



Alabama's Must See Attraction!

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**Birmingham Zoo Working to Further Mission Through Innovative
Elephant Initiatives**

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Over the six years that the Birmingham Zoo's Trails of Africa exhibit has been open, the Birmingham Zoo's elephant program has worked to meet its mission to create a center of excellence that will become a national model for the care and conservation of elephants. The Birmingham Zoo has established the standards of care for African bull elephants and has become a recognized resource for elephant management.

From December 2010-April 2012, the Birmingham Zoo acquired and transported four male African elephants to the new Trails of Africa exhibit. Bulwagi, the dominant male, was the first to arrive at the Birmingham Zoo, followed by Tamani, Ajani and Callee. Through successfully bringing in the elephants, the Zoo became the first North American Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited Zoo to house a herd of male African elephants together.

In efforts to further the Zoo's mission, the zoo keepers collect semen which is used for research purposes, but also has been used for nine artificial inseminations in six AZA accredited institutions. The Birmingham Zoo has also hosted workshops to educate staff from other Zoos, for observation and to teach about semen collecting techniques. In conjunction with the South East Zoo Alliance for Reproduction and Conservation (SEZARC), the Birmingham Zoo developed ground breaking behavioral and hormonal research for African male elephants.

Zoo Mission: Inspiring Passion for the Natural World

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Bulwagi, age 35, stands out from the other elephants at the Zoo due to having only one tusk which unfortunately has been cracked for several years. Over the last four years, the Birmingham Zoo tried several options to help correct the crack in Bulwagi's tusk. Efforts included meeting with elephant experts, trimming the tusk to reduce pressure, meeting with a dentist and filling the crack with dental cement. In 2014, the Zoo staff noticed the crack growing in length and depth. The crack had become infected, so Bulwagi was prescribed an antibiotic treatment.

In November, 2015, in conjunction with a team from the University of Alabama at Birmingham lead by Dr. Brian Pillay, a carbon fiber material wrap was placed around Bulwagi's tusk. The zoo keepers worked daily with Bulwagi to prepare him for this procedure, and the wrap was safely and successfully applied. For more information about the wrap, please [see here](#). The Birmingham Zoo veterinary team is continuing to monitor the progressive infection in Bulwagi's tusk.

"I am continuously impressed by the talented veterinary and animal staff at the Birmingham Zoo. Through their efforts and work with animal care, they are helping to further the Zoo's mission of Inspiring Passion for the Natural World through education, recreation, scientific research and community involvement." says Birmingham Zoo President and CEO, Dr. William Foster.

Approximately 950 animals of 230 species call the Birmingham Zoo home, including sea lions, zebras, rhinos and endangered species from six continents. The Birmingham Zoo is open daily from 9am to 5pm. Regular admission is \$16 for adults and \$14* for senior citizens and military and \$11* for children ages 2-12 (*Price not including tax). All Birmingham Zoo Members and children under two-years-old receive free admission.*



For more information about the Birmingham Zoo, please visit the Zoo on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter, or at birminghamzoo.com.

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