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Press release

Eye to eye with the world's tallest mammal

Construction begins on giraffe walkway at Tierpark Berlin

With their long necks, graceful gait and beautiful eyelashes, giraffes really are one of the prettiest animals on the planet. They are also fascinating creatures, especially when you get to know them better. In future, visitors at Tierpark Berlin will be able to meet the world's tallest mammal face to face on a specially constructed raised wooden path.

Construction is progressing well on Tierpark Berlin's African savannah landscape. The latest addition are the foundations for a wooden walkway that will provide a raised platform alongside the giraffe habitat, giving visitors an extra-special view of the gorgeous creatures. "Next spring, we are set to open another delightful new feature at Tierpark Berlin," announced Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "We are excited to introduce a new giraffe walkway that will allow visitors with an interest in species conservation to meet and greet these fascinating African mammals at eye level." The finished path will be approximately 120 metres long and 3 metres wide and include an eight-metre-long suspension bridge. Halfway along, visitors will reach a viewing point some 2.2 metres above ground where they can linger a while to watch the herd of Rothschild giraffes at their leisure. "The walkway will also provide a good view of the watering hole, where great white pelicans will be splashing around next to the giraffes," added Knieriem. And the new path will be accompanied by another exciting giraffe experience: a separate area where, at certain times, visitors will have the opportunity to feed the animals under the supervision of a keeper, getting a close-up view of the animals' remarkable 50 cm black tongues.

Construction work this close to the giraffes must be prepared and performed as carefully as possible, because, as flight animals, giraffes react sensitively to changes in their environment. The herd's seven giraffes are currently observing the proceedings with interest – including their newest member, three-month-old Frieda. "When planning the giraffe walkway, we wanted to ensure this wonderful experience would also be accessible for wheelchair-users," says project manager Benjamin Grabherr. "That's why the walkway will have a maximum gradient of three percent."

Based on the current schedule, the African savannah landscape should open in spring 2023. When completed, the complex will cover a total surface area of around 37,000 square metres. The redesign of the giraffe habitat is part of ongoing plans to overhaul the Tierpark. The inhabitants are gradually being moved into geographically themed areas that reflect their homes in the wild – with a focus on special features of the natural habitats, the threats facing them, and the interactions between the various fauna and flora that live there. The topic of



species and nature conservation now also plays a central role, reflecting how fundamentally important this issue is to Zoo and Tierpark Berlin. Their Berlin World Wild conservation programme supports over 35 projects around the world, and for many years now they have been working closely with the Wild Nature Institute in Tanzania, which is dedicated to the study and protection of giraffes.