

NEWS RELEASE



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NEW HABITAT COMPLETED AT VIRGINIA ZOO

NORFOLK, Va. – The Virginia Zoo completed a new binturong habitat inside its Asia – Trail of the Tiger exhibit this week and introduced the animals to it for the first time today.

“The major work was actually completed in the beginning of December, but there were a lot of details that we had to get done, like the electrical system,” said Roger Sweeney, the Zoo’s assistant director.

The Zoo has two binturongs, a male, Rungus, and a female, Suzy.

Also known as Asian bearcats, binturongs have a shaggy, thick, black coat, tufted ears, bristly whiskers and a prehensile tail. Some think binturongs have a cat-like head and a body like that of a bear, which is where the name bearcat comes from. Binturongs have a body length of 2 to 3 feet, plus a tail of approximately the same length, and weigh around 30 pounds. They are primarily arboreal, inhabiting the rainforests of South and Southeast Asia. Omnivorous, binturongs eat fruit, leaves and shoots, small mammals, birds, invertebrates, carrion and eggs.

Adept climbers, binturongs use their prehensile tails as an extra hand for balance and to help guide them through the forest canopy. Using a gland located under their tails, they mark their territories with a strong scent humans often associate with buttered popcorn. They may live alone or in small family groups composed of a female and juvenile offspring. Their population in the wild is considered vulnerable due to deforestation, encroachment, hunting and capture for the pet trade.

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NEW ZOO HABITAT, 2 OF 2



Rungus, a male binturong, explores his new habitat for the first time at the Virginia Zoo Dec. 19, 2013 (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 or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.