



News Release

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Columbian Park Zoo welcomes new penguins, plans to have colony on exhibit this season

LAFAYETTE, IN – April 3, 2023– The Columbian Park Zoo has welcomed seven new African penguins to its collection and is making preparations to have all 10 penguins out on exhibit for the 2023 season.

The new birds are on loan from Metro Richmond Zoo in Mosley, Virginia. The group includes four males and three females (Rainbow, Zurg, Gengar, Forky, Kiwi, Plum, and Ledger). The seven new birds join CPZ's Shazam, Sagely, and Donner, who were a part of the original colony that made the zoo their home in 2021.

"We are happy to report that all 10 African penguins are getting along and acclimating well to one another," said Zoo Director Neil Dale. "Our animal care team has gone above and beyond to acclimate the new penguins and integrate them with our three original birds."

After a year-long hiatus, Columbian Park Zoo plans to have the African penguins back out on public exhibit for the 2023 season. "The Columbian Park Zoo team has worked so hard to research best practices within the zoo community and develop a more extensive mosquito-abatement plan," said Mayor Tony Roswarski. "It's important to us that the public is able to enjoy this beautiful exhibit and these remarkable birds, so we have made it a priority to find the safest ways to make that happen."

Columbian Park Zoo lost six penguins in fall of 2021 after battling what is suspected to have been avian malaria. Blood test results from the deceased birds came back positive for a Plasmodium exposure. Plasmodium, the parasite that causes avian malaria, is transmitted through the bite of infected mosquitos.

Though CPZ already had multiple exposure risk reduction strategies in place prior to the African penguins' arrival in summer of 2021, a number of additional protective measures will be implemented this spring. "Our penguins will continue taking prophylactic anti-malarial medications as prescribed by our veterinarian," said Dale. "After consulting with our vet, Purdue University Entomology, and the zoo community, we've implemented several additional strategies as a part of our mosquito-abatement program. This includes installing more powerful fans to increase air flow, adding mosquito repelling plants



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and mulch to the landscaping surrounding the exhibit, and placing mosquito traps around the exhibit exterior.” The zoo also plans to install a purple martin bird house as well as a bat house in hopes of attracting natural mosquito predators to the area.

“We are very grateful to our consulting partners, who have provided us with a lot of helpful information and expertise,” said Dale, who also noted that penguin display times may vary depending on weather conditions, so as to avoid those conditions that are favorable to mosquitoes.

Mayor Roswarski is proud of the hard work and dedication that has gone into the Penguin Cove exhibit mosquito-abatement plan. “We have a very hard-working, passionate team at the zoo,” said Roswarski. “We can’t wait to be able to share that passion and dedication with the community when the penguins are back on public exhibit this spring.”

For more information about the Columbian Park Zoo, please call 765-807-1540 or visit columbianparkzoo.org. Stay up to date on Zoo happenings at www.facebook.com/cpzoo and www.twitter.com/ColumbianPrkZoo

About Columbian Park Zoo

Founded in 1908, Columbian Park Zoo is the second oldest zoo in Indiana. It is approximately 6 acres in size and is located in historic Columbian Park. The Zoo features several “immersion” exhibits and the animal collection consists of nearly 200 animals representing approximately 90 species.

About Lafayette Parks and Recreation

The Lafayette Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains 700 acres of land within the City of Lafayette. This includes the maintenance of more than 27 miles of paved trails. The city’s trails are open to the public and can be used for a variety of activities including walking, running, biking, rollerblading, and more.

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