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Ingrid Anne Russell
Curator of Animal Collections
San Francisco Zoo & Gardens



INDUSTRY

- Zoos & Aquariums

LOCATION

- San Francisco, California

CHALLENGES

- Fragile, historical animal records on paper with no duplicate copies
- Records management requirements to stay accredited with the AZA

BMI PRODUCTS & SERVICES

- Paper digitization services completed at BMI's Sunnyvale scanning bureau
- Digital records delivered to San Francisco Zoo and Gardens via CD/DVD

BENEFITS

- On time delivery to meet accreditation requirements with AZA
- Clear, easy to read digital replicas of originals

Case Study



Overview

San Francisco Zoo & Gardens is home to more than 2,000 exotic, endangered, and rescued animals in 100 acres of majestic and peaceful gardens located directly on the Pacific Coast. The mission of San Francisco Zoo & Gardens is to connect people with wildlife, inspire caring for nature, and advance conservation action.

San Francisco Zoo & Gardens is proud to be accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Accreditation with AZA comes with many responsibilities, including proper records management. Ingrid Russell, Curator of Animal Collections, states, "We're required to properly store animal records and share them with fellow AZA accredited zoos. That drove a paper digitization initiative. After exploring several options, we selected BMI Imaging."

Records Management at the Zoo: A Back-Office Process You Don't See Up Close as a Visitor

"As an accredited member of the AZA, San Francisco Zoo & Gardens doesn't operate in a bubble," said Russell. The AZA is made up of more than 230 institutions and provides strict oversight to ensure these institutions meet the highest standards in animal care.

Russell continues, "Every five years, we go through a rigorous inspection process by AZA. Part of this process is the inspection of our records management procedures." The AZA requires animal records to be properly replicated off-site and backed up in the event of a recovery requirement. Proper records management is important to meet regulations for permitting and abiding by state and federal regulations.

There are many reasons to ensure that animal records across AZA zoos are shared and available. One of the primary reasons is to genetically track each species to ensure a viable, healthy gene pool. Secondly, an animal can be compared to other species in different zoos to monitor health (e.g. to determine if a particular animal is overweight). Finally, proper animal records are vital to managing the zoo's endangered species and understanding the genetic family tree back to the wild.

Digital Records Conversion Project

Russell states, "Today's records are shared digitally through a modern, cloud-based application that many AZA accredited institutions use, called Species360. The paper scanning initiatives I had with BMI were related to scanning historical animal records on file at the Zoo."

The first project BMI took on was the scanning of historical animal records

that date back to 1929. Many of the records were fragile but contain important pieces of history that have never been digitally duplicated. "Our goal was to protect these fragile originals, digitally replicating them so that we don't have to handle the actual paper anymore. These early records contained basic Zoo inventory information such as what species came into the zoo, where they came from, and when animals left the Zoo."

The next project involved scanning hard copy files to provide more efficient access. Russell said, "There are specimen reports, animal permits, transaction paperwork, and other important information that has built up in my filing cabinet. It was time to digitally convert all of this information."

BMI delivered all digital documents back via CD/DVD so that San Francisco Zoo & Gardens could load the digital documents onto a network drive and share appropriate records with Species360.

"Digitizing these records has helped keep us in compliance with AZA record management and sharing directives," says Russell. "It also ensures that these records are properly backed up and replicated so that no on-site disaster can permanently destroy them."

Conclusion

Russell concludes, "We've been working with BMI Imaging for a few years now and on several projects. I had no experience digitally scanning boxes of files before and did not know exactly what to ask for. The work they've done for us has been top notch and the digital files are easy to read. We're very happy with the results."