

BY: Senator RIVERA

CELEBRATING the 125th Anniversary of the Bronx Zoo, an iconic New York landmark that has become a cultural and educational leader, a conservation giant, and a gateway to nature, for more than half a billion visitors

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend the anniversary of an institution that has a profound impact in its community; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Bronx Zoo on Friday, November 8, 2024; and

WHEREAS, In 1898, the City of New York allotted 265 acres of Bronx Park to the New York Zoological Society to build a park aimed at preserving native animals and promoting zoology; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Zoo (formally the New York Zoological Park) first opened its doors on November 8, 1899, and has dedicated the last 125 years to educating millions about animals and the places they live while working to protect wildlife and nature around the world; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Zoo has remained as the largest urban zoo in the United States and is home to 4,000 animals representing more than 650 species; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Zoo's long standing conservation efforts have had a number of firsts beginning in the early 1900s: in 1901, the Bronx Zoo became a pioneer in zoological health care by opening the first veterinary department at a U.S. zoological park; in 1903, the Bronx Zoo became the first zoo to exhibit snow leopards and the zoo has had 80 snow leopard births since, more than any other zoo in North America; in 1905, the American Bison Society was founded at the Bronx Zoo and efforts began to breed bison at the zoo and reintroduce them to the wild, preventing the species extinction; in 1929, the Bronx Zoo opened its first wildlife education department teaching zoology, conservation, and natural history to visitors and students; in 1941, the Bronx Zoo opened African Plains, the first ecologically representative open habitat exhibit in North America; and in 1946, the Bronx Zoo became the first U.S. zoo to exhibit Pere David's deer and began a breeding program for the species which was extinct in the wild, ultimately these captive breeding and reintroduction programs saved this species from total extinction; and

WHEREAS, In the late 20th century, the Bronx Zoo continued its efforts and in 1963, the Wildlife Conservation Society's Exhibition and Graphic Arts Department became the first of its kind in any zoo or aquarium to uniquely combine architecture, landscape and exhibit design,

and interpretation to create exhibits that allow visitors to observe animals behaving as they would in nature; in 1985, the Bronx Zoo's Wildlife Health Center opened as a state-of-the-art teaching and research hospital for zoological medicine, which also happened in the same year of the first-ever successful zoo birth of a false gharial (A.K.A. Sunda gharial), also taking place at the Bronx Zoo; and

WHEREAS, Now, in the 21st century, the Bronx Zoo continues to reach milestones: in 2007, beavers began to return to the Bronx River near the Bronx Zoo for the first time in over 200 years due to the river restoration efforts of the Bronx Zoo and Bronx River Alliance; by 2012 through a collaborative effort, the Bronx Zoo reintroduced over 10,000 captive bred Kihansi spray toads to their native habitat in Tanzania after the species went extinct in the wild a few years earlier due to placement of a hydroelectric dam; in 2012, the first genetically-pure bison born by embryo transfer was born at the Bronx Zoo; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Zoo is the largest youth employer in the borough of the Bronx, providing valuable opportunities while helping to transform lives in one of the most underserved communities; internship opportunities provided by the Wildlife Conservation Society include animal care, science research, youth advocacy, human resources, science education, exhibits and graphic arts, veterinary and vet tech student clinical externships, and library and archives with over 300 internships offered each year; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Zoo remains steadfast in its commitment to community service, actively engaging with organizations and agencies through partnerships and extending inclusive access to all New Yorkers; this commitment is demonstrated by providing free or pay-what-you-wish admission on designated days, including Free Wednesdays, to accommodate the diverse needs of the city's residents, including New York City school groups, college students, and underserved youth and seniors; and

WHEREAS, On April 18, 2024, the Bronx Zoo marked 125 years with the opening of its Animal Chronicles Exhibit, a new immersive exhibit that leads visitors through a quarter-mile ADA-accessible walking trail that includes 68 eco-sculptures displayed across 13 scenes; the exhibit will be open to the public on April 20, 2024, and each scene tells the tale of how the zoo became a leader in caring for animals, saving endangered species, designing exhibits that connect people to nature, and protecting wildlife around the world; and

WHEREAS, The Bronx Zoo is a world-renowned leader in the areas of animal welfare, husbandry, veterinary care, education, science, and conservation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Bronx Zoo, an iconic New York landmark that has become a cultural and educational leader, a conservation giant, and a gateway to nature, for more than half a billion visitors, on November 8, 2024; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be

transmitted to the Bronx Zoo.