

NEW ZOO & ADVENTURE PARK

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NEW Zoo Announces Passing of Lioness Ajia



With heavy hearts, we share the update that beloved female lioness, Ajia, passed peacefully yesterday with the help of humane euthanasia. Ajia had been under close veterinary care, receiving specialty treatment and monitoring for age-related health concerns. She turned 20 years old last October, making her one of the older lionesses in human care. Life expectancy for lions in the wild averages just 10 to 14 years.

“Ajia received excellent care throughout her life from people who have adored her,” said Carmen Murach, NEW Zoo & Adventure Park Director. “Her long lifespan is a testament to our team’s dedication to her wellbeing. Ajia will be deeply missed by staff and volunteers, and by the many zoo guests who have gotten to know her over the 18-plus years that she’s been with us.”

Ajia came to the NEW Zoo in May of 2006. She became a mother to three cubs in 2008, all of which eventually moved to other AZA accredited zoos to start families of their own. Ajia was known for being a “very good girl” by her caretakers and she bonded easily with male lion, Loid, who arrived in 2017. She enjoyed participating in regular training sessions with her zookeepers, even allowing them to draw blood from her tail while sitting calmly. Ajia preferred taking bits of food from feeding tongs rather than eating off the ground, and she would often roar in the evenings, her voice slightly quieter than Loid’s but still carrying far enough to be heard from a few miles away from the Zoo.

With Ajia’s passing, resident lion Loid will be watched closely and provided with some extra toys and treats to keep him busier. Unlike many adult male lions who seem content to be independent, Loid has always been strongly bonded with Ajia, preferring to be near her rather than apart. The Zoo is calling on community members and volunteers to consider visiting during these last several weeks of winter, to spend some time by the lion habitat to help Loid through his grief.

“We expect Loid may show some signs of loneliness while we work with the AZA’s African Lion Species Survival Plan to identify a potential new mate for him,” said Murach. “It’s quiet at the Zoo this time of year, and Loid has always loved watching people. Every zoo guest these days will make a difference for him.”

Connecting the community with wildlife and nature through engaging, interactive experiences.

The NEW Zoo & Adventure Park is one of only a few AZA accredited zoos in the country that do not receive local or regional public tax support for annual operations.



