

PRESS RELEASE

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Zoo's pregnant giraffe is under birth watch ***#HaveYouHerd: Olivia to give birth anytime to her second offspring***

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's animal keepers are on 24-hour birth watch for its pregnant giraffe, Olivia, after she began showing signs of approaching labor. The birth window began mid-March and extends until the end of April. Giraffes have a gestation period of 14 to 15 months.



The zoo's animal care staff are monitoring Olivia closely at the zoo and several times throughout the night via barn cams. Stay tuned to updates at www.zoo.org/giraffe and follow #HaveYouHerd on the zoo's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). Visit <http://bit.ly/birthwatcholivia> for the latest.

"We're definitely seeing signs of Olivia nearing labor—we think she'll give birth any day now," said Katie Ahl, a lead animal keeper at Woodland Park Zoo. "She's more restless, there are noticeable changes in her udder, and she's extending her tail and spreading her rear legs frequently. In addition, she and the expectant father, Dave, are showing more affectionate behavior toward one another, a telltale sign of hormonal changes occurring in the expectant mom."

The new baby giraffe will mark the first offspring between 12-year-old 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.

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.

"The giraffe herd still has access to the vast African Savanna habitat and we'll assess this schedule daily leading up to the birth. Once signs of labor intensify, we'll keep all of the giraffes in the barn and outdoor corral so we can more closely monitor any behavioral changes. We're gearing up for the birth and adding extra bedding to the stalls. We can't wait, we're very excited to welcome this new baby!" added Ahl.

According to Kim Szawan, an animal care manager at Woodland Park Zoo, 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. "The first 24 to 72 hours are critical for newborn giraffes. We want to see the infant nursing shortly after birth and running around with mom several hours later," said Szawan. When fully grown, giraffes reach a height of 16 feet tall for females and 18 feet tall for males.

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.

Zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily through April 30. 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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