



David M. Jones, DVM
Zoo Director

AMERICA'S LARGEST WALK-THROUGH NATURAL HABITAT ZOO

Located about 75 miles west of Raleigh in Asheboro, the North Carolina Zoo is nationally recognized as one of the nation's finest zoos. It was the first American zoo designed from its inception around the "natural habitat" philosophy--presenting animals and plants in exhibits that closely resemble the habitats in which they would be found in the wild.

Among the most popular exhibits are those that display polar bears, sea lions, river otters, alligators, elephants, gorillas, baboons, rhinoceros, giraffes and zebras. The 37-acre African Plains exhibit alone is as large as many entire zoos. The 11-acre Prairie exhibit in the North American region showcases the zoo's collection of bison and elk.

The zoo's newest attraction, "kidZone," is a special place where kids can dig, build and investigate—close up—the lives of animals. Daily, live animal encounters let kids interact with reptiles, mammals and birds and view the zoo's first species: the Galapagos tortoises. It's a great place for kids to climb, create explore and—best of all—have fun.

The North Carolina Zoo was the nation's first state-supported zoo and remains the nation's largest walk-through natural-habitat zoo. Its African and North American exhibit regions span more than 500 acres with more than five miles of walkways. Another 900 acres are available for future development on this scenic site in the Uwharrie Mountains, considered by geologists to be one of the world's oldest mountain ranges. These beautiful hills are still called "mountains," but the tallest point on zoo grounds is Purgatory Mountain at 937 feet above sea level.

One of the zoo's primary missions is to make visitors aware of the connections between humans and the world's animals, plants and natural resources. Interpretive galleries and individual signs provide a wealth of information to make visits more enjoyable and educational.

Numerous special events are held at the zoo to add another dimension to the visitor experience. These include: an "Earth Day Celebration" in April, "Migratory Bird Day" in May and the popular "Boo at the Zoo" Halloween festival in October.

The best way to see the zoo is on foot, so visitors can explore the exhibits and trails. An internal tram is available to transport visitors between exhibit areas, but most animals are not visible from the trams. Visitors can enter or exit by either the North American or African gates, where a shuttle bus can transport them to the area where they're parked. Zoo officials recommend taking a minimum of five hours to explore all that the park offers at a comfortable pace.

Other nearby attractions include more than 100 potters in the Seagrove community south of the zoo, as well as the Richard Petty Museum devoted to the "King" of stock car racing in Level Cross and the North Carolina Aviation Museum at





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the Asheboro Municipal Airport. Of course there is also the beautiful scenery and recreational opportunities of the Uwharrie Mountains region.

The North Carolina Zoo is open year round. Hours are 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. from April through October and 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., November through March. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens and college students, and \$6 for children ages 2-12. Admission prices for visitors are reduced by \$2 during December, January and February. For additional information, visit the zoo's Web site at www.nczoo.org or call 1-800-488-0444.

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*The North Carolina Zoo is an
agency of the North Carolina
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