

# NEWS

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## Video Credit, Fresno Chaffee Zoo:

Outside of building -

[https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Video%20Collections/MEDIA\\_PACKAGES/Conservation%20Action%20Center/FCZ\\_CAC\\_Exterior\\_shotcomp\\_4k.mp4?context=content\\_suggestions](https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Video%20Collections/MEDIA_PACKAGES/Conservation%20Action%20Center/FCZ_CAC_Exterior_shotcomp_4k.mp4?context=content_suggestions)

Inside of building -

[https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Video%20Collections/MEDIA\\_PACKAGES/Conservation%20Action%20Center/FCZ\\_CAC\\_Inside\\_Comp\\_4k.mp4?context=content\\_suggestions](https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Video%20Collections/MEDIA_PACKAGES/Conservation%20Action%20Center/FCZ_CAC_Inside_Comp_4k.mp4?context=content_suggestions)

## Interview – Lyn Myers – Chief Operations Manager, Fresno Chaffee Zoo

[https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Video%20Collections/MEDIA\\_PACKAGES/Conservation%20Action%20Center/FCZ\\_LynMyers\\_CAC\\_Soundbites\\_1080p.mp4?context=content\\_suggestions&role=personal](https://www.dropbox.com/preview/Video%20Collections/MEDIA_PACKAGES/Conservation%20Action%20Center/FCZ_LynMyers_CAC_Soundbites_1080p.mp4?context=content_suggestions&role=personal)

## **CONSERVATION ACTION CENTER NOW OPEN**

### **Made possible in partnership with the Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**FRESNO (May 27, 2024)** – Fresno Chaffee Zoo is celebrating the grand opening of its Conservation Action Center on May 30, 2024. This facility has been years in the making and will serve as the anchor of the Zoo’s future conservation initiatives.

“The blunt-nosed leopard lizard breeding program is a catalyst for the Zoo’s impact in local conservation work,” said Fresno Chaffee Zoo CEO and Director Jon Forest Dohlin. “This is a major milestone for the Zoo. We have supported several conservation organizations over the years, and now, thanks to our partnerships, we are poised to become leaders in local conservation science to help save native California species.”

In 2020, the Zoo joined the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Fresno State to collect the remaining few blunt-nosed leopard lizards from the Panoche Plateau to create a captive breeding program.

“Over a dozen undergraduate student researchers and 5 graduate students from Fresno State worked alongside Fresno Chaffee Zoo staff to understand the threats face by blunt-nosed leopard lizards. This new facility, and the program it houses, would not exist without the important groundwork of these students,” said Rory Telemeco, Director of Conservation Science at Fresno Chaffee Zoo.

“The opening of this center reflects the deep commitment of many partners to the recovery of species listed under the Endangered Species Act in California, including the blunt-nosed leopard lizard,” said Kim Turner,

deputy field supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office. "We have high hopes that this center will be a step on the road to recovery for many species."

Over the past few years, Fresno Chaffee Zoo has maintained the breeding program and collected vital data that improves our understanding of this endangered species. Now, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation, the Zoo is happy to announce it has completed the construction of its Conservation Action Center as a home for the blunt-nosed leopard lizard propagation program.

"This first of its kind center provides an opportunity for people to engage in conservation efforts that benefit their public lands," said BLM Central Coast Field Manager Zachary Ormsby. "This collaborative effort affords the public the ability to view this valuable work by being able to see and be active participants in the recovery effort of this endangered species. We appreciate the partnerships with the university and the zoo that have all come together with public support to bring this center to life. We look forward to the growth and future opportunities that will benefit conservation of natural resources."

"The Conservation Action Center at the Fresno Chaffee Zoo is the outcome of cooperation and collaboration among the zoo and multiple government agencies who came together to assure the continued presence of the endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizard on state and federal lands in western Fresno County," said BLM Central Coast Field Office Wildlife Biology Program Lead Michael Westphal. "The Center holds promise to contribute to the recovery of numerous endangered species endemic to the San Joaquin Valley in Fresno County. The Bureau of Land Management looks forward to continuing its involvement in, and support of, conservation projects at the Fresno Chaffee Zoo."

The Conservation Action Center is funded through a series of grants provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation. A portion of the building is being funded through Measure Z.

"The community has always supported our Zoo in our endeavors to help save species worldwide," said Chief Operations Officer Lynn Myers "Now, thanks to our partners and our communities' support through Measure Z, we can become leaders in local conservation in the Central Valley."

"The Fresno Chaffee Zoo's ability to translate conservation theory into practice is invaluable. As a foundation that unlocks positive action in preserving and protecting biodiversity," said Gabriel Miller, Technology Director with the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. "We are proud to support the Zoo's work in restoring endangered blunt-nosed leopard lizards to the San Joaquin Desert."

The Conservation Action Center will provide guests with the opportunity to see the Zoo's conservation work in action. Guests will be able to view the day-to-day operations of the critical care and research it takes to help save the blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

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Centrally located in Fresno, California, Fresno Chaffee Zoo is a 39-acre [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#) (AZA) accredited zoo. It is home to over 200 different species and features WOW exhibits—from Sea Lion Cove to African Adventure—that teach guests about animals across the globe and the conservation efforts to protect them. The Zoo welcomes over 800,000 guests annually, offering a world-class guest experience and conservation education to all who visit. The mission of Fresno Chaffee Zoo is to inspire people to care for animals, create connections, build community, and save wildlife.

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**About the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

**About blunt-nosed leopard lizards:** Blunt-nosed leopard lizards are only found in the San Joaquin Desert of central California, within the San Joaquin Valley and adjacent foothills, as well as the Carrizo Plain and Cuyama Valley. These lizards inhabit sparsely vegetated areas. The lizards use rodent burrows for coverage from the harsh desert heat and are known to pounce on prey. The blunt-nosed leopard lizard is a relatively large lizard with a long tail, long, powerful legs, and a short, blunt snout. Adult males typically range in size from 3.4 to 4.7 inches in length, excluding their tail and females are about 3.4 to 4.4 inches in length, excluding their tail. Darker than other leopard lizards, blunt-nosed leopard lizards vary in color and pattern on their backs. Their background color ranges from yellowish or light gray, brown to dark brown, depending on the surrounding soil color and vegetation. Habitat disturbance, destruction, and fragmentation are the greatest threats to blunt-nosed leopard lizard populations.