

DNREC's Brandywine Zoo updated with new animal species and exhibits this spring

WILMINGTON – DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation and the Delaware Zoological Society have announced that new animal species, and new and updated exhibits, are now on display for visitors to the Brandywine Zoo.

"We are pleased that visitors can now enjoy all of the new animals, exhibit updates and renovations going on at the Brandywine Zoo, which are part of the zoo's master plan," said DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin. "Visiting the zoo is a cherished childhood memory for Delawareans and visitors alike. The 114-year tradition is ongoing, as new generations discover animals from around the world and become inspired to care and learn about the larger world and their role in it."

The former otter pond exhibit has been transformed into a large goat contact area, where children of all ages can interact with the animals. The resident African pygmy goats were moved to the new exhibit, and have just met the Nubian newcomers, Harry and Lloyd. More goat breeds will be added in the coming months.

What was the zoo's previous goat-petting area has been updated to house three new Bennett's wallabies, also known as red-necked wallabies, in residence through the summer. Although not for petting, the wallabies serve as "ambassadors" to engage children in learning about species' diversity and conservation. The new wallabies, Lulu, Mia and Jack, will remain at the zoo until the fall.

Two common ravens have moved into the large aviary they will

share with the zoo's American bald eagles. All of the birds in the exhibit are non-releasable because of health issues. Ravens resemble crows, but are much larger. The ravens, Kanga and Dichali, arrived from the National Zoo in Washington D.C., and will be permanent residents.

The zoo's Nature Play Area has been completed, and includes a bird blind, ambassador animal exercise yard, a climb-through log, and an amphitheater that has become the focal site for animal presentation programs, storytime gatherings, concerts, and Zoo Kids activities.

"Appreciation and respect for animals, and acting to conserve wild habitats are top-tier learning objectives at the Brandywine Zoo, said Michael T. Allen, executive director of the Delaware Zoological Society. "The public can experience education programs and special events year-round at the zoo, and engage off-site with our Traveling Zoo programs, which visit schools, libraries and children's hospitals."

Other improvements for the season are in the works, including the new goat breeds and a new alligator exhibit, which is expected to open in a few days. Other species are expected to be added in the upcoming months.

The changes being made this year are to create a sense of excitement for visitors, and position the zoo for its first major exhibit – a new Madagascar exhibit, featuring several species of lemurs and radiated tortoises scheduled to open in 2020.

The Brandywine Zoo is home to Andean condors, llamas, bobcat, swift fox, serval, capybara, golden lion tamarin, red pandas, and many birds and reptiles.

About 50,000 people a year visit the Brandywine Zoo and take part in educational and social programs, and more than 15,000 children each year experience the Travelling Zoo program.

The Brandywine Zoo is managed by DNREC's Division of Parks and Recreation with the support of the Delaware Zoological Society, a non-profit partner organization that supports the mission of the zoo.

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