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## Zoo announces passing of male polar bear

Rochester, NY - January 11, 2016 - Monroe County's Seneca Park Zoo regrettably announces the passing of Zero, the Zoo's 26-year-old male polar bear. Zero was born at Milwaukee County Zoo in 1989 and came to Seneca Park Zoo in 2010, where he joined Aurora, a female polar bear also born in 1989.

"The loss of one of our most iconic animals is difficult for the entire Zoo family," said Larry Sorel, County Zoo Director. "Zero was a truly quintessential part of the Zoo's visitor experience and conservation mission, and he will not be forgotten."

Based on necropsy findings, the provisional diagnosis for Zero's disorder is lymphoma, a form of cancer. Histopathology results will be available in 6 weeks. "Given that Zero was one of the nine oldest male polar bears in Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)-accredited institutions," the Zoo's Director of Animal Health and Conservation Dr. Jeff Wyatt noted, "a cause of death correlated with advanced age was high on the differential list."

During their time together at the Zoo, Zero and Aurora were crucial to the advancement of assisted reproduction strategies that have been adopted at other zoos accredited by the AZA around the country. While he did not produce any offspring, Zero's contributions to this field will support the future of the Polar Bear Species Survival Plan (SSP), a management program that maintains a healthy and sustainable population of species in conservation care.

Potential future plans to bring another male polar bear to the Zoo will be determined in consultation with the AZA SSP.

Pamela Reed Sanchez, Executive Director of the Zoo Society, highlighted its partnership with the conservation organization Polar Bears International as a way to commemorate Zero's life. "We are dedicated to conserving this threatened species through educational programs, fundraising and research," she said. "Our message is that individuals can make a difference for polar bears, just as Zero touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of visitors over the years."

You can honor Zero's memory by making a donation to Polar Bears International at [www.polarbearsinternational.org](http://www.polarbearsinternational.org).

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Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.