

# NEWS RELEASE



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## WHAT? -- WATUSI!

NORFOLK, Va. – Two watusi steers were introduced to their new habitat in the Virginia Zoo's Africa - Okavango Delta exhibit today.

"They're very energetic and fun to watch," said Greg Bockheim, the Zoo's executive director. "Their horns are spectacular – the largest horns of any cattle species."

Weighing 900 to 1,600 pounds, watusi grow horns that can measure up to 8 feet from tip to tip and 8 inches in diameter. The horns are lightweight, however, and serve as radiators to help them cope with the heat of the African grasslands. They are also powerful weapons -- invaluable in an environment shared with lions, hyenas and jackals.

Diallo, born July 2012, and Gamba, born August 2012, will eventually share the habitat with the Zoo's Hartmann's mountain zebras, once the cattle are settled-in. There are no plans to breed watusi at the Zoo, since they are a domesticated species.

The watusi breed was developed in east Africa more than 2,000 years ago, and populations have been established around the world. Feeding on grasses and leaves, they are able to subsist on a very nutrient-poor diet and survive periods of drought. They can live more than 20 years.

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## WATUSI AT THE ZOO, 2 OF 2



**Diallo, left, and Gamba, watusi steers, survey their new habitat in the Virginia Zoo's Africa – Okavango Delta exhibit, Thursday, April 24, 2014 (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 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](http://www.virginiazoo.org) or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.*