



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Zoo's Beloved African Lion Has Nodules Consistent with Cancer

Zoo staff will be available for questions Thursday, March 31st from 1:00PM-3:00PM.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is saddened to announce that a recent medical exam of Bill, the African lion, revealed nodules consistent with cancer. The zoo's veterinary team performed the exam on Wednesday, March 30. Animal care staff continues to provide exceptional care for Bill, keeping him as comfortable as possible.

Concerns for Bill's health began with a bloody nose in the fall of 2015. Shortly after, zoo keepers recorded inconsistencies in Bill's appetite. Animal care staff monitored his eating patterns, weight, and overall health daily.

The zoo's veterinary team immobilized Bill for a medical exam in February of 2016, hoping to discover the cause of their concern.

Following treatment, Bill's condition temporarily improved, then regressed. The continued inconsistencies in Bill's behavior lead to a second medical exam on March 30 for further diagnostic tests, resulting in the discovery of the nodules.

Bill is just under ten years old. He arrived at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo in December of 2008, along with Ina, the zoo's female African lioness.

"Bill's friendly, laid back personality has always made him a hit with the staff," says Dr. Joe Smith, director of animal programs. "He is a favorite with our visitors, posing regularly in front

of the smaller exhibit window for that perfect photo. The people in our community know him by name.”

Although Bill will not be on exhibit once the zoo opens April 23, he will have access to his behind-the-scenes exercise yard where he can be comfortable and rest in privacy.

African lions live in the dry plains of the Sahara desert, primarily in groups called prides. Although the African lion is not currently categorized as endangered, the species is vulnerable, with continued threat to their habitat. The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo participates in the Association of Zoos & Aquariums Species Survival Plan (SSP) for the African lion and numerous other species. Collaboration through SSP ensures the survival of endangered wildlife species.

The zoo continues its commitment to lion conservation through active support of the Lion Guardians program. For more information on the Lion Guardians, visit the conservation pages at kidszoo.org.

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About the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo: The Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo’s mission is to connect kids and animals, strengthen families, and inspire people to care. The zoo is northeast Indiana’s largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests in 2105. The zoo received the **2015 TripAdvisor Travelers’ Choice Award**, was voted **Indiana’s #1 “Gotta-Do Summer Attraction,”** and was named the **#7 Zoo in the United States and #20 in the World by TripAdvisor** in 2015.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing more than \$90,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 91 endangered species and taxa. The zoo was named Northeast Indiana’s **Sustainable Business of the Year** in 2014.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children’s Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The zoo’s operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations.

The zoo will open for the 2016 season on April 23. Zoo hours are 9:00am-5:00pm, open until 7:00pm Memorial Day through Labor Day. The zoo will close for one day on Friday, August 19 for an annual fundraising event.

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