

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release | May 3, 2019
Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Meghan Sawyer
206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org

Baby giraffe update

SEATTLE—On May 2, Woodland Park Zoo's giraffe, Olivia, gave birth to a male giraffe. Less than 12 hours after his birth, the zoo's animal health team intervened to radiograph and diagnose abnormalities in his rear legs.

The baby giraffe was on his feet and walking within an hour after he was born. "However, we noticed right away that each rear foot was not in normal alignment, a condition known as hyperextended fetlocks," said Dr. Darin Collins, director of animal health at Woodland Park Zoo. "We have applied casts on both rear legs to help heal the tendons, which is the current best practice in treating this condition in newborns. Treatment will most likely span over several months. The baby is in guarded condition and we will continue to monitor him closely."

This condition is found in horses and has been reported to occur in giraffes, explained Collins. "He otherwise is healthy and continues to nurse and bond with mom," added Collins.

During the veterinary procedure, the baby weighed in at 155 pounds. Mom and her baby will remain off view in the barn for an indefinite period and to allow continued maternal bonding and nursing in a cozy, private setting.

The unnamed baby giraffe was born on May 2 to mom Olivia and dad Dave. It is the first offspring between the 12-year-old mom and 6-year-old dad; Olivia had her first baby in 2013 at Woodland Park Zoo with a different mate.

The last giraffe birth at the zoo was a female, Lulu, born in 2017 to mom Tufani—Olivia's younger sister—and dad Dave. In addition to the baby, Olivia, Dave and Tufani make up the current herd of giraffes at the zoo.

Viewers can see updates by visiting www.zoo.org/giraffe and following the zoo's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

"As soon as he was born, our animal care and health staff connected with this baby giraffe as we do with all of our animals. He's a symbol of hope for the future of his species and already lives in our hearts. We're rallying for this new animal to thrive and we're very grateful to our community and fans who have already showed an outpouring of love for our baby giraffe," said Martin Ramirez, mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo.

The 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.

Spring/summer zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 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 35 wildlife conservation 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](#).

###