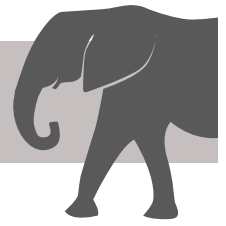


ELEPHANTS AT THE VIRGINIA ZOO

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Q| WHERE ARE THE ELEPHANTS GOING?

A| The Virginia Zoo explored a variety of options that were available to Lisa and Cita by visiting both an Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) accredited zoo and The Tennessee Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee.

The Virginia Zoo has opted to stay within the AZA recommendations and move the elephants to Zoo Miami, an AZA-accredited institution. Zoo Miami is the largest and oldest zoological garden in Florida, and the only sub-tropical zoo in the continental United States. This climate offers our girls the best weather conditions - Miami's average annual high is 84 degrees and average annual low is 69 degrees Fahrenheit. Lisa and Cita will be outdoors, 12 months a year.

Zoo Miami is also home to a pair of older African elephants, Peggy and Mable. By bringing all four elephants together, each will benefit by having opportunities for more choices in social interaction. The larger size of the Zoo Miami habitat also offers a more enhanced physical environment.

With an established African elephant program, Zoo Miami is a comfortable and more easily-managed environment and will provide close attention to Lisa and Cita as they age.

Zoo Miami occupies almost 750 acres (340 developed), and is home to more than 3,000 animals representing over 500 different species. Zoo Miami is committed to growing their elephant program. They will soon begin implementing a master plan that includes expanding their elephant exhibits and programs.

Q| WHY ZOO MIAMI?

A| Zoo Miami affords our elephants the best combination of climate, space, socialization and public education exposure.

Zoo Miami is the largest and oldest zoological garden in Florida, and the only sub-tropical zoo in the continental United States, which offers our girls the best climate conditions. Miami's average annual high is 84 degrees and average annual low is 69 degrees Fahrenheit. This affords Lisa and Cita almost 365 days a year outdoors.

Zoo Miami occupies almost 750 acres (340 developed), and is home to more than 3,000 animals representing over 500 different species. Zoo Miami is committed to growing their elephant program. Their intention is to expand their elephant program over the next several years resulting in larger and more complex exhibits.

Zoo Miami is home to a pair of older African elephants, Peggy and Mable. By bringing all four together, all of these elephants will benefit from more choices in social relationships and an enhanced physical environment.

Q| WHO ARE THE ELEPHANTS AT ZOO MIAMI?

A| Peggy and Mable were both born in Botswana, and are 37 years old. Peggy tends to be the more dominant of the pair, taking charge and is more outgoing than Mable. She is also sweet and captivating and definitely loves when the spotlight is on her. When she doesn't get the attention she wants, she will sometimes even resort to throwing around a trunk full of dirt to get it! Mable is very intelligent and mature. She is calm and patient when working with zookeepers and is very engaged when it comes to participating in her enrichment activities.



Q| WHEN WILL THE ELEPHANTS MOVE?

A| Depending on the weather and final shipping details, the elephants will most likely move in the Spring of 2016.

Q| WHY NOT MOVE TO A SANCTUARY?

A| We assessed and explored a variety of options for Lisa and Cita. Zoo Miami affords our elephants the best combination of climate and socialization. Plus, exposure to Zoo Miami's nearly one million visitors will continue educating people about elephants and sharing their importance in the world and their conservation value.

The Tennessee Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee is a very nice facility but we feel Zoo Miami has the added benefit of a larger medical team to support elephant care into the future, and a very high level of conservation education value will continue.

Q| HOW WILL THE MOVE AFFECT LISA AND CITA?

A| Transitioning and actually moving the elephants does have its challenges, but we will work with experienced veterinarians, animal movers and our own animal care staff to make the move as comfortable as possible for Lisa and Cita. We are confident the girls will enjoy the year-round sub-tropical climate and environment of their new home, as well as the softer substrate conditions found at Zoo Miami.

We are sure the elephants will miss the familiarity of the Virginia Zoo and its staff, but as they become more familiar with their new home and companions they will likely find a whole new world of added benefits.

Q| WILL THEY BE HOUSED TOGETHER AT ZOO MIAMI?

A| Yes, Lisa and Cita will be housed together in the African elephant complex. The Zoo Miami staff will then begin introductions with resident elephants Mable and Peggy.

Q| HOW WILL THEY TRAVEL TO MIAMI?

A| The elephants will travel in a semi-tractor trailer driven by an experienced and established animal shipper licensed by the USDA. A veterinarian and animal care staff members will also travel with them and attend to any needs they might have. The elephants will be introduced and conditioned to many of the elements that involve moving them to Miami.

Q| WILL ANY VIRGINIA ZOO STAFF GO WITH THE ELEPHANTS TO MIAMI AND HELP EASE THE TRANSITION?

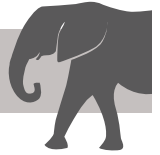
A| Yes, Virginia Zoo will send staff to travel with the elephants who will stay for a period of time after their arrival to help with the transition.

Q| WHEN WILL LISA AND CITA BE ON EXHIBIT IN MIAMI?

A| Before leaving the Virginia Zoo, our staff will ensure they are healthy and free of infectious disease. Upon arrival, quarantine is typically 30 days.

Q| WHEN WILL THE INTEGRATION BEGIN WITH THE OTHER ELEPHANTS?

A| Upon arrival and from their first day, they will be within visual, olfactory and vocal distance to Mable and Peggy. Physical introduction to the other elephants will be determined by the animals' behavior and cues observed by the elephant and veterinary care team.



Q| WHY HAS THE VIRGINIA ZOO MADE THIS DECISION NOW?

A| AZA has put a best practices policy in place that requires zoos to maintain elephants in herds of three or more members to maintain the complex social and psychological health of the animals. The Virginia Zoo does not have the space and resources available to house a larger herd of elephants and the options for additional elephants to our Zoo have not been optimal. We also feel that the climate in Hampton Roads is less suitable to elephants and that they are best suited to favorable year-round conditions that offer more space.

Based on this research and review, the Virginia Zoo, and at this time 18 other zoos, need to meet this requirement in the next year. It is our goal to find the most suitable conditions and care for Lisa and Cita.

Q| WHY ARE YOU MOVING THE ELEPHANTS?

A| Studies of elephants in the wild show that elephants, especially female elephants, are herd animals with matriarch leaders and are very social animals that naturally live in multi-generational herds. When brought into captivity many years ago, elephants were not kept and maintained in their familial family herds but were separated into singles and various pairings. As our philosophies for captive conditions changed, elephants (like most other animals today), began to be studied more closely in captivity and in the wild. More has been learned about their natural histories and species identity. What is learned and is thought to enhance their lives, is then applied to animals in captivity resulting in a greater effort to maintain them in more thoughtful conditions similar to how they naturally exist.

Q| WHEN DID THE VIRGINIA ZOO ACQUIRE THE ELEPHANTS?

A| In 1976, the Virginia Zoo acquired two elephants, Monica and Lisa. The iconic elephants, and their exhibit, brought with them both attention to these amazing animals and eventually to the threatened status of their habitat in the wild. Additionally, they brought awareness to the increased poaching for ivory in Africa.

In 2002, the Zoo underwent a major exhibit expansion, creating the Okavango Delta African plains exhibit which included a new elephant habitat. In 2005, the Zoo acquired a third elephant, Cita. The Zoo's plan was to maintain female elephants, most likely post-reproductive females, because the exhibit was not built to hold bull elephants or support an elephant breeding program.

Q| ELEPHANTS IN ZOOS SERVE AS AMBASSADORS FOR THE SPECIES. HOW CAN YOU NOT HAVE SUCH AN ICONIC ANIMAL?

A| The Virginia Zoo elephants have played a significant role as ambassadors for their species. The Zoo remains committed to furthering the conservation messaging of these great animals. We know that there are many animal species that appeal to our visitors and will be expanding the collection to include even more of these species and do not feel that the loss of elephants at the Zoo will have a detrimental effect on Zoo visitorship or support. Sending our elephants to a place that is more suitable to their needs (those determined by expert advice), is logical and the correct ethical decision to make.

Q| CAN THE VIRGINIA ZOO CREATE MORE SPACE FOR THE ELEPHANTS?

A| The Virginia Zoo property borders the Lafayette River and because of this, and other building and property limitations, does not allow us the land necessary to expand or build a suitably-sized exhibit for elephants into the future. AZA determined that elephants require a certain amount of space and it is likely that this requirement will increase in the future.



Q| DOES THIS DECISION INDICATE THAT THE VIRGINIA ZOO SHOULD NOT HAVE HAD ELEPHANTS IN THE PAST?

A| Studies of elephants in the wild show that elephants, especially female elephants, are social animals that naturally live in multi-generational herds. When brought into captivity many years ago, the philosophy for how elephants were maintained in captivity was different. As more significant and in-depth studies have been performed, the findings have shown how intelligent elephants are, how important their family and social life is, what their best body condition is and many more areas contributing to overall welfare. The new findings change our philosophies in how we care for animals, often requiring significant change.

Q| WHAT ABOUT THE ELEPHANT STATUE AT THE ZOO'S MAIN ENTRANCE?

A| The elephant statue at the Zoo's entrance will remain in place. This sculpture contributes to the rich public and community artwork in the City of Norfolk, and serves as an iconic symbol of animals and nature.

Q| WHAT ARE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR THE ELEPHANT EXHIBIT SPACE ONCE THEY ARE GONE?

A| The elephant exhibit will be renovated to suit white rhinos. We feel this species is a good match for the current exhibit size and our environment. A breeding group of rhino will align with our mission, offering us the opportunity to contribute more significantly to conserving the species. Currently in the wild of Africa, there are fewer than 20,000 White rhinoceros as compared to approximately 470,000 elephants.