

## ***Lincoln Park Zoo is for the birds!***

*McCormick Bird House, Regenstein Birds of Prey exhibit, Hope B. McCormick Swan Pond and Waterfowl Lagoon and Kovler Penguin and Seabird House offer something for everyone*

### **McCormick Bird House**

**What:** The McCormick Bird House is home to an incredible variety of birds – some so rare they are extinct in the wild – and the zoo is working to save them! The original Bird House opened to the public in 1904, and was designed by the zoo’s first director, Cyrus DeVry. After \$2.8 million in renovations in 1991, it became known as the McCormick Bird House. Ten habitats replicate the dense tropical jungles, sandy sea coasts, running forest streams, grassy wetlands and savanna plains; each depicting the birds’ natural atmosphere. The Bird House also contains a tropical free-flight aviary with more than 20 bird species, including a gregarious flock of Inca terns and the endangered yellow-throated laughing thrush. Enter this free-flight area to become immersed in a wondrous, winged world.

**Size:** 18,000 square-foot-facility

**Opened:** 1991

**Cost:** \$2.8 million renovation

#### **Featured birds:**

American avocet, Bali mynah, Bleeding-Heart Dove, Blue-faced honeyeater, Blyth’s hornbill, Cape thick-knee, Collared finch-billed bulbul, Crested wood partridge, Emerald starling, Fairy bluebird, Golden-breasted starling, Guam Micronesian kingfisher, Guam rail, Hamerkop, Inca tern, Laughing kookaburra, Lesser green broadbill, Mandarin duck, Nicobar pigeon, Orange bishop, Pheasant pigeon, Piping plover, Red knot, Red-capped cardinal, Red-legged honeycreeper, Scarlet ibis, Snowy egret, Sunbittern, Tawny frogmouth, and Yellow-throated laughing thrush.

#### **Conservation Science efforts underway at the Bird House and abroad:**

- **Guam Rail (*Rallus owstoni*) conservation efforts:**

A flightless bird, the Guam rail is extinct in the wild. Once present in the hundreds of thousands, the rail was wiped out on its native island by the introduction of the brown tree snake. Lincoln Park Zoo participates in the Guam Rail Species Survival Plan, a cooperative effort among Association of Zoos and Aquariums institutions to preserve the species. Zoo scientist Megan Ross, PhD is

the coordinator of this committee. She has visited the rail rehabilitation center on the island and oversees the breeding plan for all the rails in North America. Ross also works with population biologist, and bird curator Colleen Lynch, M.S. and wildlife staff from Guam to determine which individuals are suitable for wild reintroductions. A small number of birds from the breeding program have been introduced to the island of Rota, just south of Guam.

- **Conservation efforts for Guam Micronesian kingfisher (*Halcyon cinnamomina cinnamomina*):**

Guam Micronesian Kingfishers are extinct in the wild, due to the introduction of the invasive brown tree snake several decades ago. Lincoln Park Zoo houses several of the last remaining members of this species, and is working diligently with the Association of Zoos and Aquarium's Species Survival Plan (SSP) to coordinate conservation education and field conservation efforts. Micronesian kingfishers had not been on the island since their disappearance in the mid-1980s. The zoo has been involved with kingfisher recovery projects since the early 1990s. Director of Conservation Biology Joanne Earnhardt, Ph.D., is a member of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Recovery Team. Colleen Lynch serves a population biology advisor to the SSP. The zoo is also a leader in kingfisher breeding.

- **Conservation efforts for Bali Mynah (*Leucopsar rothschildi*)**

Bali mynahs are one of the world's most critically endangered birds, and nearly extinct in the wild due to poachers collecting them for the illegal pet trade, where they are valued for their striking plumage and beautiful songs. Because of this poaching, Bali mynahs are found almost exclusively in zoos. Scientists at Lincoln Park Zoo help conserve Bali mynahs by keeping the studbook for the species. Studbooks contain the family trees of every individual animal in the zoo population. By pairing animals that are distantly related, zoo scientists can help ensure that offspring are genetically healthy.

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## **The Regenstein Birds of Prey Exhibit**

**What:** Lincoln Park Zoo's Regenstein Birds of Prey Exhibit consists of three large free-flight exhibits; all with heated platforms for the birds to utilize during cooler winter days. These lush outdoor habitats house some of the zoo's most intriguing animals. Birds of prey are considered nature's clean-up crew. They are predatory and possess sharp-hooked bills and talons which are essential tools used to help the birds capture small animals or feed on carrion. Cinereous vultures share a large section of the habitat with beautiful white storks (which are not birds of prey). Other habitats house bald eagles and shy snowy owls.

**Opened:** 1989

### **Featured birds:**

European white stork, Bald eagle, Cinereous vulture, and Snowy owl

## **Hope B. McCormick Swan Pond and Waterfowl Lagoon**

**What:** In 1868 Chicago's Lincoln Park Commissioners received a gift, a pair of swans from New York's Central Park Commissioners. The birds became such popular attractions, "affording much pleasure to the visitors" that it marked the beginning of Chicago's free zoo. The area was refurbished in 1996 through a bequest from the estate of Hope B. McCormick. Today there is still a pair of snow-white trumpeter swans that make their home at the luxuriant Hope B. McCormick Swan Pond. It now serves as a continual reminder of the zoo's long history of preserving wildlife.

The pond is divided by a bridge into two separate areas; one side is known as the Swan Pond and the other as Waterfowl Lagoon. In 1979 a dome was built to house flamingos during the cold wintry months. Renovated in 2003 the dome was replaced by a scenic overlook and the flamingo facility was relocated below at the same level as their outdoor habitat. This new feature allows the Chilean flamingos to easily maneuver between the outdoor and indoor areas as they choose. They are a relatively cold-tolerant species and choose to be outdoors in all but the coldest temperatures. Native Illinois wildflowers and grasses make up the landscape surrounding the pond.

**Size:** Flamingo building – 1,400-square-foot-facility

**Opened:** 1997 Swan Pond  
2003 Flamingo Exhibit

**Cost:** \$1.05 million Flamingo Exhibit  
\$1 million Swan Pond

### **Featured birds:**

Swan goose, Red-breasted goose, Chilean flamingo, Hooded merganser, Red-breasted merganser, Ruddy duck, Baikal Teal, and Trumpeter swan

## **Conservation Science Underway at the swan pond and abroad:**

- **Trumpeter swan recovery efforts:**

The trumpeter swan nearly became extinct in the early 20th century due to the pressures of overhunting and habitat loss. Today, reintroduction programs are in place to restore the species to much of its former range. Since 2001, Lincoln Park Zoo has contributed 34 trumpeter swan cygnets from the breeding pair in the Hope B. McCormick Swan Pond for release in the wild. In 2006, a trumpeter swan from Lincoln Park Zoo was one of the first to nest in Illinois in more than 100 years.

### **Kovler Penguin and Seabird House**

**What:** The Kovler Penguin and Seabird House at Lincoln Park Zoo is home to Rockhopper, chinstrap and king penguins. This 18,000-gallon, temperature-controlled pool uses a sophisticated computer system which stimulates the daylight cycle that penguins experience living in the wild. The air temperature is also controlled and maintained at 35 to 40°F and their swimming water is set to 40°F as well. Puffins, murres and razorbills swim just around the corner in a separate 10,000-gallon pool and inhabit rocky cliffs that simulate their native North Atlantic coastal environment.

**Size:** 4,800-square-foot-facility

**Opened:** 1981

**Cost:** \$1.25 million

**Featured birds:**

Common murre, Razorbill, Common puffin, Tufted puffin, Chinstrap penguin, King Penguin, and Rockhopper penguin.