



Eland Antelopes Give Their Debut at Al Ain Zoo

- Zoo's popular African Mixed Exhibit welcomes new species
to its large African Wildlife collection -

Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, 08 February 2012: Al Ain Zoo is delighted to announce the addition of four Eland antelopes to the diverse array of African wildlife in the African Mixed Exhibit. Being one of the zoo's most popular exhibits, the African Mixed Exhibit showcases a total of eight mammal species including Nubian giraffe, Southern-white rhinoceros, Grant's zebra, Fringe-eared oryx, Mhorr gazelle, Dama gazelle, Thompson gazelle as well as two bird species, namely Marabou storck and Ostrich. All animals roam freely together on more than five hectares of open landscape.

The Eland is a spiral-horned antelope that lives in the savannah and plains of East and Southern Africa. It is the largest antelope in the African continent. Elands are said to be one of the slowest antelopes and can jump over a height of 2.5 meters or above.

Majid Al Qassimi, Assistant Associate Veterinarian of Al Ain Zoo, said:

"The addition of the Eland antelopes to our African Mixed Exhibit provides an exciting opportunity for animal lovers across the country to encounter this beautiful species firsthand. Mixed species exhibits such as the African Mixed Exhibit are an excellent way to educate the public on the complexity of the interactions among different animal species of specific ecosystems."

Elands are herbivores and usually eat grass, branches and leaves. They are diurnal and nocturnal but tend to be inactive during the heat of day. Elands feed for a very long time during night in hot weather and sleep long in daytime. The large antelope can conserve water by increasing its body temperature.

Although Elands are not endangered, the population is gradually decreasing due to habitat loss (because of expanding human settlements) and poaching for its superior meat. As they are docile and inactive most of the time, they can be easily killed.

- Ends -

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For more information on Al Ain Zoo please visit www.alainzoo.ae

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About Al Ain Zoo:

Founded in 1968 by the late Sheikh Zayed, the Father of our Nation, *Al Ain Zoo* is a family destination, providing entertainment and learning experiences in a natural outdoor environment. Today, visitors of all ages discover the zoo's wildlife and enjoy a great day-out packed with fun and adventure, while learning about conservation and exploring a collection of over 4,300 animals.

Al Ain Zoo is home to an internationally important conservation programme focussing on the wildlife of the world's arid regions, the zoo is involved in conservation research, captive breeding and propagation and the reintroduction of threatened species to their wild habitats. Our collection of desert antelopes is recognized as among the best in the world. *Al Ain Zoo* is a proud member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA). Strategic partnerships have been set up with leading zoos, conservation agencies and associations from across the world, including the World Conservation Union and Species Survival Commission, Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi, San Diego Zoo, Edinburgh Zoo, the Northern Rangelands Trust of Kenya and the Sahara Conservation Fund.

As part of the UAE's commitment to wildlife conservation both within the UAE and internationally, *Al Ain Zoo* is transforming the area around the existing zoo into a new institution dedicated to exhibiting, interpreting and conserving desert wildlife. This sustainable leisure and learning destination, called *Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort*, will provide an extraordinary opportunity for visitors to explore and learn about the desert world and experience a world-class tourist destination. Embedded within the *UAE World Desert*, the *Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre* will feature educational exhibits that celebrate the wildlife and traditions of the desert, celebrate the conservation heritage of the late Sheikh Zayed and help chart a sustainable future for desert living.