



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Male Lion at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Zoo staff will be available for interviews on September 29, between 1:00 and 3:00 only. Media images provided. Additional images available upon request.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is excited to announce the much anticipated arrival of a new male lion. Bahati, a two-year old male lion currently residing at the Racine Zoo is set to travel to Fort Wayne. An exact date of arrival is not yet set.

Ina, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo's female lion, is the recommended companion for Bahati and will stay at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. Following the zoo's standard quarantine process, Bahati will be slowly introduced to Ina. Guests can plan to see both Ina and Bahati on exhibit for the 2017 season

"The loss of Bill the lion was one that hit us all very hard," says Bridget Pearson, Director of Communications. "The announcement of Bahati, means that once again our guests can have that awe-inspiring moment of seeing a male lion right in front of them! It's through connecting our guests with amazing animals, that we can plant a seed to care about conservation and the habitats of animals in the wild. Bahati's arrival is one more—rather large—way we get to connect kids and animals. We couldn't be more excited!"

Bahati is one of three cubs born at Racine Zoo on July 7, 2014. Bahati, is described by his current animal care staff as intelligent, curious, and a problem solver. He is the leader among his siblings.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is an accredited organization through AZA (Association of Zoos & Aquariums) and collaborates with other accredited organizations to manage the Species Survival Plans for various species, including the African lion. After reviewing the existing African

lion population, the final recommendation was to move Bahati to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo to join Ina. There are currently no breeding recommendations for Bahati and Ina.

African lions live in the dry plains of the African 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. As a conservation leader, the zoo advocates for lion conservation through the support of the Lion Guardians program. By visiting the zoo, guests are also helping to support conservation efforts. For more information on the Lion Guardians or other conservation efforts supported by the zoo, 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 connecting kids and animals, strengthening families, and inspiring people to care. The zoo is northeast Indiana's largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 600,000 guests in 2015. 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 is open for the 2016 season until October 9. Zoo hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Fort Wayne Children's Zoo | 3411 Sherman Blvd. | Fort Wayne, IN 46808 | 260.427.6800 | kidszoo.org