax wraps; and
- Dryer balls.



Do It Yourself Gifts

Making a gift from hand is thoughtful, cost effective and better for the environment than storebought gifts! Some ideas include:

- Candles;
- Lip scrubs;
- Lotion;
- Baked goods.

Local and Handcrafted Gifts

Local gifts can help to support small businesses and are often created with more integrity so your gift will have a longer shelf life. Some places to look for local gifts could be:

- Local farmers market; and
- Etsy is a great place to find unique hand crafted gifts. If you want to keep it local, you can filter your search to look for gifts made in your state.



Evaluation Assistance

The recommended measurement strategies in this document can be valuable for assessing and monitoring the successful implementation of a message or action strategy. These can help you track progress, identify potential areas for implementation improvement and make informed decisions about how to adjust your approach moving forward. It is important not to overlook the value of monitoring during the implementation process. However, they may not provide the full picture when it comes to whether you've achieved your desired outcomes or inspired guests to pursue sustainable holiday options. If you're interested in embarking on measuring the impact of your messaging or action strategy, but do not know where to start, reach out to empathy@zoo.org and we can put you in touch with our Evaluation Specialist to provide some additional support.





Partner Examples



Other Zoo Examples

Virginia Zoo

Calgary Zoo

Organizations Working on WWCD Issues

World Wildlife Fund

IAPWA

