



## THE ALABAMA GULF COAST ZOO

### GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS ACCOMPANIED BY SERVICE ANIMALS

The Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), welcomes visitors with a service animal. Under the ADA, a service animal is defined as a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks directly related to a person's medical disability.

However, certain precautions must be taken in a zoo environment where there are so many different animal species on display. Because a dog can be seen as either natural prey or predator, their presence could cause unpredictable or adverse behavior from our zoo animals or from the service dog. For the safety of our guests and all animals (yours and ours), please review the following guidelines:

**REQUIRED:** To visit the zoo with a service dog requires an appointment made 24 hours in advance through our guest services in the gift shop. Please call 251-968-5732. All guests with a service dog must be accompanied by a zoo staff member. The dog must be on a leash or harness no longer than 4 feet in length at all times and never left unattended anywhere in the park. Please alert any zoo staff member immediately should your dog get loose or you need other assistance in attending to your animal. On warm weather days, we ask that you please keep your dog well hydrated. We also provide many shaded rest areas.

**OFF-LIMIT AREAS:** Due to the potential disruptive interaction between certain zoo animals and a service dog, some exhibits are off-limits at all times. An exhibit may also be restricted due to an illness or after the birth of a new animal. Please be sure to check with Zoo staff in order to avoid these areas.

**BEHAVIOR:** Even in areas that are not restricted to service dogs, a zoo animal may react in an unusual way that may appear harmless but could be a stress reaction. We ask that you move along quickly out of sight of that animal or comply with a request from our staff to do so. A zoo is filled with new and unfamiliar stimuli to dogs, and even the most well-behaved and well-trained dog can react, especially to the many free-roaming large birds wandering throughout the park. We also have educational animal shows and encounters that bring zoo animals very close to guests and we ask for extreme precaution in keeping your service dog under control. Please promptly request assistance from our staff should you need to remove your service dog from any situation that could be disruptive or potentially dangerous.

**Thank you and enjoy your zoo visit!**

For more information regarding the ADA Service Animals Requirements, please visit: [www.ADA.gov](http://www.ADA.gov) or download an overview of their guidelines: [www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.pdf](http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.pdf)