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Press release

Topping-out ceremony for the giraffe walkway

Visitors to Tierpark Berlin will soon be able to come face-to-face with the African savannah's most elegant inhabitants.

Construction of the giraffe walkway is proceeding apace, and today the Tierpark celebrated its topping-out ceremony. The redesigned giraffe habitat with its new raised wooden walkway and viewing platform will allow visitors to meet and greet the world's tallest animals – and even feed them by hand. “Encountering a giraffe at eye level is a very special experience,” says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem enthusiastically. “Looking into those big eyes with beautiful long lashes and getting a close-up view of the 50 cm-long blue-hued tongue is a moment you’re unlikely to forget.”

Tierpark Berlin commissioned landscaping company Krahnstöver & Wolf to help with construction of the expansive savannah-like habitat. “On the occasion of the topping-out ceremony, we would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to everyone involved in the excellent collaboration thus far,” said project manager Benjamin Grabherr. Topping-out ceremonies are an important milestone for every construction site. While laying the cornerstone marks the beginning of a construction project, the topping-out ceremony celebrates the fact that the project has entered the home stretch. “At this stage in the process, usually the roof truss at least is already in place. In our case, the two roofs for the viewing platforms are finished and we have tested lifting them into position by crane. A proper topping-out ceremony includes a topping-out wreath and a traditional speech by one of the builders.”

The giraffe walkway in figures:

- Length: 120 metres
- Width: 3 metres
- Average height: 2.2 metres
- Eight-metre-long suspension bridge with an unobstructed view of the Savannah
- Maximum incline: 3%
- Total roof area (two roofs): 180 m²
- No. of roof tiles: approx. 25,000 (larch wood)



- Tiles per 1 m² of roof: 120
- Time required to mount roof tiles by hand: Two weeks
- No. of construction workers involved: 10-15 (2-3 just for the roofs)

Background:

According to the current schedule, the Tierpark's African Savannah will open in spring 2023. When completed, the entire area will be around 37,000 m². The reconstruction of the giraffe habitat is part of a long-planned redesign of Tierpark Berlin's layout. In order to provide insight into the natural habitats of individual species – including their special features and interactions and the threats facing them – the animals are now being grouped into geographical zones. The protection of species and natural habitats plays a central role at the Tierpark today. Its Berlin World Wild conservation programme supports more than 35 projects around the world. For many years, Berlin's zoos have been working closely with the Wild Nature Institute in Tanzania, which is dedicated to researching and protecting giraffes in the wild.