

PRESS RELEASE

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Media download link for photos and video:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=4031&k=e39d813ae7>

password: akenji

Zoo shares pregnant gorilla's ultrasound images ***Baby due in late June or early July***



SEATTLE—Like proud mothers-to-be, Woodland Park Zoo is delighted to share ultrasound images of a baby gorilla. The expectant mom is Akenji (uh-KEN-jee), 22, who will give birth to her first baby at the end of June or early July. The gestation period for gorillas is eight to nine months.

In the zoo's 125-year-history, this is the first time it has ever shared gorilla ultrasound images "The ultrasound images are key in tracking fetal development. We can visualize limb movement and cardiac function and get measurements to monitor growth. The images indicate normal development thus far," said Dr. Yousuf Jafarey, an associate veterinarian at Woodland Park Zoo.

Getting ultrasound images without the need to anesthetize the gorilla is made possible because of diligent training sessions with the pregnant gorilla. According to Stephanie Payne Jacobs, a gorilla keeper at Woodland Park Zoo, "Because of the trusting relationship we have built with the gorillas, we have been able to train Akenji to sit near the front of her bedroom facing us and within our reach. Her cooperation allows us to apply the ultrasound probe on her belly and the results help us check the baby's development. Just like for human women, the procedure is non-invasive, painless and safe. Further, Akenji has the choice to participate or not. We follow her cues."

In addition to ultrasound procedures, the pre-natal care program for gorillas includes regular veterinary check-ups leading up to the birth, a diet created by a nutritionist and supplemental vitamins to help Akenji maintain a healthy weight for a delivery without challenges.

Akenji was born at Woodland Park Zoo and her baby will be the third offspring for the expectant father, Kwame (KWA-may), 24. Kwame is the father of the youngest gorillas born at the zoo: son Kitoko born March 2020 and daughter Zuna born January 2021.

The gorillas at Woodland Park Zoo currently live in two separate families. The new baby will join an extended family in group one: dad Kwame; mom Akenji and adult females Nadiri and Uzumma; juvenile females Yola and Zuna, daughters of Nadiri; and juvenile male, Kitoko, son of Kwame and Uzumma. Group two consists of: silverback Nadaya; and adult females Jumokey, Olympia and Jamani.

Help gorillas

A portion of every visit and membership to Woodland Park Zoo supports saving wildlife in the Pacific Northwest and around the world including protecting western lowland gorillas. The Goualougo Triangle Ape Project aims to preserve wildlife in the

Congo Basin by studying gorillas and chimpanzees, the ecosystems and the forces that threaten their survival. Local communities and indigenous people assist in directly addressing the challenges that impact great ape survival in this region.

Join the zoo by recycling old cell phones and other used handheld electronics through [ECO-CELL](#) to help preserve gorilla habitat. ECO-CELL operates a strict NO LANDFILL program and reimburses organizations for recyclable contributions. The community can bring used handheld electronics to drop-boxes located at both zoo entrances.

Become a Digital ZooParent to support gorillas

Become a [ZooParent](#) and help Woodland Park Zoo provide exceptional care for all its amazing animals and support wildlife conservation efforts in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Current zoo hours: 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500. Follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

Accessibility: Information about accessibility and resources, one-to-one aides, sighted guides, mobility equipment rentals, and a sensory map and tools can be found at www.zoo.org/access. For questions or to request disability accommodations for zoo programs or events, contact zooinfo@zoo.org.

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