



Alabama's Must See Attraction!

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**Birmingham Zoo to Partner with Colyer Institute for Upcoming
Elephant Procedure**

BIRMINGHAM, AL –The Birmingham Zoo's dominant 35 year old male African elephant, Bulwagi, has been in the spotlight recently for undergoing a revolutionary procedure. Bulwagi, who came to the Birmingham Zoo with only one tusk, has a long-term crack in this remaining tusk that has worsened over time and become infected. Elephants use their tusks for digging, lifting objects, gathering food, stripping bark from trees and for protection. Through these actions, their tusks become worn and can break or crack. The Birmingham Zoo partnered with the director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Materials Processing and Applications Development Center, Brian Pillay, Ph.D. to create a specialized resin and application process in hopes of preventing the crack in Bulwagi's tusk from growing wider and longer.

Despite the continued efforts of the Birmingham Zoo's Veterinary team, the infection in Bulwagi's tusk has continued to progress. Because of this infection, the Zoo has begun working with the Colyer Institute, a center for the study of oral disease and nutrition in exotic animals, to examine and develop a plan for Bulwagi's treatment. David A. Fagan, DDS and James E. Oosterhuis, DVM visited the Birmingham Zoo to examine the crack in Bulwagi's tusk and to review radiographs of the tusk. During their visit, Dr. Fagan and Dr. Oosterhuis confirmed the infection in the tusk.

Zoo Mission: Inspiring Passion for the Natural World

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Based off the findings of the Colyer Institute, a decision has been made to remove Bulwagi's tusk. Due to the progressive infection, it is best for Bulwagi's overall health to extract the tusk. If left in place, there is risk of the infection spreading. This will require a surgical procedure as well as over a year of daily wound care by the Zoo staff.

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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