

Lv Zoo Welcomes Piper, North American River Otter

The 8-Year-Old Female will Join Luani in the Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital North American Otter Exhibit this April

By Matt Provence

(Schnecksville, Pa.) -- Lehigh Valley Zoo is pleased to announce the addition of a female North American river otter named Piper. The 8-year-old otter arrived from the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore and will soon be joining the Zoo's current 10-year-old male otter, Luani, who has made LV Zoo home since 2017.

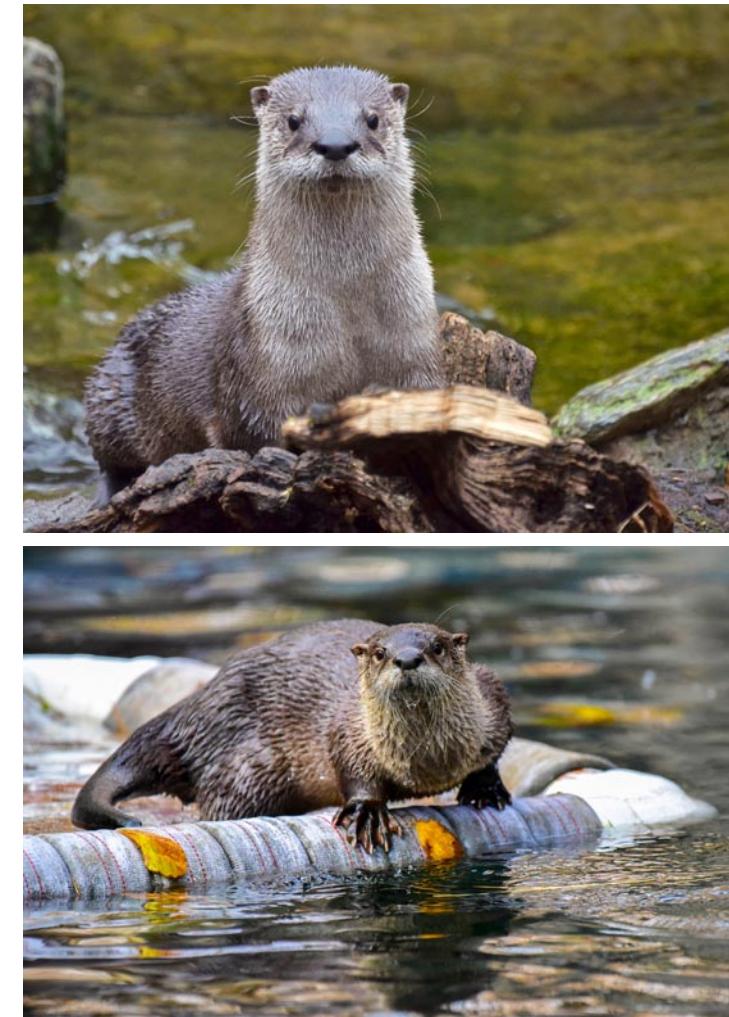
Piper has been quarantining off-exhibit since early March. On March 16, Luani also will join Piper off-exhibit to start a behind-the-scenes introduction process which is expected to take approximately two weeks. During this time, zookeepers will monitor the otters' behavior and interactions closely to ensure a smooth transition.

"Our Zoo family is very excited to welcome Piper to the Lehigh Valley and for her to get to know our community," said Amanda Shurr, President and CEO. "Our staff, volunteers, guests and -- most importantly -- Luani, have been waiting a little over a year for just the right female otter to join us. This pairing is extra special because Luani and Piper are an approved breeding pair; so we hope we may welcome more otters in the future."

Luani and Piper are part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP), which aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of threatened and endangered species in accredited zoos and aquariums. Luani has been alone in the exhibit since Naya passed away in December 2021 at the age of 14 years old, which exceeded the median life expectancy of North American river otters in the wild. As a member of the AZA, LV Zoo is committed to providing its animals with optimal welfare that allows them to thrive longer than their wild counterparts.

During the introduction process, the Zoo will take the opportunity to make repairs to the Lehigh Valley Reilly Children's Hospital North American River Otter Exhibit. These modifications will enhance the exhibit and create a more comfortable and enriching environment for both otters.

Visitors can look forward to seeing Luani and Piper together once the introduction process is complete. Starting April 1, LV Zoo will be back to in-seasons hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days per week.



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