



**What:** “The Wildest Show in the West,” an all-new live-action animal show featuring music, an engaging script, zookeepers-turned-actors and an amazing array of animals.

**When:** Noon and 3:30 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays, and noon on weekdays through June 16. Noon and 3:30 p.m. daily from June 17-Labor Day..

**Where:** Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, 5400 N. Pearl St., Tacoma.

**Admission:** Free with admission or membership to the zoo.

## ALL-NEW LIVE-ACTION SHOW HEADLINES A SUMMER OF AWESOME ANIMALS AND ACTIVITIES AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

*Herald the dog and a cast of other animals delight visitors in ‘The Wildest Show in the West;’ plus there are walruses, sea otters and polar bears to see, budgies to feed and much more*

Tacoma, Wash. – It’s going to be the Summer of Awesome at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Visitors will get close-up views of an array of amazing animals – a number of them as stars of the all-new live-action show at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater.



Plus, there are hundreds of other animals to see, from walruses, sea otters and polar bears to endangered cats like Sumatran tigers and clouded leopards. The zoo’s conservation mission and role in teaching messages of empathy for animals is showcased in this just-completed commercial for the summer season:

[zoocommercial.](#)

And a Summer of Awesome activities is well underway with daily presentations of “The Wildest Show in the West.” The brand new, live-action animal show is presented at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater show ([WildWonders](#)) and stars more than a dozen of the zoo’s most engaging animals.

There’s a new sheriff in the fictional Triple R Town, and he’s come to enforce the recycling code. Along the way, he also helps people learn about reducing waste and reusing items instead of throwing them away. But he’s not like just any other lawman. This is Sheruff Bones (aka Herald the dog), and he leads a cast of talented zookeepers-turned-actors and amazing animals in a thigh-slapping, mouth-guffawing show that amazes and inspires visitors to learn more about their species, yearn for experiences in the outdoors, and be motivated to help the environment. The action-packed show highlights rappelling, mountain biking, snowshoeing, bird-watching, picnicking and other activities that people can do right in their own Puget Sound-area backyard.

**Sheruff Bones and zookeeper Suzanne Akerman during ‘The West is Wild’ at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.**



**Tilli the armadillo is one of the animal stars of “The West is Wild,” an all-new show that debuts Memorial Day Weekend at the Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.**

Clark the king vulture will fly straight into visitors’ hearts as he soars overhead. As the king of recycling, he also helps tell the story.

Audiences are amazed by leaping clouded leopards Orchid and Banyan. Kids and adults giggle at the flock of stampeding chickens, and marvel at Gonzo the Southern tamandua, a colorful and interesting type of anteater with a 16-inch-long tongue.

The show takes place on a Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater stage that’s been transformed into the fictional Wild West town of Triple R, where the watchwords are reduce, reuse and recycle.

Talented zookeepers and zoo operations department staff members, including one who once worked on Hollywood film sets, created just the right atmosphere for the show.

When Sheriff Bones comes riding in on his custom-made hot air balloon at show’s end, visitors will have learned quite a bit about enjoying the outdoors, as well as ways they can make sustainable choices to help the environment and keep wild places beautiful and safe for the animals that live there. Small actions like using rechargeable batteries and reusable water bottles, shopping bags and lunch containers can have big results.



“Visitors leave the show with smiles on their faces and inspiration to take action to conserve the earth’s resources,” said Maureen O’Keefe, senior staff biologist at Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater. “Our staff has worked hard to write an enjoyable script, train the animals for their parts in the show and then polish our performances.”

The show is presented with support from Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital and Sound Credit Union.



Elsewhere at the zoo, visitors are enjoying the crystal-clear underwater viewing windows and a completely redone Sea Lion and Seal Pool exhibit that are part of the newly renovated Rocky Shores habitat. ([RockyShores](#)). Rocky Shores is home to Pacific walruses, California sea lions, harbor seals, sea otters and sea birds.

The zoo is home to four Pacific walruses. Dozer, Joan, Basilla and Kulu.

In the Sea Lion and Seal Pool, visitors are likely to see 770-pound Chinook swimming and getting his daily diet of fish from his keepers. And just down the way, playful sea otters Libby and Sekiu splash in their pool together.

**Top: Dozer, a massive 3,500-plus-pound male walrus with long tusks mesmerizes visitors whether he’s swimming gracefully with all that bulk underwater or making eerie mating-call whistling sounds above water. Above: Playful sea otters Libby and Sekiu.**

Over in the South Pacific Aquarium, visitors may touch stingrays (barbs removed) and small sharks at Stingray Cove ([StingrayCove](#)); be mesmerized as 16 massive sharks glide around a 225,000-gallon aquarium; and revel in the colorful sea creatures in a nearby lagoon.



**A father and daughter get up close with one of the zoo's many small animals. All dads get half-off general admission on June 18.**

In the North Pacific Aquarium, kids and adults can get hands-on with small ocean creatures like anemones, sea stars and sea urchins at the Marine Discovery Center [MarineDiscovery](#).

And the Summer of Awesome is just beginning. The zoo has a full slate of activities to entertain, inform and engage visitors all the way through Labor Day.

They include:

- **June 18: Half-Price Dads' Day.** ([Half-Price Dads' Day](#)) All fathers are admitted for half-off general admission. Come and celebrate all dads – and see our superstar Magellanic penguin dad, “Red,” and the wonderful way he cares for two newly hatched chicks.

- **July 1-2: Sharks!** ([Sharks!](#))

A celebration of the mysterious and misunderstood animals. Visitors also will learn about the threats these animals face in the world's seas, where millions of them are killed each year for their fins or because they become tangled in the nets of commercial fishermen.



**Chompers the Shark is one of 10 Washed Ashore sculptures on display at the zoo through Oct. 21.**

- **July 15-16: Wild Cat Weekend.** ([Wild Cat Weekend](#)) The zoo pays tribute to all of its cats, from Sumatran tigers to clouded leopards to a Canada lynx and an African serval with activities designed for visitors to have fun while being inspired to take action on behalf of these animals' wild counterparts.
- **Aug. 12: Primate Party.** ([Primate Party](#)) Learn about the zoo's lemurs, siamangs and white-cheeked gibbons on a day dedicated to these animals that love to climb, swing from ropes and just hang out. They'll receive special enrichments of food and toys designed to create a more stimulating environment and encourage species-typical behaviors, which are beneficial to animals' physical and mental health.
- **Sept. 2-4: End of Summer Blast.** ([Summer Blast](#)) Plan on a Labor Day Weekend jam-packed with keeper talks, special activities and animals and a celebration the zoo's fun-to-see animal ambassadors.

The Washed Ashore: Art to Save the Sea exhibit ([Washed Ashore](#)) with 10 larger-than-life sculptures of sea creatures will dot zoo grounds through Oct. 21. Each artwork is composed of trash – most of it plastic – that washed up on Northwest beaches.

The animals made of plastic bottles, fishing line, ropes, floats and an array of items from cigarette lighters to a cell phone and a microwave provide stark testimony to the staggering amount of human garbage that winds up in the world's ocean. Visitors will have fun searching for everyday items in each sculpture and then can go home with ideas on how they can, individually, reduce the number of single-use plastic bottles, plastic bags and other items that find their way into the waste stream. Often, these objects

end up in rivers and stormwater, washing out to sea, where they harm the animals that live there.

All of these activities and special events are free with admission or membership to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

Zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

For more information, go to [www.pdza.org](http://www.pdza.org).

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