

NEWS RELEASE



Contact: Winfield Danielson
Marketing and PR Manager
Office: (757) 441-2374 ext. 223
Cell: (757) 777-7899
Email: winfield.danielson@norfolk.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 20, 2013

LUSCIOUS LASHES AT THE VIRGINIA ZOO

NORFOLK, Va. – Take a look at the luscious lashes of the southern ground hornbill at the Zoo 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23.

“As part of our conservation mission, the Virginia Zoo supports the Mabula Ground-Hornbill Project, which is working to preserve these amazing birds in the wild,” said Roger Sweeney, assistant director of the Virginia Zoo. “One of their unique features are their thick, long, black lashes, and we hope to leverage these luscious lashes to raise awareness about the birds and the challenges they face in the wild.”

Docents will host a discovery station in the Zoo’s Africa – Okavango Delta exhibit, providing detailed information about southern ground hornbills, their habitat and the Mabula Ground-Hornbill Project, including a chat with one of the zookeepers at noon. The first 50 discovery station visitors will also receive free eyelashes for their car, to show their support for the southern ground hornbill.

Southern ground hornbills are large, black birds with red skin around their head. They live in the African savannas south of the equator. The birds are carnivorous, eating insects, worms, frogs, lizards, snakes and small mammals. The ground hornbill’s long, thick lashes -- which are actually modified feathers -- shade their eyes from sunlight as they search the ground for prey. Ground hornbills do not need to drink water, getting the moisture they need from their food.

All activities are included with regular Zoo admission. For more information, visit www.virginiazoo.org or call the Zoo’s Education Department at 757-447-2374 ext. 229. More information on the Mabula Ground-Hornbill Project is available at <http://www.ground-hornbill.org.za>.

- more -

LUSCIOUS LASHES AT THE ZOO, 2 OF 2



Jane, a female ground hornbill, stands on a fence, surveying her habitat at the Virginia Zoo July 20, 2012. Visit Jane, talk to one of her keepers, and learn more about these amazing animals, their luscious lashes and the Mabula Ground-Hornbill Project at the Virginia Zoo 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23. (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson.)

###

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.