



**Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011**

**Pop the kettle on, sit back and relax – The Zoo is coming to a TV near you!**

Friday night at 7.30pm is now sofa time as a brand new ten-part series of 'The Zoo' brings you behind-the-scenes with the animals and zookeepers of Dublin Zoo. Beginning tomorrow night on RTE 1, the series promises to keep you gripped from start to finish.

Home to over 600 animals, Dublin Zoo has almost one million visitors a year flocking to its gates for the chance to see some of the world's most beautiful and fascinating creatures.

For this passionate animal care team it takes hard work and dedication to look after some of the world's most endangered animals, but what the job lacks in glamour it certainly makes up for in excitement and drama. From the unenviable task of getting a snapping Nile crocodile to hold still for his check-up to the excitement of a baby rhino being born, no two days are ever the same.

This is the first camera crew to have been allowed such unique and exclusive access in Dublin Zoo's 180 year history and this engrossing series from Moondance Productions for RTÉ will show the public a side of the Zoo that visitors have never experienced before, enabling them to share in all the highs and lows of life in Dublin Zoo.

Over the course of the series a huge cast of captivating animals are featured, from the tiniest pygmy marmosets (and their even tinier babies) to the hulking frame of the white rhinoceros and everything in between, including flamingos, gorillas, turtles, wolves, giraffes, tapirs, penguins, crocodiles, tigers and snow leopards amongst many others.

Viewers will also have an opportunity to see first-hand how the work of Dublin Zoo forms part of a wider global involvement to conserve and protect the animals of the world, as the cameras follow the work of the zookeepers outside Dublin Zoo, from conservation project on the rocky beaches of Louth to zoos in England and France.

For adults and children alike, 'The Zoo' will provide a unique insight into the functioning of a world class zoo.

## **Episode one**

When London Zoo's silverback western lowland gorilla dies unexpectedly its three females are left without a leader. Dublin Zoo's adolescent male Kesho seems the ideal candidate to replace him, and with tensions on the rise between him and his father Harry, the timing couldn't be more perfect.

With their powerful tails and bone-crunching jaws, getting close enough to examine a Nile crocodile can be tricky to say the least. But when zookeeper and reptile expert Garth de Jong suspects one of Dublin Zoo's crocodiles is nursing a hidden injury, there's only one way for him to have a peek under those scales, and that's by wrestling the crocodile into position.

After 16 long months Ashanti the white rhinoceros is finally ready to give birth. It's been a long pregnancy and Team Leader Helen Clarke Bennett and her team have taken every precaution to help things along, but at this stage it's all up to Ashanti.

So, tune in to watch The Zoo on RTE One tomorrow evening at 7.30pm and every Friday evening for the next ten weeks to find out more about Ireland's most loved visitor attraction.

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### **For more information, please contact:**

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