



NEWS RELEASE

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MASAI GIRAFFE CALF BORN TODAY AT SANTA BARBARA ZOO NAMED “BUTTERCUP”

- Audrey Gave Birth to Male Calf November 13 at 1:45 p.m. in Giraffe Barn
- Medical Exam Tomorrow to Decide When Calf Goes on Exhibit
- Zoo’s Other Female Giraffe Betty Lou Also Pregnant; Due in March 2015
- Public Can Celebrate the Birth by Becoming Buttercup Foster Feeders

CALF AND MOTHER NOT ON VIEW TO THE PUBLIC. NO PRESS PHOTOGRAPHY ALLOWED AT THIS TIME. FOR IMAGES AND VIDEO, CONTACT JULIA McHUGH AT 569-3303 OR JMCHUGH@SBZOO.ORG

(Santa Barbara, CA, November 13, 2014) – The Santa Barbara Zoo’s Masai giraffe Audrey has given birth to a male calf, her third in four years, and it has been named Buttercup by donors. The six-year old mother gave birth on Thursday, November 13 in the Giraffe Barn at 1:45 p.m., just one hour and 45 minutes after labor was observed. He attempted to stand up after approximately 15 minutes, but needed human assistance to help him to his feet when he continued to slip on the muddy surface. Buttercup first nursed at 4:11 p.m.

Buttercup is off-exhibit with his mother in the Giraffe Barn, where he will have his first medical exam tomorrow. His height, weight, and general health will be assessed by the Zoo’s veterinarian Dr. Julie Barnes, who will also determine when he will be able to leave the Barn. Until that time, Buttercup and Audrey are not on view to the public or available to media.



“Our professional staff prepared for and implemented the plan for an easy and healthy birth,” said Zoo Director Nancy McToldridge. “Everything went smoothly, even when Buttercup needed to be moved to a drier spot in order to stand up.”

“Because they are just over one hundred Masai giraffes in captivity in North America, each birth and each giraffe is very important,” said Sheri Horiszny. CARE “I’m very proud of our sire

Michael, as he's now clearly a proven breeder, and his genetics greatly help the diversity of our Masai population.”

The Zoo's other female giraffe Betty Lou is also pregnant, and giraffe keepers estimate that she will give birth in March 2015. The sire in both pregnancies is Michael, the Zoo's only male giraffe. Giraffes have a 14.5-month gestation period.

Support the Herd

Buttercup was named by donors Amy and Jeff Pryor after the childhood nickname of one of their children. The public can help the Zoo welcome this long-necked arrival by becoming a Buttercup Foster Feeder. A donation of \$50 helps with the cost of feeding the growing giraffe family. New Buttercup Foster Feeders receive a plush Buttercup Beanie Baby, custom limited edition made by Ty, Inc., along with a certificate and recognition on the Zoo's Foster Feeder board. For information, visit www.sbzoo.org.

About the Santa Barbara Zoo's Giraffes

The Zoo has made a transition from exhibiting Baringo giraffes to showcasing Masai giraffes, as part of a regional giraffe management program with other West Coast zoos including those in Los Angeles and San Diego. This allows the zoos to maximize the genetic diversity within the sub-species, while minimizing distances giraffes have to be transported.

Audrey and Betty Lou arrived in Santa Barbara in March 2010, from the Los Angeles Zoo. Betty Lou was born at the San Diego Zoo on August 2, 2007, and Audrey was born on February 6, 2008 at the Los Angeles Zoo. Michael arrived from Parc Safari in Quebec, Canada, in January 2012. He is considered very valuable genetically, as he is not related to any U.S. female giraffes other than his daughter Sunshine (see below).

Audrey gave birth to Dane, a male calf, on April 18, 2014, who recently relocated to the Cameron Park Zoo in Waco, Texas, as part of a cooperative breeding program of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). Betty Lou gave birth to a female giraffe, Sunshine, in April 2013, just 10 days after Dane was born. Sunshine has moved to the Phoenix Zoo as part of the AZA program.

Audrey was also the mother of “surprise calf” Daniel, born in January 2011. Unknown to anyone, she was pregnant when she arrived at the Santa Barbara Zoo. She gave birth to Daniel just short of her third birthday, which is extremely young for giraffes. She refused to nurse, so Daniel was hand-reared by Zoo staff. Daniel died in October 2012 after being anesthetized for a dental procedure to treat an abscess and infection in his lower left jaw. Though his procedure had gone well, he went into respiratory arrest and could not be revived.

There are an estimated 37,000 Masai giraffes in Kenya and Tanzania, but a more thorough census is required. They are at risk due to poaching and habitat loss and degradation. Giraffes are the tallest land mammal, and the Masai is the largest subspecies, growing up to 17 feet tall and weighing 2,700 pounds.

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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.

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