

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release | March 4, 2020
Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Meghan Sawyer
206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org

Woodland Park Zoo's gorillas have a new family member! *Mom Uzumma gives birth today to her first baby*

SEATTLE— It's a boy! Woodland Park Zoo joyfully announces the birth of a western lowland gorilla. The first-time mom, Uzumma (uh-zum-ma), gave birth to a boy today, March 4 at 2:48 a.m. (PST) after a gestation period of nine months.

The baby, which is unnamed, is the first between 12-year-old Uzumma and 20-year-old Kwame (KWA-may), who moved from Smithsonian's National Zoo in 2018.

The newborn marks the 14th gorilla birth at Woodland Park Zoo. The last birth was Yola, a female born in November 2015.

The new mom and baby are off view in the sleeping dens so they can bond in a hushed, comfortable environment and staff can closely monitor them.

For the next few days, Uzumma and her baby are under a 24-hour watch. "The first 72 hours of life are the most critical for a newborn gorilla," said Martin Ramirez, mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "We are closely observing for signs such as the infant grasping strongly to mom with feet and hands, soft vocalizing from mom in response to her infant vocalizing, mom properly positioning her baby that allows for nursing and the baby nursing within the first 48 hours."

It may be weeks before visitors can see the newest member of the zoo's gorillas. Access for Uzumma and her baby to the outdoor public exhibit will be permitted once they are sufficiently bonded and outside temperatures are at least 65°F in the gorilla shelter.

Having Uzumma raise her baby is a high priority and in the best interest of the infant. "So far Uzumma is showing good maternal skills. She's holding her baby and being attentive," said Dr. Darin Collins, director of animal health at Woodland Park Zoo. "We will do visual neonatal exams only and remain hands off. However, if there are any visible concerns, we will intervene."

"Bringing a baby gorilla into the world is always exciting not only for us here at the zoo, but also the community as a whole. Each new gorilla is a symbol of hope for their cousins in the wild, for the forests they live in and for our planet," said Ramirez. "Growing our gorilla family of different generations and ages creates more opportunities for the zoo to engage the community in taking important action to preserve gorillas into the future."

Stay tuned to updates by following the zoo's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).
#GrowingUpGorilla.

The other members of Uzumma and Kwame's group are: 24-year-old Nadiri; 4-year-old Yola, the daughter of Nadiri; and 18-year-old Akenji. The baby's grandmother, 50-year-old Amanda, lives in the off-view bedrooms under geriatric care.

Living in another group are: 41-year-old male Vip and 34-year-old female Jumoke.

Uzumma and Kwame were paired under the Gorilla Species Survival Plan, which is a cooperative, conservation breeding program across accredited zoos to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of gorillas.

Woodland Park Zoo supports conservation efforts for the western lowland gorilla and mountain gorilla through the [Mondika Gorilla Project](#) and [Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund](#).



To help save gorillas, the public can drop off used handheld electronics at the zoo: cell phones, smartphones, iPods, iPads, tablets, adapters, chargers, MP3 players, handheld gaming systems and accessories that come with them. The handheld electronics are turned over to [ECO-CELL](#), which operates a strict NO LANDFILL program and reimburses organizations for their recyclable contributions. ECO-CELL reuses mineral ore from these devices to reduce the demand for unsustainable coltan mining in the Congo that destroys habitat for critically endangered gorillas. The zoo directs funds from ECO-CELL toward the Mondika Gorilla Project and Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund.

The western lowland gorilla lives in seven countries across west equatorial Africa: southeast Nigeria, Gabon, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Angola and Equatorial Guinea. All gorillas are endangered; the western lowland gorilla is critically endangered. The estimated population of western lowland gorillas in the wild is about 300,000. Gorillas are endangered for the following primary reasons: poaching for the bushmeat trade; habitat destruction caused by logging, mining, and slash and burn agriculture; infectious diseases such as the Ebola virus which has recently become a great threat, killing many gorillas; and climate change, which is causing the drying of the region, creating negative impacts on forest ecology and species.

For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

Winter zoo hours through April 30: 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. daily. Save 30% off summer admission rates now through March 31: www.zoo.org/visit.

###