



## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

- For Immediate Release -

*February 5, 2008*

### **Hippo fatality report commissioned by the Calgary Zoo released to the public**

Calgary, AB – The Calgary Zoo has endorsed the findings of an independent report suggesting that new standards be adopted for the transport of large animals such as hippopotamus for zoological purposes. The report, prepared by Dr. Jacques Dancosse, a member of the Animal Care Team of the International Air Transport Association, was commissioned when a six-year-old female river hippopotamus died after being shipped to Calgary from the Denver Zoo. The Calgary Zoo provided Dr. Dancosse with terms of reference to ensure a thorough investigation.

“The report indicates that proper care was provided for the animal before, during and at the end of the journey and that the medical treatment she received after her arrival in Calgary was appropriate,” said Dr. Clément Lanthier, President and CEO of the Calgary Zoo.

“We asked Dr. Dancosse to investigate specific aspects of the transport of this animal in order to identify if anything could be done differently in the future,” said Dr. Lanthier. “We care deeply for our animals and it was important for us to learn if there is a way to improve our procedures and prevent another such tragedy.”

The female hippopotamus was transported from the Denver Zoo in order to join the two hippos currently residing at the Calgary Zoo. She left Denver on the morning of October 25 and arrived in Calgary the next afternoon. In spite of medical treatment provided upon the animal’s arrival in Calgary, the hippo succumbed to complications from pressure myopathy which had produced toxins in her body during transport. She died early on Saturday, October 27.

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“After reviewing this case, it is clear to me that Hazina [‘s] death was an accident that none could have reasonably foreseen,” said Dr. Dancosse in his report.

However, Dr. Dancosse went on to make several recommendations in his report which could help prevent a similar tragedy. Those recommendations, released in the report today, include:

- ♦ Visual stops at regular intervals should be made mandatory when large animals are being transported;
- ♦ Containers in which hippos are shipped should allow the animal to stand and lay on its side without being cramped, but not allow them to turn around;
- ♦ The crate should have a non-slippery floor to give the animal sound footing when it wants to get up;
- ♦ Abundant bedding should be provided;
- ♦ Some means of looking at the animal remotely while en route, such as a closed circuit television camera, should be available;
- ♦ The animal should have free access to drinking water during the trip.

The hippo was shipped directly from Denver to Calgary, with regular stops to feed and water the animal. U.S. and Canadian quarantine laws and a lack of suitable facilities prevented the driver from stopping at zoos along the way during this trip, but Dr. Dancosse suggested such stops be considered for future shipments wherever feasible and permissible, particularly if the animal is observed not to be standing.

“Although this report confirms that all current transport requirements and regulations were followed and while most of the findings are positive, we recognize that Dr. Dancosse has made several important recommendations which have the potential of improving the future transportation of large animals such as hippos. We fully intend to implement these recommendations in our own practices insofar as transport regulations allow.”

In addition to incorporating the report’s recommendations in its own procedures, the Calgary Zoo will also provide the report to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and ask that these recommendations be considered for inclusion in the standardized guidelines being developed for the transportation of hippos.

“While the untimely death of an animal is always a difficult situation for everyone involved in its care, we hope the adoption of new guidelines as a result of Hazina’s death will benefit the transportation of all large animals in the future, “said Dr. Lanthier.

The report in its entirety, as well as the terms of reference given to Dr. Dancosse, is posted on the Calgary Zoo website at: [www.calgaryzoo.com](http://www.calgaryzoo.com).

**Media instructions:**

**What: Media Availability for Interviews**

**When: 12:00 noon, Tuesday, February 5, 2008**

**Who: Dr. Clément Lanthier, President & CEO of the Calgary Zoo  
Dr. Sandie Black, Head of Veterinary Services at the Calgary Zoo**

**Where: Safari Lodge**

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*The Calgary Zoo is part of a professional, accredited association and member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA), associations comprised of caring, trusted experts committed to ensuring that many endangered and threatened species are part of the world's future. AZA advocates on behalf of animals with a unified and consistent voice, and collaborates with others committed to their long-term survival. The Calgary Zoo participates in many Species Survival Plans (SSP), programs designed to breed endangered species in captivity to ensure the best possible genetic diversity and maintain healthy populations in human care. Through our conservation, education and research programs, many animals in our care play an essential role in the survival of their species in the wild.*

*The Calgary Zoological Society is a charitable organization. Charitable Registration #118824192 RR0001*

