

Assiniboine Park Zoo Begins Vaccinating Animals to Provide Protection Against COVID-19

For immediate release: Winnipeg, March 8, 2022 – The Assiniboine Park Zoo has begun the process of administering a COVID-19 vaccine made uniquely for animals to protect species at greater risk of contracting the illness. The Zoo is one of a number of internationally accredited zoological facilities in Canada that will be vaccinating animals against COVID-19.

“Vaccination is a very common, safe and effective way of protecting animals in human care from a variety of illnesses,” said Dr. Chris Enright, Director, Veterinary Services and Animal Welfare, Assiniboine Park Zoo. “In addition to other biosecurity protocols we have in place here at the Zoo, vaccination against COVID-19 adds another layer of protection for the most vulnerable species in our care.”

While there has not been a diagnosed case of COVID-19 among the animals at Assiniboine Park Zoo, there have been a number of cases reported at other zoos, some of which have been fatal. Species most vulnerable to illness from COVID-19 include primates, felids, and animals that have closer interactions with their human caregivers.

The Zoo is planning to vaccinate 55 animals. Species to be vaccinated include:

- Amur tigers, snow leopards and other felids
- White-handed gibbons, squirrel monkeys and other primates
- Camels, goats and llamas
- Skunks and meerkats

The vaccine will be administered in two doses, approximately three weeks apart.

About the Zoetis COVID-19 Animal Vaccine

Based in New Jersey, Zoetis is the world’s leading animal health company. The company’s COVID-19 animal vaccine was developed at its global research and development headquarters in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Zoetis is donating over 26,000 doses of the vaccine to over 200 zoos and 20 conservatories, sanctuaries and other animal organizations located in over a dozen countries including Canada, Chile, and the United States. Use of the Zoetis COVID-19 vaccine is being authorized on a case-by-case basis by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (Canadian Centre for Veterinary Biologics division, CCVB).

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