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Seneca Park Zoo invites the community to visit orangutans before their departure

Bornean orangutans will move to new homes in preparation for Main Zoo Building demolition

March 1, 2018 — Zoo officials are celebrating Denda, Kumang, and Bella, the Zoo's Bornean orangutans, and encourage the community to visit to join the celebration before the orangutans depart to new homes this spring.

The three orangutans will be moving to other zoos in preparation for the Main Zoo Building demolition this year. The demolition will pave the way for a new, state of the art tropics complex to be built in the next phase of the Zoo transformation.

“While it’s very sad to say goodbye to Denda, Kumang, and Bella, we are very happy that they are moving to zoos where they will have modern habitats rather than the ones in the antiquated Main Zoo building,” stated **Larry Sorel, Zoo Director**.

“Keepers have done an amazing job ensuring the physical and mental stimulation of the orangutans despite the old-fashioned habitat,” he continued. “This year, it’s time to raze the Main Zoo Building so we can replace it with a modern habitat like the *A Step into Africa* expansion that the community will experience later this summer.”

The Zoo is in the midst of a multi-year transformation that includes two new openings this year: the beginnings of a Cold Asia area incorporating new red panda and snow leopard habitats in May, and then later this summer, a four-and-a-half-acre expansion of *A Step into Africa* featuring over a dozen animals of the African savanna, including giraffes, zebras and much more. The demolition of the Main Zoo Building and subsequent rebuild of the front of the Zoo is part of this transformation.

The Zoo invites the public to visit, celebrate, and say goodbye to the orangutans. Included in the plans are special enrichment and zoo keeper chats on weekends in March, and every day during spring break, March 30 to April 8.

The Zoo has been home to Bornean orangutans since 1967. Kumang, who recently turned 40, has been at the Zoo since 1991 and has had four offspring, including Bella, who was born in 2013.

“Denda, Kumang, and Bella have captured the hearts and imagination of guests here at the Zoo,” said **Pamela Reed Sanchez, President and CEO of the Seneca Park Zoo Society**. “We welcome the community to help celebrate them before their departure, and to get involved in the ‘*A Wilder Vision*’ campaign to support the Zoo’s transformation,” she commented. “The next phase of the development includes the construction of a tropics complex that will incorporate animals from the Congo, Madagascar and Borneo, thus bringing orangutans back to Seneca Park Zoo in a best-in-class habitat.”

The departure dates for the orangutans has not been confirmed, but is expected before mid-April. The new homes for the orangutans will be disclosed when the receiving institutions see fit.

To learn more about the Zoo’s transformation visit senecaparkzoo.org/wilder.

Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.