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## Wildly Popular “Quit Bugging Me” Valentine’s Day Event Returns to the El Paso Zoo

**EL PASO, Texas** — The El Paso Zoo is bringing back the annual “Quit Bugging Me” Valentine’s Day event with even more of its animals involved in the fun.

Starting February 1 through February 12, people will have a chance to name a cockroach after an ex or someone who’s been “bugging” them on the Zoo’s website, and are encouraged, but not required, to donate while submitting a name.

Zookeepers will feed Madagascar hissing cockroaches to different zoo animals such as meerkats, birds, and primates throughout Valentine’s Day weekend, hoping to give everyone a shot at closure – with a dash of pettiness.

Donations collected will remain at the zoo for conservation efforts and to further the zoo’s mission statement. As a special incentive, El Paso Zoo Director Joe Montisano will eat a cockroach for every \$1,000 dollars raised, as he did last year.

In 2020, the zoo received more than 20,000 name submissions from more than 97 countries and more than \$12,000 in donations.

“Insects are actually the perfect protein and have been consumed by humans since the beginning of time, and they are a special treat for our animal friends,” said El Paso Zoo Director Joe Montisano. “The fact that you can assign a name of a spouse, boss or really anything that is bugging you is just added cathartic release. I know I will be purchasing a few for COVID, face masks, and maybe even an ex-wife or two!”

The Madagascar hissing cockroaches that will be fed to the animals are ethically frozen and are given to them regularly. The Zoo purchases 1.5 million insects annually to feed to zoo animals.

Due to the pandemic, the feedings will be streamed online on the El Paso Zoo Facebook page and at the Zoo’s amphitheater with limited capacity on Saturday, February 13, and on Valentine’s Day, Sunday, February 14.

For more information and to submit a name, visit the El Paso Zoo at [www.elpasozoo.org](http://www.elpasozoo.org).

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