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## Zoo Ave: First Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries Accreditation in Costa Rica

**'Zoo Ave is clearly an outstanding leader for all of Central America in wildlife rehabilitation and education programs,' says GFAS director.**

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is honored to announce that Zoo Ave (Fundación Restauración de la Naturaleza) in San Jose, Costa Rica has achieved GFAS Accreditation.

"Zoo Ave is already a recognized leader in Costa Rica and beyond on wildlife rehabilitation and public education programs," said Patty Finch, executive director of GFAS. "We are pleased to validate their excellence through our rigorous accreditation program. When I visited Zoo Ave, I was especially impressed with the strong messaging against the purchase of wildlife as pets, the excellent rehabilitation and release program and facilities, and the little turn-over amongst staff...which speaks volumes for the quality of the program and the leadership team."

The accreditation means Zoo Ave meets the comprehensive and rigorous definition of a true rescue center/sanctuary and is providing humane and responsible care of the animals, meeting thorough and peer-reviewed standards for operations, administration and veterinary care established by GFAS, which is the only globally recognized organization providing standards for identifying legitimate animal sanctuaries and rescue centers. The accreditation status also provides a clear and trusted means for the public, donors worldwide and government agencies to recognize Zoo Ave as a solid and sustainable organization which deserves worldwide support.

"Achieving this certification is not easy, and thanks to the daily work of our staff we are a proud part of the conservation efforts in Costa Rica. We work to improve every day and to comply with all the international standards that GFAS requires. This certification is a great accomplishment for Zoo Ave," states Guisella Arroyo, director of Zoo Ave.

Zoo Ave has been working with Humane Society International (HSI) for many years, and with support from HSI and funds from the U.S. State Department, they are outfitting a new state-of-the-art facility designed specifically for the rescue center. This building, mainly funded by Zoo Ave itself, will house the animal reception area, the clinic, a neonatal area, an x-ray room, and several quarantine and rehabilitation enclosures for mammals. The State Department funding is being used to properly equip the

new facilities, including the purchase of a large x-ray machine. New protocols to standardize care, policies and procedures were also developed, and all staff members were then trained on the protocols. “HSI is very proud that Zoo Ave has been approved for GFAS Accreditation. Their hard work has paid off with such recognition and their new facilities will help them comply even better with the standards. HSI would like to congratulate them for their achievements and urge them to continue working towards meeting and raising the bar on international standards with GFAS,” says Jennifer Dinsmore, program supervisor for HSI.

Zoo Ave was founded in 1990 and receives on average between 900 and 1,200 animals per year at the rescue center in La Alajuela, outside San Jose. It has two additional properties, staffed by permanent employees, which are used for pre-release and release phases. Those sites are in Golfito and Guanacaste.

“Zoo Ave is the perfect combination of outstanding facilities for sanctuary, rescue, rehabilitation and release,” states Finch. “No matter the need of any individual animal, Zoo Ave can provide the solution, using very detailed animal intake, biosafety, rehabilitation and quarantine protocols. I hope this GFAS Accreditation will bring in much well-deserved ongoing support.” Donations can be made by contacting [zooave@hotmail.com](mailto:zooave@hotmail.com).

#### **About Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries**

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the sole purpose of strengthening and supporting the work of animal sanctuaries in the United States and abroad. The goal of GFAS in working with and assisting sanctuaries is to ensure they are supported, honored, recognized and rewarded for meeting important criteria in providing care to the animals in residence. GFAS was founded in 2007 by animal protection leaders from a number of different organizations in response to virtually unchecked and hidden animal exploitation of animals for human entertainment and financial profit. These founding leaders sit on the GFAS Board of Directors to continue guiding the organization’s work in a collaborative manner. They represent top leadership from Born Free USA, The Humane Society of the United States, World Society for the Protection of Animals, American Anti-Vivisection Society, National Anti-Vivisection Society, and International Fund for Animal Welfare. [www.sanctuaryfederation.org](http://www.sanctuaryfederation.org).

#### **About Zoo Ave**

La Fundacion Restauracion de la Naturaleza (The Nature Restoration Foundation) is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental conservation through environmental education projects, investigation, habitat protection, the rescue of wild animals and re-establishment of wild populations. The Foundation works to reintroduce native species that have disappeared in parts of the country due to human interference, with the goal of protecting and restoring Costa Rica’s biodiversity. The Foundation has several centers, including the wildlife rescue center and the rehabilitation and release sites in Golfito and Guanacaste, which are all closed to the public. Its separate exhibit area next to the rescue center is open to the public and is what helps finance all species protection and environmental education programs. For more information please visit: [www.zooavecostarica.org](http://www.zooavecostarica.org).