

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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SPECIAL DELIVERY!

NORFOLK, Va. – Whom do you call when your orangutan absolutely, positively has to be there today?

A new male orangutan from the Houston Zoo is arriving at the Virginia Zoo today at 9 p.m.

Solaris is 10 years old, and will be joining Dara, a 14-year-old female from the Seneca Park Zoo in Rochester, N.Y., who arrived at the Zoo Thursday, April 24. The two will spend approximately a month in quarantine before they go on exhibit in the Zoo's outdoor orangutan habitat in Asia - Trail of the Tiger.

Schnitz, a male orangutan, and Pepper, a female, who have been residents at the Zoo since the opening of the Trail of the Tiger exhibit in 2011, will remain at the Virginia Zoo.

“Schnitz and Pepper are in their thirties and never had access to an outdoor habitat before coming here, and they just aren't very interested in going outside,” said Greg Bockheim, the Virginia Zoo's executive director. “Solaris and Dara love the outdoors, so they should make better use of the outside habitat, and they are of breeding age, so we're hoping for some baby orangutans in the future, as well.” He added that the entire staff is thrilled about receiving a new pair of orangutans.

Orangutans come from the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. Males can reach 300 pounds and stand up to 5 feet tall. They are omnivorous, eating fruit, young shoots, bark and insects. Very intelligent, orangutans have learned to use twigs as tools to extract honey, ants and termites from nests. They are critically endangered due primarily to habitat destruction, particularly the conversion of forest to palm oil plantations.

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SPECIAL DELIVERY, 2 OF 4



Solaris, a 10-year-old male orangutan, is loaded into a FedEx jet for transportation to the Virginia Zoo May 1, 2014 (Virginia Zoo photo by Amanda Guthrie).

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SPECIAL DELIVERY, 3 OF 4



Solaris, a 10-year-old male orangutan, at the Houston Zoo, Feb. 17, 2014. He is scheduled to arrive at the Virginia Zoo 9 p.m. Thursday, May 1, 2014 (Houston Zoo photo by Tammy Buhrmester).

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SPECIAL DELIVERY, 4 OF 4



Dara, a 14-year-old female orangutan, at the Seneca Park Zoo in Rochester, N.Y. Dara is already in quarantine at the Virginia Zoo, where Solaris, a 10-year-old male orangutan from the Houston Zoo, will join her May 1, 2014 (Seneca Park Zoo photo by Tina Fess).

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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 or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.