



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Spring Break Sets Attendance Record

Out-of-town guests comprise 75 percent of gate

ABILENE, TEXAS – The Abilene Zoo was hopping during spring break 2017, setting an attendance record that topples totals from at least a decade.

More than 24,600 people visited the zoo between Saturday, March 11, and Sunday, March 19. Abilene Zoo members accounted for 2,950 of those visitors, and the busiest day of the week was Wednesday, March 15, when 3,836 people visited the zoo – a one day attendance record during spring break. The zoo entertained nearly 20,000 guests during spring break 2016.

Zip codes collected at the gate show almost 75 percent of spring break visitors came from homes outside Taylor County. Three percent of those lived outside Texas, with Abilene entertaining travelers from Yellowstone, Wyoming, as well as guests from Michigan and Alaska.

“With the new Giraffe Safari exhibit opening at the end of April of 2016, this was the first year spring breakers could enjoy our giraffe herd and the Twiga Terrace,” said Marketing Coordinator Kelly Thompson. “We also know opening the swan boat rentals generated a lot of excitement among the guests, as well.”

2017 Spring Break:

- **Total Guests: 24,604**
- **Out-of-State Visitors: 3%**
- **Guests From Outside Taylor County: 72%**
- **Swan Boat Riders: 1809**

More than 1,800 people paddled around Nelson Lake in the new swan boats. Even the wind cooperated. The swan boats can't go out during winds of more than 15 miles per hour and were grounded for only two days during their opening week. Paddleboat rentals are available on weekends from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and will be open daily starting April 1.

“We put on a good show. The zoo keepers and education staff offered exceptional programming every day,” Thompson said. “Guests could enjoy hands-on animal encounters and daily zoo keeper chats about the zoo’s colorful residents.”

For information about upcoming fun at the Abilene Zoo, check out events on the new downloadable calendar at www.abilenezoo.org.

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 has more than 1000 animals of 270 species from around the globe. The zoo is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Last admittance is 4 p.m. The zoo is open until 9 p.m. each Thursday all summer, with last admittance at 8 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. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Mission Statement: *The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.*