



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | October 4, 2024**

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## **Virginia Zoo unveils Norfolk mermaid statue makeover**

NORFOLK, VA – The Virginia Zoo is unveiling the newly designed mermaid statue that greets guests as they enter the zoological park on October 10th at 2:30pm. Media and the public are welcome to join the Zoo with Executive Director, Greg Bockheim, and several Virginia Zoological Society Board Members to view the new statue designed by local artist Bob Langston.

The tradition of Norfolk mermaid statues began in 1999 with Norfolk attorney Peter Decker to signify the city's symbol, the mermaid, on a "parade" throughout local businesses. These sculptures were designed and adopted by many businesses and community leaders to have them decorated by artists in an effort to represent the variety of organizations that make up the city.

"We are excited to celebrate our community and our Zoo through the rejuvenation of this beloved symbol of our city. I anticipate that with beautiful and skillful work Bob has crafted, this may easily become the most photographed mermaid statue in our area," said Greg Bockheim, Executive Director of the Virginia Zoo.

The Virginia Zoo's mermaid statue was last refreshed in 2010 and it was due for a facelift after experiencing normal wear and tear over the years. The Zoo made a call-out for local artists to submit their design concepts and Bob Langston was selected by Zoo staff out of many Hampton Roads creatives to ultimately redesign the beloved mermaid statue. Bob is a full time freelance artist from Virginia Beach with over 36 years of experience that primarily focuses on creating paintings. In his career he has designed one Norfolk mermaid and two Virginia Beach dolphins. Bob's full portfolio can be found here: <https://thebobzone.com/>

For this mermaid refresh, Bob found inspiration in the animals that call the Virginia Zoo home and the wild environments around them. A wide variety of animal species will be represented on this new statue and the welcoming sculpture will give guests a taste of what they are set to experience in the park.

### **About the Virginia Zoo**

The Virginia Zoo, located in Norfolk, Virginia, is home to more than 700 exceptional animals representing over 150 fascinating species. Founded in 1901 and residing on 53 beautifully landscaped acres, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to saving and protecting the world's wildlife by inspiring a passion for nature and taking conservation action at home and around the world. The Virginia Zoo is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is recognized as a global leader in education, recreation, science, wildlife conservation, and animal care and welfare. For more than a century, the Zoo has connected adults, families and school children with the natural world and its wildlife. The Virginia Zoo is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. with last admission at 3 p.m. For admission prices and to learn more, visit [virginiazoo.org](http://virginiazoo.org).



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