



About Audubon Nature Institute

Audubon Nature Institute is a New Orleans not-for-profit operating a family of nature-themed parks and attractions. With a rich and storied history woven into the very fabric of New Orleans, Audubon Nature Institute consistently earns national and international recognition as a leader among zoos and aquariums.

The story of Audubon Nature Institute reaches all the way back to 19th century New Orleans. In uptown New Orleans, **Audubon Park** has been a favorite gathering spot for local citizens for more than a hundred years. Since the 1884 World Exposition, the park has also been home to a collection of animals. This collection earned the name “Audubon Zoo” in the early 20th century.

The Zoo fell on tough times mid-century, and after national media labeled **Audubon Zoo** an “animal ghetto” in the 1960s, New Orleanians campaigned to dramatically improve conditions at the Zoo, transforming it into the widely acclaimed “Urban Eden” it is today. Audubon Nature Institute evolved from the “Friends of the Zoo” group formed as part of that initial effort.

The astounding transformation of Audubon Zoo led to Audubon Nature Institute’s expansion in the 1990s with the construction of **Audubon Aquarium of the Americas** and **Woldenberg Riverfront Park**. Overwhelming voter support for the project meant there would be unprecedented access to the Mississippi River when the aquarium and park opened; for the first time people could see the mighty Mississippi and marvel at the wonders of the sea at the Aquarium.

Freeport McMoRan-Audubon Species Survival Center opened across the river in 1993, followed by **Audubon Center for Research of Endangered Species** in 1996. These facilities pioneer innovative scientific breakthroughs in the field of assisted reproduction for endangered species. These efforts, in conjunction with a host of academic institutions worldwide, help to boost populations of disappearing animals with cutting-edge technology.

Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, located in New Orleans East, merged into the Audubon family in 1994; it operated programs at **Audubon Wildness Park**, located adjacent to the Species Survival Center. The Nature Center is currently closed due to extensive damage from Hurricane Katrina.

Entergy IMAX[®] Theatre followed in 1996, bringing giant-screen, high-definition 3D films to the area for the first time. Phase II of the Aquarium, including a changing exhibits gallery, opened in 1996.

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Audubon Insectarium is the 10th and newest facility of Audubon Nature Institute. Located in the historic U.S. Custom House on Canal Street, it is the largest museum in the United States dedicated to insects and their relatives.

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