

## AN AFRICAN SAVANNA

**The Lewa Savanna is Zoo Zurich's newest key project. It brings giraffes and rhinos back to the Zürichberg and impresses with its generous open landscape. The new exhibit strives to encourage visitors to actively support the conservation of endangered species and wildlife habitat.**

After the Masoala Rainforest (2003) and the Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park (2014), the Lewa Savanna is the third key project in the zoo's master plan first outlined by Zoo Director Alex Rübel in 1993 to transform Zoo Zurich into a centre of nature conservation. The most striking feature of the 5.6 hectares spanning exhibit are the generous open spaces for giraffes, rhinos and other animals as well as the large African baobab trees. The Lewa Savanna shall increase the visitors' interest in wildlife, raise awareness about the threats to wildlife and natural habitats, highlight the Zoo's partnership with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, and allow visitors to personally contribute to the protection of threatened species.

### **The exhibit**

Through an African-styled entrance, the main path from Kaeng Krachan Elephant Park leads to a large walk-in aviary inhabited by **grey parrots**. From there it continues into the Lewa Giraffe House, the interior zone for **reticulated giraffes** and **white rhinos**. Two platforms allow visitors to observe both species at eye level. An exhibition, featuring life-like bronze rhinos and a cinema, educates visitors about the animals, their natural habitat and the threats they face in the wild. The Zoo's partnership with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (lewa.org) in Kenya is also presented, for visitors to learn more about in situ wildlife conservation efforts.

**Naked mole-rats** can also be found inside the Lewa Giraffe House. Thanks to special peepholes, visitors can observe this animal's underground tunnels and learn more about their highly organized social structures.

From the inner area the path leads to a covered walkway along the length of the exhibit, bringing the visitor to an enormous (artificial) **Baobab** tree, that can even be entered. Behind the iconic African tree, a footbridge leads the visitor into the middle of the giraffes' and rhinos' open savanna space.

Next to the Baobab and the Savanna footbridge, the **meerkat** exhibit provides an action-packed viewing opportunity for visitors.

The visitor now arrives in the middle of **Lewa Village**, which features a school, a hairdressing salon and even a small African airstrip. In this part of the exhibit, visitors can learn about **sustainable tourism** and responsible ways to support community-based conservation and wildlife tourism. On the airstrip stands a tightly anchored replica of the iconic **Serengeti airplane** of legendary zoologist and wildlife filmmaker, Bernhard Grzimek. Nearby, snacks and drinks can be purchased from the Ubele Pavillion, and a picnic area provides a pleasant space to pause and rest while watching the grazing **Dahomey cattle**.

From an elevated terrace above the watering hole, visitors have a beautiful view across the entire Savanna landscape, complete with leaf-pulling giraffes, grazing rhinos, **Grevy's zebras, impalas, Scimitar horned oryx, ostriches** and scurrying **Helmeted guineafowl**. At special events, guests can observe the animals drinking at the watering hole under the moonlight.

The visitors' path continues along the Lewa Airstrip, past the Masoala Express station to the Kopje rocks, the mighty African rock formations which visibly dominate the Lewa Savanna to the southeast. There, visitors will learn more about the animals that call these rocks home, including **Crested porcupines, Pancake tortoises, Giant-plated lizards** and **Spotted hyenas**. Visitors are also encouraged to board the safari bus stuck in the mud for an excellent view across the entire Savanna.

### Key figures

Total area:	5.6 ha
Area Lewa giraffe house:	2400 m <sup>2</sup>
Volume watering hole:	ca. 180 m <sup>3</sup>
Height large baobab:	19 m
Circumference large baobab:	23 m
Diameter large baobab trunk:	7,5 m
Highest Kopje rock:	13 m
Number of feeding trees:	4
Number of feeding lots:	28 automatic feeders with 36 dispensers in total

### Construction

Construction of the Lewa Savanna was implemented under the supervision of Andreas Hohl, Deputy Director of Zoo Zurich, Development and Logistics Manager, and carried out by vetschpartner Landschaftsarchitekten AG in Zürich (management and landscape architecture, Urs Baumgartner and Walter Vetsch) and L3P Architekten AG in Regensburg (architect, Martin Reusser). Construction of Lewa Savanne took place in partnership with Holcim (Schweiz) AG.

## **Financing**

The cost of the Lewa Savanna totals CHF56 million. As with all exhibits at Zoo Zurich, the Lewa Savanna is funded entirely through donations.

Major support was provided by the Tiergarten-Gesellschaft Zürich TGZ, the BUZ Foundation, the Vontobel Foundation, the Baugarten Foundation, the Ernst Göhner Foundation, the DENG Foundation, the Paul Schiller Foundation and the Zoofäscht. Many more contributed to funding the Lewa Savanna with donations or by financing individual objects.

Zoo Zurich's main sponsors Migros, Zürcher Kantonalbank, ewz and Mobiliar as well as the main sponsor for construction, Holcim (Switzerland) AG, supported the zoo's fundraising campaign with their own activities. Costs to develop the land for the site were covered through infrastructure subsidies from the city and Kanton of Zürich in 2010.

Without the generous support at all levels the launch of the new Lewa Savanne would not have been possible.

① Further information, photos, videos and links at [zoo.ch/medien-lewa](http://zoo.ch/medien-lewa)