

## **Biopsy from hippo dental procedure reveals cancer diagnosis** **Palliative care plans being developed to ensure her ongoing quality of life**

A biopsy of tissue samples collected during a recent medical procedure on Water Lily the hippo has revealed a diagnosis of fibrosarcoma, a type of cancer of connective tissue. The 45-year-old hippo, affectionately known as Lily, is receiving top-notch medical and comfort care from her health team.

An expert team of animal health professionals recently performed a dental exam on Lily and evaluated a wound and swelling on her cheek that had become abscessed. The procedure was necessary to define the cause of the wound and prevent it from worsening and causing other potential serious complications. The successful procedure involved nearly 30 zoo staff and a veterinary dentist who specializes in megavertebrate patients.

The procedure was the first time that Lily had been placed under anesthesia, and her care team made the most of the opportunity by conducting additional health exams and collecting biological samples to assess Lily's overall health status. Biopsy results have determined that Lily's cheek swelling is an inoperable malignant tumor. While curative treatment is not likely possible, her care team is creating a palliative care plan to provide comfort and ensure her wellbeing.

"Lily did such a great job during her recent procedure and has been recovering well, so we've been cautiously optimistic about her recovery. This diagnosis was not the result we had hoped for, but we are glad that now we know and can create a plan to provide her the best possible care. Without her recent surgery, this cancer would have continued to be unknown to us," said Dr. Tim Storms, Director of Animal Health. "We are exploring the possibility of surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and other treatments used in humans and other animals. Unfortunately, these options are difficult in Lily's case because of her size, the location and size of the tumor, as well as the risk of repeated anesthetic procedures. Our primary focus will be to ensure she has the best possible care and quality of life for the time she has left with us."

Due to the difficulty in diagnosing cancer in hippos, there are no documented cases of sarcomas in hippos. As a result, there is not a clear life expectancy for Lily based on this latest health diagnosis. Her animal caretaker and veterinary teams will continue to provide her with customized health and comfort care and monitor her behavior for any changes.



Lily's surgery last week left her with a visible surgical wound on her cheek. As Lily's surgical recovery wound is visible, guests to the zoo may see it when they visit Lily at her hippo habitat – please know that she is under close care and observation by her dedicated keeper team and receiving excellent medical attention from her expert veterinary team.

Woodland Park Zoo is thankful for the outpouring of kindness for Lily and her care team from zoo members, our community and on social media during her recent procedure, and the zoo is grateful for the ongoing support!

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