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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Head down under to the Fort Worth Zoo's *Great Barrier Reef*

Australian Outback renovated to include aquatic exhibit

Fort Worth, Texas - Zoo visitors can now go to the depths of the Coral Sea at the Fort Worth Zoo's newest feature, *Great Barrier Reef*. An aquatic exhibit with three saltwater tanks containing more than 10,000 gallons of water, *Great Barrier Reef* is full of 500 vibrant fish, coral and even sharks.

Great Barrier Reef opens on May 6 and is located in the Zoo's renovated *Australian Outback*, which also houses red kangaroos and wallabies. (Formerly named *Koala Outback*, the exhibit was renamed *Australian Outback* after the Zoo's one koala was returned to San Diego Zoo in January, after being on loan to the Zoo since 2000.)

Visitors will see a diverse collection of Australian aquatic wildlife spanning 86 species (45 fish species, three small- to medium-size shark species, 30 coral species and eight invertebrate species.) Among them are clownfish, black-tip reef sharks, angelfish, brain corals, moray eels and sea apples. Full of interpretive graphics and the Coral Reef Play Area, the Zoo hopes *Great Barrier Reef* will be fun and educational.

"Most people will not have the opportunity to travel to Australia and see all the fascinating sea life in the Great Barrier Reef," said Zoo Director Michael Fouraker. "By featuring the Great Barrier Reef at the Zoo, we hope our visitors will leave with a greater appreciation for these wildlife species and their importance in the natural world."

In the wild, the Great Barrier Reef stretches for more 1,200 miles along the northeast coast of Australia. Comprised of approximately 3,000 reefs, some 940 islands and surrounding waters, the Great Barrier Reef is the largest natural feature on the earth and home to thousands of animal and plant species.

Great Barrier Reef and the Coral Reef Play Area were made possible by the generosity of Baylor All Saints Medical Center, the Discovery Fund and the T.J. Brown and C.A. Lupton Foundation, Inc.

The Fort Worth Zoo is home to more than 400 animal species, a world-famous reptile collection and one of a few breeding facilities for Asian elephants in the United States. The nationally ranked Fort Worth Zoo supports more than 20 conservation projects around the globe, and was awarded the American Zoo and Aquarium Association's top conservation award for its work benefiting the Jamaican iguana and a second award for its work with the Puerto Rican crested toad. For more information on the Fort Worth Zoo, visit www.fortworthzoo.org.

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