

Frequently asked questions about Bamboo's move to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium (PDZA)

When will Bamboo move to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium)?

- We are making final arrangements for the transfer of 38-year-old Asian elephant Bamboo from Seattle to Tacoma. The move is expected to be completed before Labor Day.

Bamboo has lived at Woodland Park Zoo for 37 years. Why is she being moved?

- This move is a win-win situation that serves the best interest of Bamboo, Woodland Park Zoo, and Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. The American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) recognizes the social nature of elephant communities and recommends that elephants be managed in groups of three or more. Woodland Park is moving toward multi-generational, integrated herds. PDZA has been in need of a third elephant to enhance its herd's social dynamics. Here, Bamboo will have an opportunity for more social contact.
- Bamboo will remain in the same region, enabling the Seattle community to continue enjoying this wonderful elephant when they visit Tacoma.

What if Bamboo doesn't get along with the elephants at PDZA? Will she return to Seattle?

- The zoo staffs have carefully assessed both herds and are very confident that Bamboo will be more compatible with Asian elephants her age and disposition at PDZA. She will live in an appropriate social grouping where she will have more social contact.
- The close proximity of our zoos will allow the Woodland Park staff to monitor the transition and introduction. We will evaluate any issues and necessary changes that continue to be in the best interest of Bamboo. PDZA has a 40-year proud tradition of caring for elephants. We are confident in our integration plan and the passion, expertise and professionalism that our staff will bring to this new opportunity.

Is Bamboo being moved because she doesn't get along with Hansa, the Woodland Park calf?

- Now that Hansa is nearly 5 years old, Bamboo has progressively gotten along better with her. However, this was not the case when Hansa was a newborn. Bamboo doesn't exhibit predictable social skills toward newborns and very young calves. Moreover, Bamboo and African matriarch Watoto have never been consistently socially compatible. Woodland Park currently manages two separate herds, but it is optimal to have a herd that is integrated.
- As an AZA-accredited institution, we look to the Asian Elephant Species Survival Plan team for recommendations. The plan manages the elephants cooperatively and we have a commitment to proactive elephant management. Woodland Park Zoo is a designated Asian elephant breeding facility; Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is not. PDZA is in need of a third elephant. This is a good window of opportunity for both herds.

Is Point Defiance able to care for an additional elephant?

- Point Defiance is very excited to welcome Bamboo. We have both the physical capacity and six expert elephant keepers to care for three elephants. The barn was designed to accommodate three elephants and the yard can accommodate even more. We would not accept Bamboo if we did not believe we could provide an ideal home and the best of care for her.

Why do zoos keep elephants?

- Most people can't afford to see these magnificent animals in the wild and, with an increasingly urbanized society, opportunities to connect with nature are fewer and fewer. Zoos have a big impact on visitors by offering a chance to see live animals up close and the greatest potential to teach about what is happening in the wild and how people can help ensure a brighter future for all elephants. We want people to care for elephants and to take action on behalf of elephants in the wild.
- In a poll released by AZA in May, 95 percent of U.S. adults agree that visiting accredited zoos and seeing elephants and rhinos helps people appreciate them more and encourages people to learn more about them.
- Further, elephants in zoos provide a link to their wild counterparts in nature. Research on elephants in our care is applied in many ways to help elephants in the wild.

What kinds of standards does Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium adhere to in caring for our elephants?

- Point Defiance Zoo is an accredited member of AZA, which sets rigorous standards for animal care. The AZA Standards for Elephant Management and Care includes minimum space requirements, enclosure design, nutrition, reproduction, enrichment, and veterinary care to ensure a quality living environment for elephants. These standards, which were adopted in 2001 and updated in 2003, were developed in consultation with zoo elephant experts, as well as field researchers and animal welfare advocates.
- AZA's standards go far beyond USDA standards for elephant care or other state regulatory agencies.