



NEWS RELEASE

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YOUNG LION MOVING TO NEW HOME

NORFOLK, Va. – A juvenile male African lion will be leaving the Virginia Zoo Thursday, heading for Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Orlando, Fla.

Dakari was born at the Zoo May 2, 2009 to father Mramba and mother Zola, along with two other male cubs and one female cub. The litter was their second. Dakari is the last of the siblings to move to a new home. The other male cubs went to the Pittsburgh Zoo and the female went to the Knoxville Zoo.

“Dakari is being moved to a potential future breeding situation as part of the Species Survival Program,” said Roger Sweeney, the Zoo’s assistant director, “but the move also frees up Mramba and Zola to breed again, because they still maintain an SSP breeding recommendation.”

Species Survival Programs are designed to help endangered species through a range of activities, including cooperative breeding, research, public education, fundraising and field conservation projects. Wild lions currently inhabit sub-Saharan Africa and are considered to be a vulnerable species due to habitat loss and conflict with humans.

With some males exceeding 550 pounds – Dakari weighs 438 pounds – lions are the second-largest living cat after tigers. Lions prey primarily on large mammals, including buffalo, impalas, warthogs, wildebeest and zebras. They are more social than other cats and are normally part of a pride consisting of related females, a small number of adult males, and their offspring. Lions are also the only cat species in which males and females look markedly different; the males possess a mane that is believed to make them look larger during confrontations.

LION MOVING



Dakari, a juvenile male African lion at the Virginia Zoo, in his outdoor habitat Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012 (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson).

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As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits more than 400 animals on 53 beautifully landscaped acres. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to education and conservation, and offered a fun-filled day for visitors of any age. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors (age 62 and over) and \$9.00 for children ages 2-11. Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.