



NEWS RELEASE

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TWO ENDANGERED MASAI GIRAFFES CONFIRMED AS PREGNANT AT SANTA BARBARA ZOO

- Sire of Both is Zoo's Male Michael
- Adia's First Pregnancy; Due Around April 2020
- Audrey Due in July 2020; Has Had Four Calves with Michael
- Masai Giraffes Declared "Endangered" by IUCN on July 11 Due to Poaching and Changes in Land Use
- [Photos and B-Roll Available at https://bit.ly/315ozzz](https://bit.ly/315ozzz)

Santa Barbara, CA. July 30, 2019– Just three weeks after Masai (mah-SIGH) giraffes were declared as “endangered” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Santa Barbara Zoo has announced that both of their adult females are pregnant. The Zoo’s adult male Michael is the sire.

This is the first pregnancy for Adia (ah-DEE-ah), aged five, who arrived in December 2017 from the Cleveland Zoo as a potential mate for Michael. She is due in April 2020. Audrey, who is 11 years old, is due in July 2020. She has had four calves with Michael, most recently Amirah (Ah-MERE-ah), born in March 2018, who remains a member of the Zoo’s giraffe herd.

“The number of Masai giraffe in the wild is significantly declining, and the population under human care here in the U.S. is relatively small. So every single giraffe born at the Zoo helps keep their species genetically diverse and thriving,” said Dr. Julie Barnes, the Zoo’s vice president of animal health and care.

Michael is the most genetically important male Masai giraffe in North America, as he is only related to his off-spring. He was brought to the Zoo from Canada in December 2011 and has since sired seven calves. Five of those calves have moved to other accredited zoos as part of a cooperative breeding program among accredited members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

“In the wild, young giraffes often leave their natal herd to breed. Calves born here at our zoo go to other AZA zoos so their important genes are passed on to maximize genetic diversity,” added Dr. Barnes.

Giraffe gestation is approximately 15 months, and pregnancies are confirmed through hormone analysis of fecal samples.

Giraffe Calves Sired by Michael

Michael has sired seven calves at the Zoo since he arrived in December 2011.

4/18/13 – Dane, now at Fresno Chaffee Zoo (Audrey)

4/28/13 – Sunshine, now at Cameron Park Zoo, Waco, TX (Betty Lou)

11/13/14 – Buttercup, now at Oregon Zoo (Audrey)

3/14/15 – Asha, deceased at Toledo Zoo following an accident (Betty Lou)

8/6/16 – Parker now at Seneca Park Zoo, Rochester, NY (Betty Lou)

3/26/16 – Chad now at Franklin Park Zoo, Boston, MA (Audrey)

3/14/18 – Amirah, at Santa Barbara Zoo (Audrey)

The Santa Barbara Zoo's Masai giraffe herd currently numbers four: Michael, Adia, Audrey, and her calf Amirah. It is anticipated that Amirah will soon move to another zoo as part of the AZA breeding program. Another female, Betty Lou, arrived at the Zoo in 2010 and moved to the Fresno Chaffee Zoo in 2018 after producing three calves.

IUCN Announces Masai Giraffes as Endangered

On July 11, 2019, the IUCN announced that Masai giraffes are now endangered, primarily because of poaching and changes in land use. Of the nine subspecies of giraffes, Masai (the largest) and reticulated giraffes are endangered, and Nubian and Kordofan (KOR-doh-fan) giraffes are critically endangered. Find more information at www.iucnredlist.org/species/88421036/88421121.

There are an estimated 35,000 Masai giraffes currently, but their population has fallen by nearly 50% in the last three decades. Africa's overall giraffe population has decreased by up to 40% in that same timeframe.

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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](http://www.aaz.org) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Asian elephant, California condor, island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. A private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, the Santa Barbara Zoo depends on community support, not tax dollars, for operations and improvements.*

Visit www.sbzoo.org

The Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission \$18 for adults, \$13 for seniors 64+, \$11 for children 2-12, and free for children under 2. Parking is \$11.

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