

DNREC Opens Brandywine Zoo Madagascar Exhibit

Cutting the ribbon, left to right: State Senator Sarah McBride, former State Senator Harris McDowell, Delaware Zoological Society President Arlene Reppa, DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin, Governor John Carney and Brandywine Zoo Director Brint Spencer. DNREC photo.

View Endangered Lemurs, Tortoises

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control cut the ribbon on its new Madagascar exhibit Nov. 19, and officially welcomed its new tortoise and lemur inhabitants. This new exhibit is home to radiated tortoises and three species of lemurs. The public will be able to visit the habitat starting Friday, Nov. 20.

Governor John Carney and DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin hosted a small group for a first look at the newcomers as they interacted in the exhibit, along with several who are still in quarantine. The event was also live streamed for the public and zoo fans on the [Delaware State Parks YouTube page](#).

“I grew up coming to the Brandywine Zoo and it has come a long way since then. I am thrilled we were able to revive this habitat space as one of many upgrades in DNREC’s Wilmington parks,” said Governor Carney. “As one of few zoos managed by a State Park system, we are proud of the work the staff does here and grateful for those who brought this habitat to life.”

The animals include three radiated tortoises, four Ring-tailed lemurs from the Bronx Zoo, two Black and White Ruffed lemurs from the Duke Lemur Center; and one male and one female Crowned lemur from the Duke Lemur Center, who came as a breeding recommendation from the Association of Zoos and

Aquariums.



“We are thrilled to welcome these animals to their new home and unveil this beautiful space to the public,” said DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin. “Not only will the Madagascar exhibit provide a safe habitat for the animals, it will also provide an enriching environment where our visitors can learn about how humans can reduce our impacts to endangered species such as these.”

The Madagascar exhibit is part of the Brandywine Zoo’s recently approved master plan and is the largest capital improvement in the zoo’s history. The master plan focuses on improved animal welfare and guest experiences, species of conservation concern and the inclusion of more mixed-species exhibits.

At nearly 4,000 square feet, the Madagascar exhibit is one of the zoo’s largest display habitats. It includes interactive features and information about conservation concerns in Madagascar. The project took approximately 10 months to complete and cost \$3.5 million, funded by the State Bond Bill with a matching Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. Since 1967, the LWCF has provided nearly 200 grants totaling almost \$40 million dollars for projects in Delaware, including 73 grants to the DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation alone.

As part of the Crowned lemur survival plan, a male and a female will be paired for breeding at the zoo; just 30 of the species exist in the Americas, 18 males and 12 females. Brandywine Zoo will become the 12th location on the entire North American continent where Crowned lemurs can be viewed by the public.

The Madagascar animals will be in their habitat for public viewing when temperatures are above 45 degrees. Because they are native to a subtropical climate, the animals will be brought inside the Brandywine Zoo’s new holding area once

temperatures fall below 45 degrees.

In efforts to support social distancing, the Brandywine Zoo is offering three timed sessions each day. Zoo admission is \$7 for adults and \$5 kids (3 and older); admission is free for zoo members children ages 3 and younger. All visitors must register online at <https://brandywinezoo.org>. Masks must be worn by all guests ages 5 and older, and are strongly encouraged for children older than 2.

About DNREC

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control protects and manages the state's natural resources, protects public health, provides outdoor recreational opportunities and educates Delawareans about the environment. The [Division of Parks and Recreation](#) oversees more than 26,000 acres in 17 state parks and the Brandywine Zoo. For more information, visit the [website](#) and connect with DNREC on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#).

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