

NAPLES ZOO

COURTESY OF NAPLES ZOO AT CARIBBEAN GARDENS



at Caribbean Gardens

2009 marks the **40TH ANNIVERSARY** since the Tetzlaff family introduced wild animals to the historic tropical garden. Coinciding with the 70th anniversary of *The Wizard of Oz* movie, Naples Zoo is celebrating with Lions, Tigers, and Bears,'09!

Representing the first part of the famous phrase are pure-bred South African lions. Just a year old, these young cats are as adorable as they are rare. Their genetics can be directly traced to southern African populations. To maintain a healthy and genetically diverse population outside the wild for at least 100 years, these lions participate in a Species Survival Plan® coordinated by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

As for tigers, Naples Zoo offers guests an opportunity to see a striking white tiger in their Tiger Forest exhibit. The white tiger can be seen this summer stalking amid historic 80-year-old bamboo or basking in his naturalistic rockwork pool. After Labor Day, the Zoo's endangered Malayan tigers return.

Finally, to educate Zoo guests about living with Florida's wild bears, Naples Zoo created Black Bear Hammock featuring two distinct habitats. The "Natural Habitat" contains native plantings to replicate the hardwood hammock ecosystem as well as descending pools culminating in a rockwork pond for the bears to enjoy a cool swim. The public watches the bears from inside an old style Florida shack through full height 2" thick zoo grade glass. The

"Backyard Habitat" is themed like a suburban backyard complete with a lanai where visitors watch through simulated sliding glass doors.

It is the largest black bear exhibit at any AZA accredited zoo east of the Mississippi and is 30 times larger than the state's requirements and 50 percent larger than long range recommendations set by the AZA. Visitors will both have the opportunity to learn basic safety tips if a bear is encountered in the wild as well as how to avoid attracting them to their yard. They will also gain a deeper appreciation of the bears' crucial role in the local environment.

Naples Zoo also offers a full day of fun shows and activities including the Primate Expedition Cruise which takes guests on a guided tour through islands of monkeys, lemurs and apes. Feature shows include Planet Predator and Serpents: Fangs & Fiction. Both present living animals along with stunning wildlife clips. Guests also enjoy the Meet the Keeper Series, Snake Sunbathing and watching professional keepers hand feed the giant reptiles in Alligator Bay.

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239-262-5409 | www.napleszoo.org