

# MARYLAND ZOO

## NEWS

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**CONTACT:** Jane Ballentine  
O: 443/552-5275  
C: 301/332-1742

### **CHANGES COMING TO THE AFRICAN JOURNEY AT THE MARYLAND ZOO**

*-- Major renovations to elephant, giraffe and lion exhibits --*

**BALTIMORE, MD** – The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is excited to announce the renovation and expansion of several areas within the African Journey section of the Zoo, specifically the expansion of the elephant barn and creation of new outdoor yards, as well as major renovations to the giraffe and lion habitats. “We are committed to meeting or exceeding the highest standards of animal care for every animal in the Zoo,” stated Don Hutchinson, president and CEO of The Maryland Zoo. “When it comes to habitat design, this means creating opportunities for animals to engage naturally and actively with their environment and to make choices about when, where, and how to engage. Since my tenure began here ten years ago, we have strived to improve upon existing habitats, taking animal, staff, and visitor needs into consideration. We are incredibly excited to get these new improvements underway.”

The elephant habitat expansion will dramatically change the current elephant experience for both the elephants and Zoo visitors. While the physical expansion of the habitat will allow the Zoo to increase the herd and provide space for rearing calves, upgrades to the existing barn will also enhance elephant management practices. The indoor barn space will nearly double to 14,300 square feet, and will include expanded stalls with new flooring including sand beds and rubberized floors, training walls in multiple locations, hydraulic gates to allow for remote operation when transferring elephants in and out of the barn and new animal care team facilities featuring an enclosed, air conditioned space with kitchenette, lockers and meeting area.

The outdoor elephant habitat will nearly triple in size to 77,330 square feet by transforming the camel ride area and former Rock Island penguin exhibit into the Savanna Passage and Upper Savanna Habitat. New features will be added to the outdoor habitat that will increase the elephants’ ability to engage in natural behaviors such as dusting, bathing and mud wallowing, as well as guests ability to view and learn about these amazing animals. Features will include a water cannon, a flexible elephant hay hoist, a demonstration/keeper chat area and a new, more accessible boardwalk leading to an expansive deck space called the Savanna Overlook, where guests can watch the elephants wallowing in the mud and dusting themselves in the sand pit.

The giraffe habitat portion of the project is aimed at improving animal health and safety. The slope of the current outdoor yard will be re-graded to make the ground flat throughout and therefore safer for the animals when the ground is wet. The outdoor habitat will increase 33 percent to 36,200 square feet and will include an expansion of the smaller giraffe yard.

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“One of the more unique features of the renovation will be the Giraffe Crossing - a passageway that will allow the giraffe to cross over from their dedicated habitat to the Upper Savanna Habitat,” continued Hutchinson. “This will not only give the giraffe additional room to roam, but to eventually share the Savanna with elephants as they would in the wild.”

A newly created guest pathway, the African Overlook, will be developed as a cul-de-sac in between the lion and the giraffe habitats, adjacent to the Giraffe Feeding Station. This pathway will have a dramatic impact on the visitor by providing guests with a more intimate viewing experience with an eye level passage to lions on the left and giraffes on the right. The barrier along the lion side of the African Overlook path will be a combination of stainless steel mesh and glass, giving the lion habitat a more open feel. There will also be a large window with a training demonstration area where visitors will be able to watch keepers interact with the lions during positive reinforcement training sessions, which effectively ask the lions to participate in their own health care.

To realize its vision, the Zoo will be working once again with CLR Design, the architectural and landscape design firm that created the award-winning *Penguin Coast*. CLR brings to its work an intimate understanding of key innovations and trends in zoo exhibit design, beginning with the advent of landscape immersion and now including activity-based design for animals. The Gilbane Building Company is the general contractor for the project. Construction will begin immediately and is expected to be completed by Fall 2019, with the project estimated to cost \$16 million; funding provided by the State, as well as private donations and grants.

“As the project progresses, there will be periods of time when guests will not be able to see the elephants or the lions at all,” concluded Hutchinson. “During the renovation to the giraffe outdoor habitat, the herd will be inside the Giraffe House which will be open to Zoo guests. There will be well marked pathway detours for the duration of the project, as there were with *Penguin Coast* construction. We hope that our members and guests will bear with us while we are working to bring this new vision to light for the benefit of both the animals in our care and our visitors.”

For updates on the renovations during construction, please visit [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org) and our [www.facebook.com/marylandzoo](https://www.facebook.com/marylandzoo).

#### [About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore](#)

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo's varied natural habitat exhibits such as the AZA-Award winning *Penguin Coast*, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children's Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

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## FACT SHEET – AFRICAN JOURNEY RENOVATION

Looking ahead, these are the improvements planned for each habitat and the ways in which they will benefit animals, visitors, and staff.

### *Elephant*

- Outdoor habitat will nearly triple, going from 30,000 to 77,330 square feet.
- Indoor holding space will nearly double, going from 9,900 to 14,300 square feet.
- Overall exhibit will expand to include former Camel and Rock Island exhibits, which will be converted respectively into the Savanna Passage and the Upper Savanna habitat.
- New features will be added to outdoor habitat that will increase elephants' ability to engage in natural behaviors such as dusting, bathing, and mud wallowing.
- New guest pathways will be created to allow guests to observe elephants at multiple locations.

### *Giraffe*

- Outdoor habitat will increase by about 33%, from 23,900 to 36,200 square feet.
- Slope of outdoor yards will be re-graded to make the ground flat throughout.
- Along the southern side of the giraffe habitat, upper guest pathway will be removed and only lower guest pathway will remain.
- Eventually, the giraffe will be able to cross over from their dedicated habitat into the Upper Savanna habitat, allowing for greater room to roam, new use of space, and potential interaction with elephants.

### *Lion:*

- Grading of exhibit will be changed to create a raised area in the center where lions can lounge.
- Mesh fence will replace barrier poles currently in place around the perimeter of the exhibit, giving lion habitat a more open feel with increased viewing.
- New visitor cul-de-sac pathway will run between lion and giraffe habitats.
- Visitors will be able to see lions up close through a large viewing window along the cul-de-sac.
- There will be a training demonstration area near the viewing window where visitors will be able to watch keepers interact with lions during training sessions.

### **Project Description & Timeline**

- Location: Back half of *African Journey*, encompassing current Lion, Giraffe, and Elephant exhibits and former Camel and Rock Island exhibits
- Design: CLR Design, Philadelphia, PA
- Contractor: Gilbane Building Company, Baltimore, MD
- Timeline: Construction expected to begin in Spring 2018 and end in Summer 2019.
- Cost: Estimated cost for the exhibit renovations and barn expansion is \$16 million, funding provided by the State, as well as private donations and grants.