

## Woodland Park Zoo giraffe now expecting *Birth window is late spring to early summer*

SEATTLE – Woodland Park Zoo’s 8-year-old giraffe, Tufani (too-fawn-ee), is expecting her first baby. With a gestation period of 14 to 15 months, her window to give birth ranges from mid-May to early July 2017.



The father is 4-year-old Dave, who [arrived at the zoo in June 2014](#). This will be the first baby for both parents who were paired under a breeding recommendation made by the Giraffe Species Survival Plan (SSP), a cooperative breeding program to ensure genetic diversity and demographic stability in North American zoos. To learn more about the expecting parents, visit the zoo’s [blog](#).

To confirm Tufani’s pregnancy, animal care staff collected her fecal samples every other day for one month in the fall, when she was in her second trimester, and then sent the samples to a lab for testing. While the lab test confirmed Tufani’s pregnancy, the zoo’s animal care staff advises that animal pregnancies cannot be 100 percent confirmed until the baby is born. “Due to the long gestation period, signs of pregnancy can be difficult to detect early on,” said Katie Ahl, zookeeper at Woodland Park Zoo. “For those of us who work with Tufani on a daily basis we can see how her physical appearance has changed. That combined with the lab results make us confident she is pregnant.”

Though Tufani will not have a visible bump until closer to her birth window, animal care staff note her belly has started to round out. “If you know what you’re looking for, you can see it,” said Ahl. “She’s now in her third trimester so she’s really starting to show; and she’ll only get bigger from here.”

Tufani’s baby would mark the second viable giraffe birth at Woodland Park Zoo since 1997, the first being Misawa who was born in August 2013. Misawa, famously known as the [“grumpy face” giraffe](#), captured the hearts of zoo visitors as they watched him grow from a 6-foot-tall curious calf into a 12-foot-tall loving, adventurous adult. In September 2015, Misawa moved to Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas to begin his own family. His father Chioke passed away before he was born but his mother Olivia still resides at Woodland Park Zoo; she is Tufani’s older sister.

Tufani’s experience as Misawa’s doting aunt could prove useful for her as a first time mother. “Tufani was a wonderful aunt to Misawa,” said Ahl. “She was interested in him the minute he was born and was very protective of him. This makes me think she will be a good mom. I also think Dave will be a good herd mate and, based on her experience as a mom, Olivia will be a good aunt.”

Over the next few months Tufani's animal care team, consisting of zookeepers, managers and veterinary staff, will continue to increase her diet and provide regular vet checks. "Closer to her birth window we will need to do daily assessments to see if she is in labor," said Ahl. "We will likely keep Tufani, Dave and Olivia together at the barn if there is a possibility of her giving birth that day. Otherwise it will be business as usual."

Tufani will remain on exhibit at African Savanna with Dave and Olivia until she has the baby. Starting May 1, visitors can visit Tufani, Dave and Olivia at the up close giraffe experience (hours to be determined, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) for more information).

Giraffes give birth while standing, and the calf drops 5 feet from the ground as it is born. About 6 foot tall at birth, infants usually stand within half an hour after birth and can run around with their moms several hours later.

Widespread across southern and eastern Africa, with smaller isolated populations in west and central Africa, new population surveys estimate an overall 36 to 40 percent decline in the giraffe population, from approximately 151,702 to 163,452 in 1985, to 97,562 in 2015. Of the currently recognized subspecies of giraffe, five have decreasing populations, while three are increasing and one is stable.

Giraffe fans can help support conservation efforts by visiting Woodland Park Zoo and supporting Wildlife Survival Fund projects, including the [Giraffe Conservation Foundation](http://www.zoo.org/conservation), which seeks to provide the first long-term ecological monitoring effort of the Angolan giraffe—an important desert-dwelling giraffe subspecies in north-western Namibia. Visit [www.zoo.org/conservation](http://www.zoo.org/conservation) to learn more about the zoo's conservation partnerships taking place in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Woodland Park Zoo participates in 108 SSPs, overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. Led by experts in husbandry, nutrition, veterinary care, behavior, and genetics, SSPs manage populations in North America to maximize their genetic and demographic diversity with the goal of ensuring their long-term survival. SSPs also involve a variety of other collaborative conservation activities such as research, public education, reintroduction and field projects.

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums, award-winning Woodland Park Zoo is famed for pioneering naturalistic exhibits and setting international standards for zoos in animal care, conservation and education programs. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 40 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to care and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Free Wi-Fi is available for zoo guests, made possible through products donated by Cisco. For more information, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org).

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