



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**May 15, 2017****MEDIA CONTACT:**

Bill Gersonde
Director, Abilene Zoo
Office: 325-676-6590
E-mail: bill.gersonde@abilenetx.com

Bill Gersonde, Executive Director Abilene Zoo, Statement:

At approximately 8:10 a.m. this morning animal care staff discovered a two-year-old jaguar had escaped its enclosure and was lying on top of the adjacent spider monkey exhibit. Staff called an animal escape code over the zoo radios with both veterinary staff members and members of the zoo firearms team responding. The animal was darted by the zoo veterinarian at approximately 8:19 a.m. and was secured in its exhibit at approximately 8:50 a.m.

The jaguar is currently recovering from the anesthesia and appears fine. The second jaguar was secured in a holding area during the escape and is also fine. Unfortunately a spider monkey, who was in its exhibit, sustained serious injuries and had to be euthanized.

At this time it is unclear how the animal escaped as all doors to the exhibit and holding area were secure. The animals have been in this exhibit for over a year with no incidents. An investigation into how the animal was able to escape will begin immediately.

The zoo staff is to be commended on their response to this emergency. Staff routinely drills for a variety of emergencies and that practice contributed to the smooth and professional recapture of the jaguar.

About the Abilene Zoo:

Since its founding in 1966, the Abilene Zoo has stood as a place of learning and adventure, where visitors make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife. Situated on 16 acres in the award-winning Grover Nelson Park, the zoo provides a special encounter in a lushly landscaped walkable setting with more than 1000 animals of 270 species from around the globe. The zoo is open 7 days a week (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Last admittance is 4 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. www.abilenezoo.org. 325-676-6085.