



County of Onondaga  
Office of the County Executive

J. Ryan McMahon II  
County Executive

[ongov.net](http://ongov.net)

**Media Release**

**For Immediate Release:** 7.5.2019

**Contact:** Mark Nicotra (315) 435-3516

## **County Executive Ryan McMahon Unveils New Exhibit at Rosamond Gifford Zoo**

*6-year old Female Komodo Dragon*

**SYRACUSE, N.Y.** – Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon today welcomed the newest addition to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo – a female Komodo dragon named Naga.

The 5-foot-long reptile represents the largest species of lizard in the world and a first-time species for the zoo. Naga is 6 years old and is on loan from the Memphis Zoo. Today she moved into her new home in the former peafowl exhibit at the Syracuse zoo, adjacent to the Diversity of Birds aviary.

County Executive McMahon said, “This has been a really exciting year for our awesome zoo, starting with the birth of a baby elephant in January, the recent addition of a jellyfish exhibit, and now this amazing creature has joined our zoo family.”

Zoo Director Ted Fox said the Komodo dragon is a species that the zoo has long hoped to introduce to Syracuse as part of its conservation education mission. “This species is so impressive,” he said. “Naga weighs about 35 pounds, but she is not full-grown. Full-grown female Komodos can weigh up 150 pounds, while males average 180 to 200 pounds. The largest Komodo dragon on record was 10 feet long and weighed over 330 pounds.”

Komodo dragons are native to the Lesser Sunda Islands of Indonesia, where they are protected within Komodo National Park. They are vulnerable due to humans encroaching on their habitat and over-hunting of one of their main food sources, Timor deer.

Komodo Dragons are carnivores and the dominant predator in their native habitat. Adults often hunt in groups and are capable of subduing water buffalo and wild pigs as well as deer.

Besides having a powerful bite, Komodo’s have saliva that contains bacteria and anticoagulants – so one bite will make their prey sick and weak, allowing them to easily catch and eat it.

Komodos have a very dragon-like appearance, with coloration ranging from yellow-gray to black, sharp claws and forked tongues. Naga's name is an Indonesian word for "dragon."

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is Syracuse's accredited member of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the gold standard for animal care, wildlife conservation and guest experience. Visit the zoo's website at [www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org](http://www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org) and the Friends of the Zoo events site at [www.syracusezooevents.org](http://www.syracusezooevents.org).

The Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo is the non-profit organization that supports the zoo and its conservation missions. Learn more about the Friends at [www.syracusezooevents.org/our-story](http://www.syracusezooevents.org/our-story).

###