

PRESS RELEASE

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Zoo's giraffe expecting a baby in the spring Birth window for experienced mom is mid-March to late April

SEATTLE—Another tall baby is on the way at Woodland Park Zoo! Olivia, a 12-year-old giraffe, is expecting her second baby this spring. The window for her to give birth opens mid-March and extends to late April. Giraffes have a gestation period of 14 to 15 months.

The new baby giraffe will mark the first offspring between Olivia and the father, 6-year-old Dave. Olivia had her first baby in 2013 at Woodland Park Zoo with a different mate, Chioke, who passed away the same year. Their offspring, Misawa, captured hearts and minds across the world with his famous [“grumpy face.”](#) The last giraffe birth at the zoo was Lulu, born in 2017 to mom Tufani—Olivia's sister—and dad Dave. Olivia, Dave and Tufani make up the current herd of giraffes at the zoo.

“Now that Olivia's in her third trimester, we're seeing more signs of a pregnancy such as weight gain and a rounder belly. Judging by the size of her belly, combined with fecal testing results, our guess is that Olivia will give birth in mid-April,” said Katie Ahl, a lead animal keeper at Woodland Park Zoo. “We'll continue to monitor Olivia closely and watch for telltale signs of labor, which may include restlessness, loss of appetite, or biting or licking her flanks.”

As a part of the zoo's excellent animal welfare program, the animal care and veterinary staff will increase her diet as needed and do regular veterinary check-ups leading up to the birth, explained Martin Ramirez, a mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. “At the first sign of labor, we'll bring Olivia into the barn and implement a 24-hour birth watch, with an animal care and health team monitoring the birth. A barn cam will allow us to monitor the new family throughout the birth watch, during the birth and post-birth,” said Ramirez.

Giraffes give birth standing up and the calf drops 5 feet to the ground as it is born. Baby giraffes are typically born 6 feet tall and stand within an hour after birth, said Ramirez. “The first 24 to 72 hours are critical for newborn giraffes. A healthy infant should begin nursing shortly after birth and be able to run around with its mom several hours later.” When fully grown, giraffes reach a height of 16 feet tall for females and 18 feet tall for males.

“Sharing two healthy baby giraffes with our community over the last five years has been very rewarding, and we're just as excited for this new giraffe to make its entry into the world,” said Ahl. “Baby giraffes have a way of stopping your heart a beat or two because they're so magical. Every giraffe is a precious ambassador for their kin in their natural range. They have the power to spark a connection and move people to take action to help preserve giraffes into the future. We hope our guests and community will come to love this giraffe and care about saving giraffes as much as we do.”

The expectant parents, Olivia and Dave, were paired under a breeding recommendation made by the Giraffe Species Survival Plan, a cooperative, conservation breeding program across accredited zoos to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of giraffes. Woodland Park Zoo participates in 111 Species Survival Plans, overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. Led by experts in husbandry, nutrition, veterinary care, behavior, and genetics, these plans also involve a variety of other collaborative conservation activities such as research, public education, reintroduction and field projects.

Giraffes are widespread across southern and eastern Africa, with smaller isolated populations in west and central Africa. New population surveys estimate an overall 40 percent decline in the giraffe population; fewer than 100,000 exist today. Of the currently recognized subspecies of giraffe, five have decreasing populations, while three are increasing and one is stable.



Giraffe enthusiasts can stick their necks out for giraffes and help support conservation efforts by visiting Woodland Park Zoo and supporting the Wildlife Survival Program, which includes the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. The Foundation 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 <http://www.zoo.org/conservation> to learn more about the zoo's conservation partnerships taking place in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Winter zoo hours through April 30 are 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

Founded in 1899, Woodland Park Zoo engages more than a million visitors of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and walks of life in extraordinary experiences with animals, inspiring them to make conservation a priority in their lives. The zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats in the wild through more than 30 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Woodland Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and certified by the rigorous American Humane Conservation program. The Humane Certified™ seal of approval is another important validation of the zoo's long-standing tradition of meeting the highest standards in animal welfare. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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