



PRESS RELEASE

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Masai Giraffe Calf Born March 27 At The Santa Barbara Zoo

This is the eighth Masai giraffe born at the Zoo since 2012

(March 27, 2020) Santa Barbara, CA -- [The Santa Barbara Zoo](#)'s Masai giraffe Adia has given birth to her first calf, and the two are currently bonding behind the scenes in the giraffe barn. Both Adia and the calf appear healthy and are doing well. The calf was born after approximately three and a half hours of active labor on Friday, March 27 at 12:26 pm. The sex, height, weight, as well as the name of the calf, will be determined at the calf's first medical examination, which is scheduled to take place tomorrow, Saturday, March 28.

"This birth is special in so many ways," said Dr. Julie Barnes, the Zoo's Vice President of Animal Care and Health. "It's always a joy to see a new life begin, but we think it's especially meaningful right now as a beacon of hope and good news during these challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Masai giraffes are listed as endangered due to the significant decline of this species in the wild in recent decades. The population under human care here in the U.S. is relatively small, and the Species Survival Plan manages the population to ensure that genetic diversity is maintained so that the population thrives, and each giraffe born at the Zoo is very important to this population and conservation of this species."

The Zoo's giraffe keepers who know Adia best will determine when Adia and her calf are ready to leave the giraffe barn. Until that time, Adia and the newborn calf will spend time bonding, behind the scenes. The public is encouraged to tune into the Zoo's social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#)) for photos and updates.

This is the first baby for mother Adia, age 5, and eighth for the father, Michael. The calf had its first medical exam today (DATE TBD), where its height, weight, and general health was assessed by veterinarian Dr. Julie Barnes, the Zoo's Vice President of Animal Care and Health.

Michael is the most genetically important male Masai giraffe in North America, as he is only related to his offspring. He was brought to the Zoo from Canada in December 2011 and has since sired eight calves. Five of the 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).

The Santa Barbara Zoo's Masai giraffe herd now numbers five with the addition of the new calf: Michael, Adia, Audrey, and her calf Amirah. (Amirah was scheduled to depart for the Sacramento Zoo as part of the AZA breeding program, but her departure was delayed for weather and coronavirus concerns). Giraffe calves sired by Michael include Dane, now at Fresno Chaffee Zoo, 2013; Sunshine, now at Cameron Park Zoo, Waco, Texas, 2013; Buttercup, now at Oregon Zoo, 2014; Asha, deceased at Toledo Zoo following an accident, 2015; Parker, now at Seneca Park Zoo, Rochester, NY, 2016; Chad, now at Franklin Park Zoo, Boston, 2016; and Amirah, at Santa Barbara Zoo, 2018. The giraffes at the Zoo are among more than 120 Masai giraffes that live at 28 North American zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

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Support the Herd

The Zoo needs the community's help now more than ever! The public can also help the Zoo welcome this long-necked arrival by becoming a Foster Feeder sponsor of the giraffe herd. A donation of \$50+ helps with the cost of feeding the growing giraffe family. New giraffe Foster Feeders will receive a digital certificate with a baby photo of the calf, a Masai giraffe fact sheet, and recognition on the Zoo's Foster Feeder board. For information or to become a Foster Feeder, [click here](#).

About Masai Giraffes

Last year, the International Union for Conservation of Nature announced Masai giraffes are endangered. 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.

About the Santa Barbara Zoo

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 more than 500 individual animals in open, naturalistic habitats. The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA), representing the highest level of animal care, and participates in AZA endangered species programs for Masai giraffe, California condor, island fox, and Western lowland gorilla, among others. As 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.