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Gorilla Dies at Toledo Zoo

Toledo, Ohio—Elaine, a 42-year-old female gorilla, died early Tuesday afternoon at The Toledo Zoo. A necropsy performed on Tuesday revealed abnormalities in the adrenal glands, kidneys and lungs. Further tests are pending to determine the significance of the lesions.

Elaine had a decreased appetite on Friday, and by Saturday she had developed an intermittent dry cough, trembling, lethargy and labored respirations. Treatment was initiated and she appeared to be responding and slowly improving over the next two days. However, on Tuesday morning she was minimally responsive and was immobilized for an examination. Preliminary diagnostics indicated potential kidney failure and treatment was undertaken. She died during recovery. None of the other gorillas at The Toledo Zoo are currently presenting with any symptoms.

According to the Zoo's Executive Director, Dr. Anne Baker, "It's difficult to lose such a beloved animal. Caring for geriatric animals such as Elaine requires a special focus, and it's through the efforts of the animal care staff that our animals experience not only longevity, but also an excellent quality of life in their advanced years." The life expectancy for gorillas in zoo settings is about 31 years; only about 28% of gorillas in zoo settings reach the age of 42.

Elaine was born in the wild, and is owned by Hogle Zoo in Salt Lake City, Utah. She came to The Toledo Zoo in 1991. Although she had no offspring of her own, she served as a surrogate mother to two young gorillas. The Toledo Zoo is currently home to eight gorillas: five females (Johari, Kitani, Nia Lewa, Dara and Malaika) and three males (Bwenzi, Juba and silverback Kwisha).

The Toledo Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is located on the Anthony Wayne Trail (US 25), four miles south of downtown Toledo. For more information, please visit www.toledozoo.org or call (419) 385-4040. Lucas County residents are admitted free of charge each Monday from 10 a.m. to noon. ID showing proof of residency is required.

The Toledo Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is building North America's largest wildlife conservation movement.

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