

NEWS RELEASE



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VIRGINIA ZOO JOINS FIGHT TO STOP AFRICAN ELEPHANT KILLING

NORFOLK, Va. – The Virginia Zoo has joined the Wildlife Conservation Society as a partner on the recently launched 96 Elephants campaign.

The campaign is an effort to secure a U.S. moratorium on illegal ivory, bolster protection of African elephants and educate the public about the link between ivory and elephant poaching. As part of its conservation mission, the Virginia Zoo will work together with WCS and other 96 Elephants partners to raise awareness and engage the public through activities including online petitions, letter writing and social media efforts coordinated through the campaign website at www.96elephants.org.

“The demand for ivory resulted in the slaughter of an estimated 35,000 elephants by poachers in 2012 alone,” said Greg Bockheim, the Zoo’s executive director. “If we don’t band together and take action, we may be among the last generations to live in a world shared by wild elephants.”

Elephant numbers have plummeted by 76 percent since 1980, due largely to the demand for elephant ivory. 96 Elephants was named for the number of elephants gunned down on average each day. According to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, there are currently 166 African and 142 Asian elephants in the AZA’s Elephant Species Survival Plan, which means that there are more elephants killed in four days than exist in all of the AZA-accredited zoos combined.

To learn more about the elephant crisis and how to help eradicate the demand for ivory, visit www.96elephants.org.

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ZOO JOINS FIGHT TO STOP ELEPHANT KILLING, 2 OF 2



Cita, a female African elephant, enjoys time in the snow at the Virginia Zoo Jan. 23, 2014. According to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, there are 166 African and 142 Asian elephants in AZA-accredited zoos nationwide, which is less than the number of wild elephants being killed every four days by poachers seeking ivory. (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson.)

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The Wildlife Conservation Society saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth. For more information or to make donations in support of wildlife and wild places, please visit www.wcs.org.

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 for adults, \$10 for seniors (age 62 and over) and \$9 for children ages 2-11. Children under 2 admitted free! Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.