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**NEWS
RELEASE**

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El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens to Celebrate International Vulture Awareness Day

Community Invited to Meet Dexter and Learn About Vulture Conservation

EL PASO, Texas—The El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens invites the community to celebrate International Vulture Awareness Day and learn why these remarkable birds are essential to healthy ecosystems at 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 5.

Zookeepers and education staff will host a special event near the turkey vulture exhibit featuring animal enrichment, games, hands-on activities and an educational chat about vulture conservation.

While vultures may not be the most glamorous birds, they play a critical role in keeping ecosystems healthy by consuming animal carcasses and organic waste, helping prevent the spread of diseases that can threaten wildlife, livestock and people.

Visitors will also meet Dexter, a two-year-old female turkey vulture that arrived at the Zoo in 2025 through its Raptor Rehabilitation Program. Dexter suffered a broken right wing and was deemed non-releasable because she is unable to fly at the level needed to survive in the wild. Her name was inspired by the television series *Dexter*.

“Wildlife faces so many challenges out there, many of them due to human impact. This is one way we can help make up for that,” said El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens Chief Veterinarian Vikki Milne. “It’s incredibly rewarding when these birds get another chance at life in the wild.”

Vultures face growing threats from poisoning, illegal killing, electrocution and collisions with power lines. International Vulture Awareness Day brings attention to these challenges while highlighting the importance of protecting vultures and the ecosystems that depend on them.

Raptor Rehabilitation Program

The Zoo’s Raptor Rehabilitation Program cares for more than 100 wild raptors each year, providing veterinary treatment and rehabilitation to injured birds. The program works with wildlife agencies, El Paso Animal Services and rescue partners throughout West Texas and southern New Mexico.

Birds that are able to return to the wild are transferred to regional partners for additional flight conditioning. Non-releasable birds, like Dexter, may become conservation ambassadors, helping educate the public about wildlife and the importance of protecting their species.

For more information about the El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens and its conservation efforts, visit www.ElPasoZoo.org.

About The El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens

The El Paso Zoo & Botanical Gardens is home to hundreds of animals representing species from around the world and is committed to conservation, education, exceptional animal care and creating meaningful experiences that inspire visitors of all ages.

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Good Governance
Leadership that is responsive + reliable

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