



PREPARE TO BE DAZZLED: ZOOLIGHTS OPENS NOV. 27

*Northwest holiday-season tradition brings animals and landmarks
to life in a sea of more than 600,000 colorful LED lights
at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium from Nov. 27-Jan. 3*

TACOMA, Wash. – Imagine a giant orange-and-white rock crab, pincers alternately snapping, glowing in the dark of a winter night.

Think about mesmerizing jellyfish and elegant stingrays swimming serenely outdoors in blue, white and orange lights on the side of an aquarium.

Visualize an orca family breaching the Sound beneath the twin Tacoma Narrows bridges as cars zoom along on the spans overhead, their, head and taillights twinkling in the dark.

The 28th annual edition of Zoolights, the Northwest's longest running and much-loved holiday lights display, is all that and much, much more. It opens Nov. 27 and runs from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. nightly through Jan. 3, with the exception of a one-night closure on Dec. 24.



There are a number of new displays this year, including that gorgeous Sea Life scene and whimsical 8.5 foot-tall-by-22-foot-wide rock crab. He sits just below a 100-foot-wide Giant Pacific octopus in lights atop the North Pacific Aquarium. One might almost imagine them arm wrestling for Zoolights supremacy among the magical creatures that light up the night.

Below them on land, brilliant blue-and-white penguins frolic.

And over near the Kids' Zone area of the zoo, giant saguaro cacti bloom in brilliant green lights, standing in a real cactus bed.

Dozens of longtime favorites are back for encores this year, too, including:

- A polar bear family standing majestically atop ice floes in a dazzling turquoise blue sea.
- Mount Rainier rising tall in a light-scene so realistic the glaciers flowing down its flanks in lights look just like their natural counterparts.
- The purple-and-green Flame Tree, its trunk glowing green and its crown a stunning purple. Generations of Puget Sound families have posed before the Flame Tree for family holiday snapshots over the years.

An instant fan favorite, the Seahawks Zone, featuring bright greens and blues in team colors running up a tall tree topped by a brilliant white number 12 for the 12th Man, is making a comeback this year, too, just as the region's favorite professional football team hopes to do.

And while the zoo's living inhabitants are bedded down each night, their counterparts in lights have a blast. Siamangs swing, tigers leap and eagles swoop in animated scenes certain to bring smiles to kids of all ages.

All together, Zoolights features 18 scenes with a total of 102 figurines, plus another 168 independent figurines spread around the zoo campus. In addition, plants and trees throughout the grounds twinkle with lights.



Strolling the grounds and taking in the lights is the undeniable highlight of Zoolights, but because it's located on zoo grounds, visitors have a few more treats in store.

- **Ride a camel:** Camels stride around a desert oasis, providing kids and adults with the chance to hop aboard and ride one of the "ships of the desert."
- **See 16 huge, live sharks:** The South Pacific Aquarium, home to the zoo's shark population, is open during Zoolights. Visitors can both warm up in the steamy aquarium and watch these mesmerizing animals.
- **Watch Santa swim with sharks:** Ho, Ho, Ho, it's a-diving Santa will go. The Jolly Old Man puts on his scuba gear and swims with the sharks at 6 p.m. Dec. 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, and 23.
- **See other zoo animals:** Visitors can feed goats in Kids' Zone and watch hundreds of Puget Sound and North Pacific sea creatures swim in the North Pacific Aquarium.



Zoolights is a bargain. It's a great trip for Family Night, Friends Get Together Night, Date Night and other holiday season occasions.

General Admission tickets are just \$8.50 per person if purchased online at www.pdza.org/zoolights or at the Customer Service counter of any Puget Sound-area Fred Meyer store.

Plus, buying tickets in advance lets visitors skip the lines and go straight through the turnstiles.

Tickets for zoo members are just \$5 each, whether purchased online or at the gate.

General admission at the gate is \$10 per person.

Children 2 and under are admitted at no charge.

And, as always, Zoolights parking is free.

Zoolights is presented by Fred Meyer with support from KING 5.

For more information, go to www.pdza.org/zoolights.



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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).

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