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Zoo staff mourns loss of elder maned wolf



ABILENE, TEXAS – The Abilene Zoo’s adult maned wolf has died after a life helping to ensure the survival of his threatened species.

Named Cerrado to reflect the animal’s South American heritage, the canid had shown signs of deteriorating health recently and was being treated to decrease suspected inflammation in the brain.

“Cerrado was nearing 12 years old – geriatric status for his species – so, we’ve been on alert,” explained the zoo’s veterinarian, Dr. Stephanie Carle. “The care regimen appeared to be effective for several weeks, but last week, his condition worsened.”

When nothing medically could be done to ease apparent discomfort, staff made the decision to euthanize the animal, Carle said.

When any zoo animal dies, veterinarian staff performs a necropsy to determine the cause, as well as to provide data for medical research about maladies that affect endangered species.

Maned wolves are among the Abilene Zoo’s 38 Species Survival Plans overseen through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. With SSPs, threatened or endangered animals are paired to produce offspring that help ensure genetic variance and the creatures’ continued existence.

Cerrado arrived in Abilene in the winter of 2008 from the Wild Canid Survival and Research Center in Eureka, Missouri, where he was born in 2004. He was paired with his mate Rosita in 2010, and the couple successfully produced two litters. He also was the grandparent of four pups born last year.

Maned wolves’ native range extends from the Amazon basin rain forest in Brazil to Paraguay and northern Argentina. Wolf in name only, the animal’s characteristics – such as a shaggy, white tipped tail, long legs and large ears – have earned it the nickname “Fox on stilts.”

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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 serves more than 225,000 visitors per year, and offers VIP behind-the-scenes tours, as well as popular classes, camps and after-hours family events. 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.