

In the short history of the Wild Animal Park, there are only a few animals that have achieved legendary status for both employees and guests alike. Ivan, the male reticulated giraffe, was one such animal. On April 29, 2008, Ivan passed away quietly in the Wild Animal Park's South Africa exhibit. He was 19 years old.



Ivan arrived at the Wild Animal Park in January 1990. It wasn't long after his arrival that the "Ivan Stories" started to accumulate. During his years of living in the same multi-species exhibit, Ivan was always actively interacting with his neighbors. As he got acquainted with the various species nearby, he learned early on that some animals just aren't friendly. A Hartmann's mountain zebra bit the tip of Ivan's tail off during his acclimation period!



As Ivan became more comfortable with his surroundings and neighbors, he would focus his attention on specific individuals. He paid plenty of attention to the female reticulated giraffes in his enclosure: Ivan sired 23 offspring during his lifetime. He also preferred to spend many hours following and bothering an adult male Cape buffalo named Bucky. Ivan and Bucky seemed to have an unwritten agreement that each would tolerate harassment from the other. On numerous occasions, Ivan could be observed placing a front hoof on the head of the buffalo!

The biggest reason Ivan was so popular was his personality. He was always curious and easy going. He enjoyed taking food from guests on the [Photo Caravan Safari](#) trucks traveling through his home.

No one who interacted with Ivan will ever forget how majestic he was and that pungent odor that alerted us to his proximity. He will be remembered fondly.

Lance Aubery is an animal care supervisor at the Wild Animal Park.

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17 Responses to "Ivan Giraffe: The Passing of a Legend"

1. *Bernice* says:

[May 1st, 2008 at 5:43 pm](#)

Thank you for letting us know. Ivan seemed like a real sweet giraffe – your account of his goofy interactions with Bucky brings a big smile to my face. Rest in peace, big fellow. We'll miss ya.

2. *Mae in NJ* says:

[May 1st, 2008 at 8:09 pm](#)

Please accept my deepest sympathies for the Wild Animal Park's loss of a remarkable giraffe. He will be missed by his animal friends and human visitors and caretakers, with the exception of Bucky. Perhaps even Bucky will wonder where his constant antagonist has gone.

We enjoyed the photo caravan tour last year and our guide pointed out Ivan and his hairless tail. We all had a good laugh at his expense. We fed several giraffes that day and I hope that I was able to provide some