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Wading In - Brand-New South American Habitat Announced at Banham Zoo!



Something exciting is stirring at Banham Zoo, and it's set to make a splash!

Work has officially begun on a brand-new South American habitat that will soon welcome two incredible species: the world's largest rodent, the Capybara, and the gentle rainforest giant, the Brazilian Tapir.

This exciting redevelopment will turn an underused area of the zoo into a vibrant, mixed-species habitat designed to encourage natural behaviours, provide exceptional standards of care, and create meaningful opportunities for visitors to connect with wildlife.

Every element of the design, from naturalistic landscaping to high-quality indoor facilities, has been carefully considered with animal welfare at its heart.

The project will roll out in two phases. First to arrive will be the capybara, bringing their famously relaxed charm and love of lounging to their brand-new home. Meanwhile, specialist infrastructure is being prepared behind the scenes for the Brazilian tapir, ensuring the habitat is perfectly suited to these remarkable rainforest residents when they join the group.

In the wild, capybaras thrive in social groups and rely on water to stay cool and safe, while Brazilian tapirs, often known as “gardeners of the forest”, play a vital role in seed dispersal, helping to regenerate tropical ecosystems. By welcoming these species, Banham Zoo will shine a spotlight on the biodiversity of South America and the urgent need to protect these habitats for future generations.

Josh Hunter-Harl, Director of Sales and Marketing at ZSEA, said,

“As a conservation and education charity, this is a really exciting step for Banham Zoo and a brilliant example of how we’re continuing to invest in both animal welfare and visitor experience.

Capybara and Brazilian tapir are fantastic, characterful species, and this new habitat will not only give them a great home but also give our visitors a fun and memorable way to connect with South American wildlife and highlight the importance of protecting it.

Guests will be able to see the habitat take shape over the coming months, following the journey from construction through to animal arrivals, as part of our ongoing investment in enhancing habitats and creating more immersive visitor experiences.”

A huge thank you to City College Norwich students who are donating labour building the capybara house, MKM for the donation of building materials, and Anglian Metal Roofing for the donation of roofing materials and labour.

Visitors can look forward to watching the transformation unfold in the coming months, with sneak peeks, construction milestones, and, of course, exciting arrival updates shared along the way.

Big changes are coming to Banham Zoo, and they’re going to be wild!

-ENDS-

Images: [Capybara Build PR](#)



Notes to editors

Interviews available on request

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About Zoological Society of East Anglia (Registered Charity No 1150158)

The Zoological Society of East Anglia (ZSEA) is the conservation and education charity that leads Africa Alive and Banham Zoo. For over 50 years, the zoos have sought to amaze and inspire guests who visit, providing wonderful, memorable days out and sharing unique experiences with their families, friends and loved ones. www.zsea.org