



County of Onondaga
Office of the County Executive

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Media Release

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County Executive Ryan McMahon Welcomes Two Southern Tamandua Anteaters to Rosamond Gifford Zoo

Dexter and Derby are on display now

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon welcomed Dexter and Derby to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo family today. Dexter and Derby are Southern Tamandua Anteaters and the latest addition to the growing zoo family.

Tamanduas are a genus of anteater with two species, Northern and Southern, that live in the Northern and Southern parts of South America. They are called lesser anteaters because they look like a smaller version of the giant anteater that hails from the same part of the world.

The tamanduas – a male and a female -- arrived at the zoo from Michigan and can be found on exhibit in the zoo's Animal Adaptations wing.

County Executive McMahon said, "Dexter and Derby are a special and unique addition to our zoo family." McMahon continued, "We have a tremendous team and are fortunate to be among the few accredited zoos that have a nocturnal area, which allows us to have nocturnal animals like sloths, the new kiwi bird and now these tamanduas."

Nocturnal animals are active at night and sleep during the day. The zoo's Animal Adaptations exhibit includes a nocturnal area that's on a reverse light cycle where lights go on at night and off during the day, enabling zoo visitors to see the animals when they are awake.

Tamanduas also are arboreal, meaning they spend most of their time in trees. They have long, sharp claws that help them climb, long snouts ending in a tiny toothless mouth and long, thin tongues that they use to forage for food. In the wild they eat mostly social insects like ants, termites and bees. At the zoo they receive a "smoothie" of insectivore diet, ground beef, honey, yogurt, milk replacer and Vitamin K.

Keepers named the male tamandua Dexter and the female Derby in keeping with the zoo's 2019 "I Love New York" animal-naming theme. Dexter is a village in Jefferson County and Derby is a hamlet in Erie County.

Zoo Director Ted Fox said the Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo was instrumental in providing support to bring tamanduas to the zoo. "These are among several unique species that have come into our care recently, and we are very grateful to the Friends for the many ways they support the zoo and the animals in our care."

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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 and the Friends of the Zoo events site at 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.

