



Alabama's Must See Attraction!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Beloved Birmingham Zoo Elephant to Undergo Serious Surgery

BIRMINGHAM, AL – The Birmingham Zoo's beloved African elephant, Bulwagi, is set to receive potentially life-saving surgery in May to remove his infected tusk. The surgery is a very involved process requiring intense preparation, so the Birmingham Zoo is bringing in experts from the Colyer Institute and extra veterinary assistance from across the country to help with the multiple hour operation. In addition, Bulwagi has been receiving advanced training in preparation for the surgery.

Bulwagi, age 35, came to the Birmingham Zoo with only one tusk, as he lost the first tusk following an injury sustained at an early age. His remaining tusk has a long-term crack.

Elephants use their tusks for digging, lifting objects, gathering food, stripping bark from trees and for protection. Through these activities, their tusks can be damaged. The veterinary staff at the Zoo has been working to correct this condition since he arrived. In November 2015, Bulwagi participated in a revolutionary procedure in partnership with University of Alabama at Birmingham to place a composite wrap on his cracked tusk in an attempt to keep the crack from growing. To read more about this endeavor, [click here](#).

Despite the continued efforts of the Zoo's Veterinary Staff, the crack has worsened over time and become infected. The Veterinary Staff has tried several attempts at treating the infection with antibiotics without success. If left in place, there is a risk of the infection spreading to other organs, including the heart, which is why the tusk must be removed.

Zoo Mission: Inspiring Passion for the Natural World

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Following a successful procedure, Bulwagi will receive daily care of the surgical site. The Zoo's staff does not anticipate any changes to the social structure, and believe Bulwagi will remain the dominant male of the Zoo's bachelor herd.

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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