



Birmingham Zoo rolls out new 'Trails of Africa' exhibit

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By **William Thornton -- The Birmingham News**



BIRMINGHAM, Alabama --- Crowds began forming early this morning at the **Birmingham Zoo** as donors and members waited to get the first look at the new **"Trails of Africa"** exhibit.

The general public can see it Saturday, starting at noon. Today **attendees got to see Bulwagi**, the zoo's elephant, a rhinoceros and a hippopotamus at different times in the exhibit.

Enlarge

Joe Songer -- The Birmingham News

Birmingham Zoo donors and members are getting a sneak peek at the much anticipated Trails of Africa exhibit Thursday March 10, 2011. This weekend paid visitors to the zoo will be able to see sections of the new area before the official opening this April. Agatha Anderson, 3, of Homewood keeps a safe distance as she checks out Bibi the warthog during the sneak peek at Trails of Africa. (Joe Songer-The Birmingham News)

Birmingham Zoo Trails of Africa sneak peek gallery (9 photos)

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Katrina Cade, vice president of marketing, said the zoo is holding a **low-key, gradual rollout** of the new \$12.5 million **Trails exhibit**. When fully up and running, the exhibit will present a simulated African savannah environment for elephants, giraffes, zebras, hippos and ostriches to roam. In addition, interactive exhibits will bring visitors closer to the animals, and a cafe will offer a mealtime view of the beasts.

Keepers will also be out through Saturday to give demonstrations and talks about the

animals.

"We're really excited to offer this opportunity to our members and donors who have been so supportive of us through the years, even during the present economic crisis," Cade said. "This is just a sneak peek, but they're finally coming to see our new home for these animals."

The zoo expects to have a third elephant, Ajani, arrive from the Indianapolis Zoo within the next two to three weeks. The 10-year-old male, Ajani (pronounced Ah-JOHN-ee), will join the **10-year-old male Callee**, and 29-year-old Bulwagi. A fourth elephant is expected later this summer from the Dresden Zoo.

Want to know more?

See the Birmingham Zoo files

Birmingham Zoo Trails of Africa sneak peek

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