

## News Release

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## For Immediate Release

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# Three Not-So-Little Pigs Debut at Naples Zoo

## *Colorful Red River Hogs Ready to Delight Visitors*

**Naples, FL** — Three of Africa's colorful red river hogs debut at Naples Zoo tomorrow, Wednesday, May 17. With tufts of hair hanging off leaf-shaped ears that stick out above a shovel-like snout and a red-haired coat divided by a white stripe running down the back, this all new species to Naples Zoo is an eye-catcher. The new 100-pound wild swine are the latest addition to the African Oasis area where zoo guests already see greater kudus, impalas, tortoises, gazelles, and porcupines.

As you can imagine, red river hogs, a type of African bush pig, leave quite an impression. Along with their signature reddish coat, the three young boars have short, sharp tusks used in combat with other hogs as well as bony outgrowths on the sides of their muzzle which help protect them in these encounters.

Red river hogs are fast runners and surprisingly good swimmers. They are found in the forests and savanna woodlands of western and central Africa. In the wild they sweep their snouts across the forest floor like vacuum cleaners to devour pig delicacies like roots, seeds, bulbs, and dung beetles.

As forests have been destroyed, red river hogs are becoming scarce. While not yet endangered, the red river hog is one of the species sought after by commercial bushmeat hunters. It is rare to find the species outside protected areas in western-most parts of its range. Besides humans, the red river hog's other predators are leopards, lions, spotted hyenas and pythons.

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Zoo Director David Tetzlaff states, "We are excited about introducing these animals as they are the first non-domesticated pig to be exhibited at Naples Zoo. Plus, as an accredited zoo, we're honored to be entrusted with helping to manage the population of red river hogs."

Select species including the red river hogs are managed through a *Taxon Advisory Group* (TAG) coordinated through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Specifically for this species, professionals from accredited zoos work through the *Wild Pig, Peccary and Hippo TAG* to maintain lasting genetic diversity. Naples Zoo General Curator Conrad Schmitt, who serves on this TAG, explains: "A number of zoos cooperatively imported red river hogs from Africa in the past decade. These three boars are the result of successful breeding programs for those animals." Naples Zoo's red river hogs were born at the Denver Zoo.

Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens is nationally accredited by the prestigious American Zoo and Aquarium Association. The Zoo is located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road in Naples across from the Coastland Center mall. In addition to innovative presentations like *Serpents: Fangs & Fiction* and *Planet Predator*, the Zoo offers a historic botanical garden and many rare animals. Guests board the *Primate Expedition Cruise* to glide by islands inhabited by monkeys, lemurs, and apes living in natural habitats. Admission (\$15.95 adult/ \$9.95 children) includes all shows and the boat ride. Visitors can also pick up a healthy lunch and snacks at the SUBWAY® Cafe and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. The Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:30 to 5:30 with the last ticket sold at 4:30. Discover more at [www.napleszoo.com](http://www.napleszoo.com) or call (239) 262-5409.

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