WELCOME TO ZOONOMICS NEWS!

This newsletter, compiled by the Center for Zoonomics based at Zoo New England, is your place to share and learn about the exciting work zoos and aquariums are doing in the fields of genetics and biobanking.

To keep this newsletter as dynamic and relevant as possible, **we'd love to hear from you!** Whether you're working on a new project, have a recent publication to share, or want to highlight upcoming events or activities, let us know. We're here to celebrate and share your contributions with the community. Send your updates and questions to zoonomics@zoonewengland.org.

Please feel free to share this newsletter with colleagues and friends who may be interested. They can join the listserv here.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Webinar April 9: *ZooMu in Action: Practical Pathways to Make your Biorepository Findable and Usable*

Do you manage biological collections and data? Heard terms like "GBIF" or "metadata standards" but not sure how to actually start using them? Join this 1-hour webinar hosted by the ZooMu Cyberinfrastructure Working Group on Thursday April 9 from 12 – 1 PM EDT to see the practical steps zoos are taking to make their collections more accessible, findable, and impactful for research and conservation. The ZooMu Network helps zoos, aquariums, and museums make collections findable, usable, and connected (zoomunetwork.org). All are welcome to join and can register here.

Call for Abstracts Due May 8: Species360 Conservation Science Alliance Research Symposium

Species360 will host its 3rd Annual Conservation Science Alliance Research Symposium on July 29 from 10 – 12 pm EDT. This free, online event will showcase research using data from the Species360 Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS) as a primary resource. Abstract submissions are due May 8, 2026. For more information, visit the Species360 website here.

UPDATES

Biobanking Session Held at 2026 AZA Mid-Year Meeting

The Biobanking Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) and the AZA Molecular Data for Population Management SAG co-hosted a half-day biobanking session at the AZA Mid-Year Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia on Sunday, March 22, 2026. 40 participants from zoos, aquariums, and partner organizations came together to build a shared understanding of the scope, impact, and vision of biobanking across the zoological community. Through collaborative discussions and break-out groups, attendees explored common barriers, desired outcomes, and actionable solutions to improve zoo biobanking. To learn more, contact Danica Wolfe at zoonomics@zoonewengland.org.

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance Collaborates on Vietnam National Biobanking Strategic Planning Workshop

San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, the IUCN SSC Center for Species Survival Biodiversity Banking, and the Institute for Ecology and Conservation of Nature co-hosted the Vietnam National Biobanking Strategic Planning Workshop from March 16-17, 2026, at Vinh University. The workshop convened 80 stakeholders from international experts and Vietnam's conservation community to review a draft national biobanking strategy and announce the Vietnam National Biobanking Network. The workshop featured talks on biobanking techniques, capacity building, and NGO perspectives, and is advancing collaborations and early-stage sample collection across Vietnam.

ZooMu Network Hosts Human Capacity Workshop

The ZooMu Network hosted a 4-day workshop at Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, LA from January 19-22, 2026. This workshop focused on human capacity in zoo biobanking and is one of three topic-focused workshops under the NSF funded Zoo-Museum Research Coordination Network. You can learn more about the ZooMu Network here.

Biobank Alliance Working Group

Building on the momentum and collaboration of the 2025 Zoonomics Working Group, a Biobank Alliance Working Group, composed of 12 institutional representatives, is meeting monthly to create a plan for voluntary, coordinated biobanking across AZA member institutions. For more information, contact Danica Wolfe at zoonomics@zoonewengland.org.

PUBLICATIONS

Zoos and aquariums are making great contributions to genetics research and biobanking. If you have or know of a recent publication in this area, please e-mail us at zoonomics@zoonewengland.org so we can include it in our next newsletter.

Using genomic tools to evaluate assumptions in a conservation breeding program for endangered red siskins (Spinus cucullatus)
Zoos and other *ex situ* conservation breeding programs play a critical role in endangered species management and recovery, but they often rely on pedigree-based management to guide breeding decisions, which may miss important aspects of animal health and reproductive success such as hybrid ancestry, inbreeding history, and cryptic relatedness. In a recent study on the endangered *Spinus cucullatus* (red siskin), researchers used genomics to evaluate key assumptions underlying a conservation breeding program. The authors identified population structure not fully captured by existing pedigrees, demonstrating the growing role of genomics in advancing *ex-situ* conservation. You can read the full publication in Conservation Genetics.

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