



Southwick's Zoo

For immediate release

Subject: Vicuñas at Southwick's Zoo

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Zoo fans will be excited to learn about Southwick's Zoo's latest addition. This zoo, located in Mendon, MA, recently became the only zoo in the United States with vicuñas currently on display.

Vicuñas are members of the camelid family which also includes Bactrian and dromedary camels, llamas, alpacas, and guanacos. Visitors to Southwick's Zoo can view all members of the camelid species with the exception of the guanaco. Vicuñas are unique among camelids and other hoofed animals because of their teeth. Their lower incisors grow continuously, similar to those of a rodent, to accommodate their diet of short, tough grasses.

Vicuñas are native to the Andes Mountains in South America, and are believed to be the wild ancestor of domesticated alpacas. They are valued for their extremely fine wool, however demand for their fleece led to a drastic decline in their population with only a few thousand remaining by the 1960's. The species has since recovered due to strict laws and regulations which are still in effect today.

Southwick's Zoo visitors can view the vicuñas daily until the zoo closes for the season after October 31.

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Southwick's Zoo is a privately owned zoo located at 2 Southwick Street in Mendon, MA and is home to hundreds of wild animals, featuring more than 150 varied species (many of which are endangered). Southwick's Zoo's mission is to provide an extensive zoological collection and educational facility for their visitors. Southwick's Zoo offers an exciting environment for visitors to learn more about animals and their conservation.

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