



Animal Care and Management at the National Zoo: Final Report

*Committee on the Review of the Smithsonian Institution's National Zoological Park, Board on Agriculture
and Natural Resources, Institute for Laboratory Animal Research, Division on Earth and Life Studies,
National Research Council*

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This report follows up on an interim report released in February 2004 that focused on immediate needs in the areas of animal care and management, recordkeeping, and pest control. The report finds that the zoo has made good-faith efforts to correct deficiencies noted in the interim report and has made some noticeable improvements in the past year in zoo operations and animal care. However, problems in areas such as staff training, workplace culture, and strategic planning still need to be addressed. Specifically, the report recommends that the zoo immediately develop and implement animal-care training programs to ensure that people who are directly responsible for the well-being of its animal collection are adequately prepared and competent. The report commends a zoo-initiated strategic planning process as a positive step, but recommends it contain a more detailed, comprehensive strategy of how it will meet short-term goals and that it should link plans to upgrade facilities with those to acquire animals. The zoo should also focus on improving communication among keepers, veterinarians, nutritionists, senior managers, and curators.

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