



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Elephant's Tusk Surgery a Success**

March 28, 2019 – *Jacksonville, FL* – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (JZG) is happy to report that the surgery on 29-year-old African elephant, Ali, was a success. A dedicated team of veterinary and dental specialists assisted the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens' Animal Health and elephant teams with the complicated procedure.

Ali had been receiving ongoing treatment for a damaged tusk and infection for the past few years. Unfortunately, his dental condition reached a point where it could no longer be managed without significant intervention. Jacksonville Zoo consulted with the experts in the field and coordinated a plan of action that included anesthetizing Ali and a dental procedure designed to extract the tusk, if possible.

At 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday morning, Ali's trusted trainers encouraged him into the best position for the procedure to proceed in a side yard behind of the elephant building. Carefully anesthetizing an eleven thousand-pound creature is challenging, but everything went perfectly. Ali was safely, and fully immobilized, a first for him and the crew. Once he was in place, the teams quickly set to work, moving in loads of equipment, shade tents, power sources and heavy machinery. One group was dedicated to the dental work, while the other team was tasked with closely monitoring the Ali's condition and vitals while he was under.

Ultimately his damaged tusk was not able to be extracted. The dental experts determined that, similar to what can sometimes happen in people, bone had grown in connecting Ali's tusk to the jaw. They confirmed that the infection was now under control, but his tusk was jagged and very sharp, requiring trimming and filing. Compromised tissue around the tusk was removed and the site was thoroughly cleaned and treated. Upon completion of the dental work, Ali was awake and on his feet within 90 seconds of reversal. The entire procedure took three hours.

Ali will receive daily care to clean and treat the sensitive site for the next few weeks. Ali is already walking around and eating comfortably.

According to Deputy Zoo Director, Dan Maloney, "We are celebrating a successful procedure. Ali's tooth has been addressed, and he recovered well and is doing nicely. All of our teams performed exceptionally, especially animal health and the elephant crew!"

[Dropbox link to photos and video.](#)

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### **About Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens**

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. **The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit organization and a portion of every ticket sold goes to the over 45 conservation initiatives Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens supports around the world, and here in NE Florida.** JZG is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit [jacksonvillezoo.org](http://jacksonvillezoo.org).