



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Birmingham Zoo Welcomes New African Lion From San Antonio Zoo!

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Birmingham Zoo is thrilled to announce the newest addition to our Zoo family, a young male African lion. Age 6, Josh came to us from the San Antonio Zoo, also accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The Birmingham Zoo joins the AZA and other zoos around the world in the African lion SAFE program and maintaining Species Survival Plan® (SSP) programs for cooperative breeding and conservation initiatives.

According to Scott Kayser, Zoo Manager of Predators, "The Animal Care Professionals that work with Josh have done a great job of acclimating him to his new home here at the Birmingham Zoo. While Josh was a bit shy at first, he's proven to be very resilient and has quickly warmed up to his keepers. We are all excited for everyone to meet him."

Moving to a new zoo can be a big adjustment for an animal and the Zoo team does a great deal of planning to make that transition as smooth as possible. This process started last year after the death of longtime resident male lion Kwanza. "Lions are social cats so we knew that our female, Akili, would need a companion," says Hollie Colahan, Vice President of Living Collections at Birmingham Zoo. "As part of the SSP and discussions with the San Antonio Zoo in Texas, Josh was recommended as a great new addition to our Trails of Africa habitat. As with all animal moves, we shared records and discussed his medical history, as well as details like his personality and favorite snacks."

After his exam, clean bill of health and settling in at the Animal Health Center as part of the routine quarantine procedure for new animals that come to the Zoo, Josh is now in his habitat and adjusting quickly. "Soon we will begin introductions to Akili. Starting as a visual process through mesh panels, once we see that they are comfortable seeing and sniffing each other through the mesh, we will open the door for a full introduction," Colahan says.

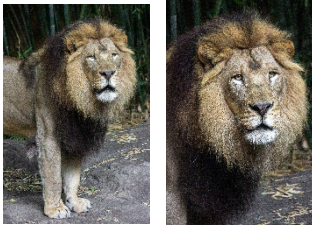
Josh and Akili will not have cubs: Akili is contracepted to prevent pregnancy, because she has had five cubs previously, which means that she and Kwanza already are well represented in the population.

"Our Zoo has done a fantastic job supporting the African Lion SAFE program," says Birmingham Zoo President & CEO, Chris Pfefferkorn. "Based on a recommendation from the African Lion Species Survival Plan® (SSP) the Birmingham Zoo has now become the new home for Josh. We are truly excited to have a new lion join our Zoo family and even happier that now Akili has a companion! Our vision to conserve wildlife and wild places is what fuels our dedication to preserving endangered and vulnerable species. We take pride in being a part of the global lion conservation effort by AZA accredited zoos to ensure these magnificent animals will survive into the future."

The African lion is one of the four roaring cats. Their roar, which can be heard more than 5 miles away, is used to communicate with other lions and to help mark territory, not to scare prey. The thick manes on adult males serve as protection for the cats when fighting over prides or when defending territory. They spend an average of 15 to 22 hours a day resting and sleeping.

Guests are invited to see Josh now, as he has appropriately acclimated and is currently enjoying his spacious habitat!

Zoo Logo & Photos of lion Josh – *Photos Courtesy of Scott Kayser, Birmingham Zoo Manager, Predators*



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ABOUT THE BIRMINGHAM ZOO

The Birmingham Zoo is an independent, not for profit, 501(c)(3) organization and is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

Our mission: Inspiring Passion to Conserve the Natural World.

Approximately 700 animals of 230 species call the Birmingham Zoo home, including sea lions, zebras, rhinos and endangered species from six continents. The Birmingham Zoo is a non-profit and is open daily from 9am to 5pm. Regular admission is \$17* for adults and \$14* for senior citizens and military and \$12* for children ages 2-12 (*Price not including tax). All Birmingham Zoo Members and children under two-years-old receive free admission. The Birmingham Zoo is the only AZA accredited Zoo in the state of Alabama.

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