

A short story of the Warsaw ZOO

1928

The Warsaw Zoological garden was opened on 11 March 1928 on the area of 12 hectares (vs current 40 ha). The newly established ZOO was inhabited by almost 500 animals.

1930s marked the period of intense development, led by the next director Jan Żabiński. His biggest success in terms of breeding came in 1937, when the famous elephant Tuzinka was born. It was the twelfth elephant to be born in captivity since zoos were established, and the only one born in Poland to date.

1939

In 1939, the ZOO was enlarged to 32 hectares and thus became the largest zoological garden in Europe. In September 1939, the Warsaw ZOO ceased to exist. In the Żabiński Villa house, also known as "Villa under the Crazy Star", the Żabiński family gave shelter to many Jewish survivors from the ghetto. The Żabińskis saved about 300 people at the risk of their own lives. Because of that, in 1965 they were recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations".

In 2017 the movie "The Zookeeper's Wife" (dir. Niki Cairo) had its premiere, that was based on the book by Diane Ackerman of the same title. It tells the story of Antonina and Jan Żabiński during the war.

After the war

In 1946, a decision was made to rebuild the ZOO. The exhibition included animals donated by private collectors, as well as animals from foreign ZOOs. After a short period of development, stagnation began. It changed for the better only in 1980s, when city officials began to include the ZOO in the capital's investment plans.

Current day

Currently, over 12,000 animals live in the Warsaw ZOO (including over 9,000 fish), representing over 500 species, of which nearly 50 are covered by EEP protection programs (regional program for the protection of endangered species)