



NEWS RELEASE

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MALE GIANT ANTEATER BORN AT SANTA BARBARA ZOO

Newborn Pup Being Hand-Raised by Keepers and Not on View to Public for Several Months

- Rare Twin Births on March 1, Female Twin Did Not Survive
- First Birth for Adult Female, Who was Also a Twin and Hand-Raised
- “Prognosis for Little Guy is Good, But Guarded”
- First Giant Anteater Birth at Zoo Since 2006
- **Photography of Pup Not Allowed Now: Photos & B-roll Available**

Santa Barbara, CA, March 14, 2014 – A male giant anteater born at the Santa Barbara Zoo on March 1, 2014, is being hand-raised by keepers and won’t be on view for some time, possibly several months. This is the first birth of the species at the Zoo since 2006, and the first offspring for the Zoo’s adult pair, Anara and Ridley. Anara, aged two, gave birth to twins, but the female newborn pup did not survive. Twins in anteaters are rare, though Anara is a twin and was also hand-raised, at the Fresno Zoo. The unnamed male pup weighed 1.58 kilograms at birth (approximately 3.5 pounds) and 1.84 kilograms (4 pounds) today (March 14).



“The prognosis for the little guy is good, but still somewhat guarded,” said Sheri Horiszny, the Zoo’s Director of Animal Programs. “Giant anteater pups have a fifty percent mortality rate in the first three months of life, and he did not get the valuable colostrum from his mother’s first milk for added immune support.”

The pup is being fed Esbilac, a puppy milk replacer. “He made it clear that he preferred this to the kitten milk replacer that we tried first,” adds Horiszny.

The cause of death for the female twin has not been determined. “Our female is a first time mom,” notes Horiszny, “and she was not willing to care for two babies. This male pup was not being allowed to cling to her or nurse, so we began hand-rearing him on the afternoon of his birth.”

Keepers observed that the female pup seemed more able to cling, and appeared to be nursing, but she was found dead on Wednesday morning, March 5.

“We did not feel that it was in the best interest of the young male to put him back with mom, and so have continued to hand-raise him,” said Horiszny.

The sire Ridley, is six years old and was imported from Germany’s Zoo Dortmund in 2008 as part of a cooperative breeding program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to bring new genetics to North America.

**PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE GIANT ANTEATER PUP IS NOT ALLOWED
AT THIS TIME. HIGH RESOLUTION PHOTOS AND DIGITAL B-ROLL ARE AVAILABLE.
Contact Julia McHugh at jmchugh@sbzoo.org or at 569-3303.**

Giant Anteaters at the Santa Barbara Zoo

There have been a total of 26 giant anteaters born at the Santa Barbara Zoo since 1975. The Zoo has been a leader in a nationwide study of giant anteaters, thanks in great part to Grandma, who had over 15 offspring. The average lifespan in this species is between 20 and 23 years of age, and Grandma lived to be 31 years old. She was the oldest giant anteater in captivity when she died in 2002. Giant anteater breeding is overseen by an AZA collaborative breeding program. The last giant anteater births at the Santa Barbara Zoo were in 2006 and 2004 to a pair named Sophie (a male, misidentified at birth) and Madeline.

About Giant Anteaters

Giant anteaters were once found from northern Argentina to southern Belize, in savannas, grasslands, swampy areas, and humid forests. However, they have disappeared from Belize, Guatemala, and probably in Costa Rica. In South America, they gone from Uruguay and portions of Brazil.

The Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates population loss of at least 30% over the past 10 years, and lists the species as “vulnerable.” Causes appear to be habitat loss; deaths caused by fires, dogs, and traffic; being hunted for sport, food or as pests; and illegal trade as pets.

Giant anteaters have a body length of three to four feet with tail that is an additional two to three feet, and weigh 40 to 85 pounds, though some captive anteaters have weighed more than 100 pounds.

This species uses powerful claws to rip apart termite and ant mounds. They have no teeth, but use an 18 to 24 inch tongue used to eat termites, ants, and grubs. In the wild, giant anteaters may consume as many as 35,000 ants in a single day. At the Zoo they eat a specially formulated

insectivore diet, plus avocados, bananas, crickets, and worms. The avocados must be ripe because anteaters do not have teeth; they break open the skin with their long sharp claws.

Anteaters in the wild are solitary, except for females with young, and spend most of their days with their noses to the ground searching for food using exceptional senses of smell and hearing – their sense of smell is 40 times more powerful than a human's.

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*Known as one of the world's most beautiful zoos, the **Santa Barbara Zoo** is located on 30 acres of botanic gardens and is home to nearly 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. It is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, Channel Island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements. The Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors aged 65+, \$10 for children 2-12, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$6. Visit www.sbzoo.org.*