

London Zoo to reopen after blaze kills five animals

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London Zoo's brightly coloured Adventure Cafe was turned black by the fire



By Aubrey Allegretti, News Reporter

Five animals have died in a blaze which had to be tackled by 72 firefighters at London Zoo.

A nine-year-old aardvark named Misha was killed and four meerkats are "presumed" to have died after going missing during the fire on Saturday morning.



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Fire rips through London Zoo cafe

The zoo has confirmed it will reopen at 10am on Christmas Eve after earlier saying the attraction would be closed "until further notice".

Flames ripped through the Animal Adventure section just after 6am, spreading to a cafe that included a petting zoo, and a gift shop near a penguin pool at the back of the site.



Misha, 9, died in the fire on Saturday. Pic: ZSL London Zoo

London Ambulance said paramedics treated eight people at the scene - six for smoke inhalation and two for minor injuries, with one of those treated taken to hospital.





London Zoo director: 'We're all devastated'

Pictures showed the brightly coloured Adventure Cafe with blackened walls and smoke pouring out of its windows.

Firefighters were also seen climbing ladders with hoses to douse the roof.



72 firefighters were called to the scene of the fire

London Zoo said in a statement: "We have keepers living on site and they, along with our security team, responded incredibly quickly to move animals to safe locations within their enclosures.

"The London Fire Brigade were on the scene within minutes and the fire was brought under control by 9.16am.





The large majority of the zoo's animals have been accounted for

"Those staff who were first on the scene have been treated on site for shock and smoke inhalation.

"Sadly our vets have confirmed the death of our nine-year-old aardvark, Misha. There are also four meerkats still unaccounted for, but we are now presuming these have also died.

"All other animals in the vicinity are being monitored closely by our vets, but early signs suggest they have not been affected. We will continue to monitor them over the coming days.

"We are all naturally devastated by this, but are immensely grateful to the fire brigade, who reacted quickly to the situation to bring the fire under control.





Some of the the zoo's meerkats are presumed dead. Pic: ZSL London Zoo

"It's too soon to speculate on the cause of the fire but we will be working very closely with fire investigators over the coming days and weeks to ascertain the cause.

"After consultation with fire experts attending yesterday, we are able to safely open the zoo today.

"The Zoo with be open from 10am today, Sunday 24 December."



The fire broke at just after 6am on Saturday. Pic: LFB

Earlier, LFB confirmed 10 fire engines and 72 firefighters and officers were dispatched to the scene.

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