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New York City's *Central Park Zoo*

The Central Park Zoo is a small 6.5-acre zoo located at the southeast corner of Central Park in New York City. It is part of an integrated system of four zoos and the New York Aquarium managed by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). In conjunction with the Central Park Zoo's operations, the WCS offers children's educational programs, is engaged in restoration of endangered species populations, and reaches out to the local community through volunteer programs.

Its precursor, a menagerie, was founded in 1864, becoming the first public zoo to open in New York. The present facility first opened as a city zoo on December 2, 1934, and was part of a larger revitalization program of city parks, playgrounds and zoos initiated in 1934 by New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) commissioner Robert Moses. It was built, in large part, through Civil Works Administration and Works Project Administration (WPA) labor and funding. The Children's Zoo opened to the north of the main zoo in 1960, using funding from a donation by Senator Herbert Lehman and his wife Edith.

After 49 years of operation as a city zoo run by NYC Parks, Central Park Zoo closed in 1983 for reconstruction. The closure was part of a five-year, \$35 million renovation program, that completely replaced the zoo's cages with naturalistic environments. It was rededicated on August 8, 1988, as part of a system of four zoos and one aquarium managed by the WCS, all of which are accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. *[Wikipedia]*

