

# 125 Years

## *A Conservation Legacy*



Wildlife  
Conservation  
Society

We Stand for Wildlife®

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# 1890s



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**1894** Theodore Roosevelt, as Boone and Crockett Club president, appoints committee asking New York State to establish a zoological society in New York City.

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**1895** The New York Zoological Society (NYZS) is founded.

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**1896** The New York Aquarium established at Manhattan's Castle Clinton, in present-day Battery Park.

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**1897** A.J. Stone travels across the Arctic for two years on behalf of NYZS and the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), studying the geographic distribution of animals and investigating native people there.

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**1899** The Bronx Zoo (formally, the New York Zoological Park) officially opens under the leadership of founding Director William Hornaday. **IMAGE ABOVE**

# 1900s



**1900** With the backing of NYZS leadership, the Lacey Act passes, prohibiting trade in wildlife, fish, and plants that have been illegally taken, possessed, transported, or sold.

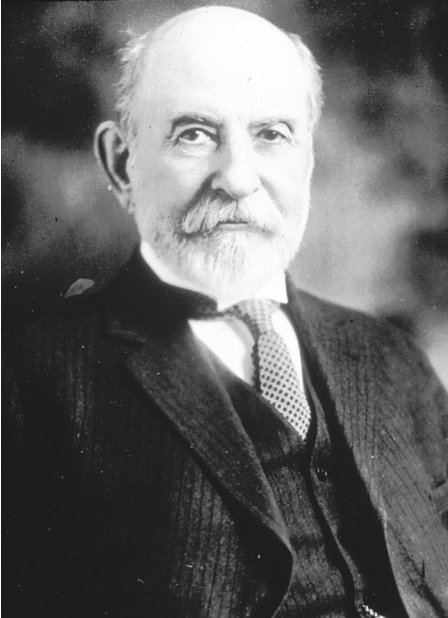
**1901** The Bronx Zoo establishes first veterinary department at a U.S. zoological park.

**1902** NYZS takes over management of New York Aquarium under the direction of Charles Haskins Townsend. **IMAGE BELOW**

**1907** The American Bison Society begins the transfer of Bronx Zoo bison to protected lands in American West to restore decimated populations of this species. **IMAGE LEFT**



# 1910s



**1911** The Fur Seal Treaty of 1911—signed by the U.S., Great Britain, Japan, and Russia, and promoted by William Hornaday's campaigns to protect the northern fur seal—becomes the first international treaty to address wildlife conservation.

**1913** Bronx Zoo director William Hornaday helps write language in the 1913 Tariff Act, prohibiting importation of bird plumage for use in hats. **IMAGE LEFT**

**1916** Bronx Zoo Curator of Birds William Beebe opens a tropical research station in British Guiana (now Guyana) and soon begins NYZS's Department of Tropical Research.

A fully-equipped animal hospital takes the place of the Bronx Zoo's previous makeshift clinic; Dr. Reid Blair serves as the Bronx Zoo's first veterinarian. **IMAGE BELOW**



# 1920s



**1922** Helen Keller visits the Bronx Zoo.

**IMAGE ABOVE**

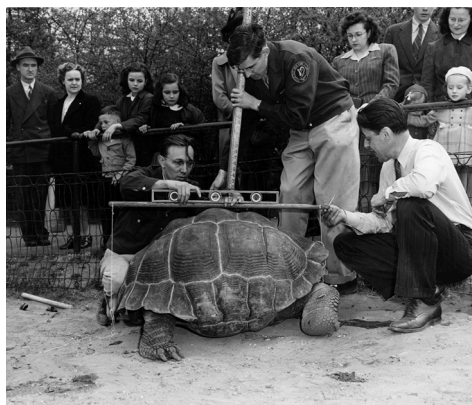
**1924** Congress passes new code of game laws for Alaska as a result of NYZS advocacy.

**1928** In an effort to save the Galápagos tortoise from extinction, Charles Townsend collects different species from Ecuador and transports them to zoos in the U.S., Australia, Bermuda, and Panama. First-generation offspring of those tortoises survive today at the Bronx Zoo's World of Reptiles. **IMAGE RIGHT**

**1929** NYZS passes resolution to oppose introduction of non-native animals in U.S. national parks and urges the National Park Service to prohibit all such introductions.

After more than 10 years of campaigning by William Hornaday and other NYZS officers, the Migratory Bird Conservation Act passes.

The Bronx Zoo opens its first education department, teaching zoology, conservation, and natural history to visitors and students.



# 1930s

**1930** NYZS officers head a campaign against misguided slaughter of thousands of hoofed mammals in Zululand, South Africa to eradicate the tsetse fly.

The NYZS Department of Tropical Research distinguishes itself through the inclusion of several women scientists—including newly hired zoologist Jocelyn Crane—and artists in a field dominated by men. **IMAGE BELOW**

**1931** NYZS analysis of whaling logs illustrates range and seasonal migrations of whales and becomes foundation of later cetacean conservation work. **IMAGE RIGHT**

**1934** Bronx Zoo Curator William Beebe completes record-setting 3,028-foot dive in Bathysphere off Bermuda coast.



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# 1940s



**1941** With the opening of its African Plains exhibit, the Bronx Zoo begins grouping animals by landscape rather than taxonomic order (big cats, primates, etc.), with prey and predator species separated by protective moats.

**IMAGE ABOVE**

The Bronx Zoo Children's Zoo opens. **IMAGE RIGHT**

**1946** NYZS establishes the Jackson Hole Wildlife Park to conserve Rocky Mountain fauna. It becomes part of Grand Teton National Park in 1962.

**1948** The Conservation Foundation is founded to handle NYZS's ever-expanding conservation program. The foundation later fledges as a free-standing entity.

NYZS president Fairfield Osborn writes *Our Plundered Planet*, calling attention to environmental destruction by humankind.



# 1950s

**1952** NYZS supports research by A. Sarker Leopold and Frank Fraser Darling on wildlife conditions in Alaska, focusing on forest destruction, overgrazing, and protection of wolves.

**1956** NYZS supports expedition to southern slope of Alaska's Brooks Range by Olaus and Margaret Murie, joined by a young researcher named George Schaller. They later successfully urge Congress to create Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

**1957** The New York Aquarium opens in Coney Island, moving from original Manhattan location after 16-year hiatus. **IMAGE BELOW**



**1959** Through efforts of NYZS's Carleton Ray, world's first land and sea park is established at Exuma Cays in Bahamas.

Accompanied by his wife Kay (pictured) and supported by NYZS, George Schaller conducts the first ecological study of mountain gorillas.

**IMAGE ABOVE**



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# 1960s



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**1960** NYZS surveys and conservation proposals for James's flamingos lead to establishment of Laguna Colorada Reserve in Bolivia.

**IMAGE ABOVE**

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**1966** NYZS's George Schaller conducts the first ecological and behavioral study of Serengeti lions.

NYZS establishes the Institute of Research in Animal Behavior at Rockefeller University that professionalizes conservation work and gives a home to leading scientists in the field.

NYZS wildlife biologist Thomas Struhsaker begins a groundbreaking study of the primate community within Uganda's Kibale Forest, beginning an association with wildlife conservation and scholarship in Uganda that continues today.

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**1967** NYZS supports Iain Douglas-Hamilton's ecological survey of elephant population in Tanzania's Manyara National Park.

Dian Fossey continues George Schaller's work on mountain gorillas with NYZS support.

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**1969** Conservation work in Argentina between 1960-1969 helps create six coastal reserves, including Punta Tombo and Península Valdés.

The Bronx Zoo opens World of Darkness, the first zoo exhibit to feature nocturnal animals on a reverse light cycle.

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# 1970s



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**1970** A recording of humpback whale communications by NYZS wildlife biologist Roger Payne generates a wave of public interest in these mammals and contributes to the movement to ban commercial whaling.

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**1972** The Bronx Zoo World of Birds opens; revolutionizes how bird species are housed and exhibited. **IMAGE BELOW**



New York City's first native-born gorilla, Patty Cake, is delivered at what will become NYZS's Central Park Zoo. **IMAGE ABOVE**

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**1973** NYZS studies of field ecology and animal behavior help guide management of Kenya's Amboseli protected area.

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**1977** The 43-acre Wild Asia and Monorail exhibit opens at the Bronx Zoo.

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**1979** NYZS-supported Amy Vedder and Bill Weber establish world's first wild gorilla tourism program in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park.

# 1980s



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**1980** NYZS wildlife biologist George Schaller begins a long-term study of giant pandas in China's Wolong Natural Reserve.

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**1981** The Bronx Zoo conducts the first cross-species embryo transfer from gaur to domestic cow.

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**1984** NYZS helps create world's first jaguar reserve, in Belize's Cockscomb Basin.

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**1985** NYZS establishes the Wildlife Health Center, one of the first modern zoo hospitals, at Bronx Zoo.

JungleWorld opens at the Bronx Zoo.



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**1987** NYZS design and animal departments work on master plan for the Kenya Wildlife Service Nairobi Safari Walk. [IMAGE ABOVE](#)

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**1988** Under contract to NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, NYZS assumes management of (and redesigns) New York City zoos. Central Park Zoo becomes one of NYZS's wildlife parks in 1988, followed by Queens Zoo in 1992 and Prospect Park Zoo in 1993.

[IMAGE BELOW LEFT](#)

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**1989** NYZS elephant research and advocacy contributes to an international ban on ivory trade.

In heart of Brazil's flooded forest, NYZS launches Mamirauá Lake Ecological Station, which becomes Brazil's first Sustainable Development Reserve.

NYZS initiates first ever zoo-based field veterinary program.

# 1990s



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**1992** Work by NYZS staff helps establish the 5,300-square-mile Okapi Wildlife Reserve in present-day Democratic Republic of Congo. The okapis at WCS's Bronx Zoo today help to raise awareness of this unique and endangered species. **IMAGE BELOW RIGHT**

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**1993** Under the leadership of President and General Director William Conway, the New York Zoological Society changes its name to the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

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**1995** WCS leads the effort to establish Madidi National Park and Kaa-lya del Gran Chaco National Park in Bolivia. The latter is the first such area in the Americas initiated by an Indigenous group.

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**1998** WCS becomes one of the first conservation groups to work in Cambodia after fall of Khmer Rouge. **IMAGE ABOVE**

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**1999** WCS wildlife biologist Mike Fay begins 1,200-mile megatranssect walk across Congo Basin.

The Bronx Zoo's Congo Gorilla Forest exhibit opens, raising an average of more than \$750,000 in each successive year for Central African conservation.

WCS plays a pivotal role in documenting that West Nile Virus has spread to the Western Hemisphere for the first time.



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# 2000s

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**2002** The Gabon government establishes 13 national parks in the wake of Mike Fay's 1999 megatransect.

**2003** The Bronx Zoo opens Tiger Mountain, the 7th Bronx Zoo exhibit to receive the AZA's award for exhibit excellence—more than any other AZA member zoo. **IMAGE BELOW**



**2004** WCS establishes One World-One Health to prevent disease transmission at the interface of wildlife, livestock, and human communities.

With land donated by Goldman, Sachs & Co., WCS shepherds creation of 1,160-square-mile Karukinka Reserve in Chile.

**2007** WCS-led conservation science helps define 6-fold expansion of Canada's Nahanni National Park, protecting wilderness 3.5 times the size of Yellowstone.

Seima forests are declared a protected area, bringing the number of new PAs created as a result of WCS's Cambodia work to four.

**IMAGE RIGHT**

WCS surveys reveal that the world's 2nd largest annual land migration of wildlife survived decades of war in southern Sudan.

**2008** WCS efforts lead to creation of the first federally-designated U.S. wildlife migration corridor, the Path of the Pronghorn, to protect the longest land migration in the lower 48.

WCS identifies 125,000 western lowland gorillas, more than half of the world's population, in the Republic of Congo.

Madagascar! exhibit opens in Bronx Zoo's former Lion House.

WCS work in Patagonia leads to the creation of the Golfo San Jorge marine protected area, a key habitat for Magellanic penguins.

WCS launches a partnership with the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute to conduct a national survey of elephants and frame a national strategy for their conservation.

WCS conservationists Brian D. Smith, Rubaiyat Mansur Mowgli, Samantha Strindberg, and others identify nearly 6,000 Irrawaddy river dolphins, among world's rarest species of marine mammal, in the freshwater mangrove system of Bangladesh.

**2009** WCS helps establish Band-e-Amir, Afghanistan's first national park.

WCS's Center for Global Conservation, HQ for its field programs, opens at the Bronx Zoo.



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# 2010s

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**2010** A twenty-year conservation effort by WCS-India and local partners in the Malenad landscape secures the world's largest tiger population.

A decade's work results in U.S. Postal Service stamp benefiting the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

**2012** WCS begins effort to protect 25 most endangered turtle and tortoise species through propagation efforts at Bronx Zoo.



2,000 Kihansi spray toads bred at the Bronx & Toledo Zoos are released into their former Tanzania habitat after going extinct in wild. **IMAGE LEFT**

**2013** WCS establishes the 96 Elephants campaign to stop the killing, trafficking, and demand for elephant ivory.

WCS and partners successfully press for protection of 7 species of sharks and rays at meeting of CITES.

**2014** The Komodo Dragon and Aldabra Tortoise exhibits open at the Bronx Zoo.

WCS's 96 Elephants campaign succeeds in its efforts to pass state ivory bans in NY and NJ.

**2015** WCS's New York Aquarium staff discover a nursery for sand tiger sharks in the waters of Long Island's Great South Bay.

Amur tigers are confirmed by WCS to be breeding in Russia's Primorskii Krai, one of the last strongholds for this species.

**2016** WCS advocacy is critical to the designation of the American bison as the national mammal of the United States.

WCS partners with The Nature Conservancy and the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis to create the Science for Nature and People Partnership (SNAPP).

**2016** After a decade working with the Thai government, WCS identifies Huai Kha Khaeng (HKK) as the only location in SE Asia where tiger numbers are increasing.

**2017** Animal Planet's television docu-series THE ZOO premieres, taking visitors behind the scenes at the Bronx Zoo.

The Burmese star tortoise is brought back from the brink of extinction thanks to captive breeding in Myanmar led by WCS.

Six purebred bison calves that came to the Bronx Zoo as a historic gift from the Assiniboine and Sioux tribes are born into an 8-animal herd.

**2018** WCS Bolivia concludes its Identidad Madidi expedition, adding 1,382 plants and animals to Madidi National Park's species lists.

WCS's New York Aquarium opens *Donald Zucker and Barbara Hrbek Zucker Ocean Wonders: Sharks!* exhibit.

Colombia's Serranía del Chiribiquete becomes the world's largest national park protecting a tropical rainforest, thanks in part to a public-private partnership that WCS joined in.

**2019** WCS scientists work with the Afghanistan government to establish the Bamyán Plateau Protected Area.

A Chelonian Propagation Center is constructed at Bronx Zoo to breed critically endangered turtles for reintroduction.

WCS works with the Belize government to nearly triple the area under its strictly protected waters, more than doubling the area of its no-take zones.

# 2020s

**2020** WCS Zoos and Aquarium close to guests for several months due to the COVID-19 pandemic; Bronx Zoo assists community serving as staging location for emergency response vehicles and as COVID-19 testing site for nearby hospital.

In response to COVID-19, WCS calls for ending commercial trade in birds and mammals for human consumption and closing such markets, and works closely with many governments to implement this change.

At the Bronx Zoo, five tigers and three African lions test positive for COVID-19; information learned is shared with zoo and aquarium, wildlife, and human health communities to better understand the virus.

WCS celebrates its 125th Anniversary.

## THIS PAGE

The Niassa National Reserve, where WCS has been working in partnership with the Mozambique government to protect a core population of elephants.

## FRONT COVER

WCS has worked with Jaguars for more than three decades since helping to establish the world's first jaguar reserve in Belize's Cockscomb Basin.

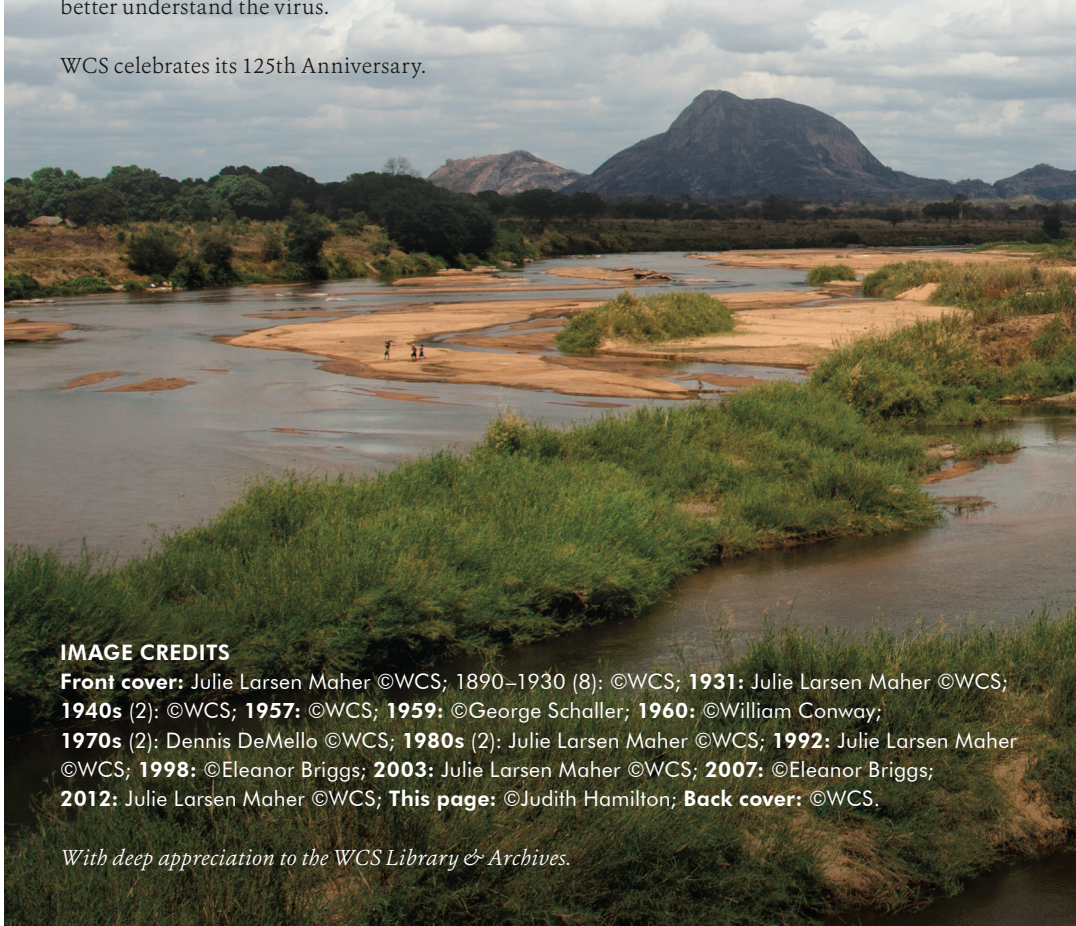
## BACK COVER

Explorer and Bronx Zoo founding bird curator William Beebe atop the Bathysphere submersible in which he completed his 1934 record-breaking dive.

## IMAGE CREDITS

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## Mission

WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature.

## Vision

WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth.

Discover  
Protect  
Inspire



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