

It's back...it's ZooBOO!

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Window Rock's Navajo Nation Zoo hosts a day of wild Halloween fun

ZooBOO! returned once again to usher in Halloween with various fun activities in Window Rock, Ariz. The Navajo Nation Zoo and Botanical Park held its 10th annual event Oct. 27, with a free and safe day of family fun.

The zoo held a costume contest with over 500 contestants and saw over 4,200 people pass through the facility to enjoy the day of events.

Not only was Halloween in the air, but ZooBOO! also offered a chance for visitors to see reptiles, stroll a a pathway with animals, and listen to short talks about the creatures found at the zoo.

Concessions, activities for the kids and breath-taking landscapes were all par for the course. There were live cougars, black bears, elk, owls and many other animals to be seen.

The event even featured a demonstration with a rough-legged hawk and its handler Shane Little Singer, who spoke about the bird.

All animals at the zoo were brought there to be cared for because they are injured, orphaned or unable to live in the wild.

"I've been training this hawk and getting it used to seeing other people, and this is a perfect opportunity to do so today," Little Singer said. "People really haven't seen one of these kinds up close, and they're simply amazed at these creatures."

The animals are represented by signs posted in English and in the Navajo language. Along with its name, a short cultural story is depicted about what the animal means to the Dine' people in terms of beliefs and legends.

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Zoologist David Mikesic said even the weather was perfect for a fun-filled day.

“It didn’t get too hot nor did it get too cold — just a perfect day for this event,” he said. “The biggest part was our costume contest with over 500 participants in it. We also had a pumpkin carving contest and crafts all day long, it was designed to be fun for kids of all ages.

Mikesic said the zoo opened 41 years ago with the acquisition of orphaned animals. He said they aim to give the animals good lives.

Most of the zoo’s animals are native to the Southwest and the Navajo Nation, and Mikesic said most are significant to the Navajo people.

The zoo’s eagle facility, in particular, opened in 2016, and the sanctuary now hosts 13 bald eagles.

For more information about the Navajo Nation Zoo, visit: www.navajozoo.org or call (928) 871-6574.

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