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Bird Hatchings Brighten Aviary

Toledo, Ohio—The Toledo Zoo's Aviary is celebrating a number of very important hatchings, including the Zoo's first-time double hatching of African pygmy falcons! Hatched in late August, one of the African pygmy falcon chicks fledged on September 25, and the other is beginning to peek out of the nestbox. The Toledo Zoo was the only institution to hatch this species this year, and the little ones can be seen with their parents in the Aviary's African Walkthrough exhibit.

The African pygmy falcons' mother is a 6-year-old who came to the Zoo from the Memphis Zoo, and their 3-year-old father came from the Zoo New England. They reared one chick in the past and hatched another chick that was hand-reared by The Toledo Zoo's Aviary staff. Native to the dry savannas of eastern and southern Africa, African pygmy falcons will grow to be just under eight inches tall. But despite their diminutive size, they are predators by nature. Because of this, the Zoo's falcon family lives in a separate exhibit within the African Walkthrough.

The hatching of the African pygmy falcons is another on a series of important bird births at The Toledo Zoo in 2010. A Crested coua is being hand reared off-exhibit in the Zoo's Avian Breeding Center. The chick's parents live in the Aviary's Madagascar exhibit, and although they have not demonstrated parenting skills to date, Zoo staff is hopeful that they will eventually raise their own chicks. This species of cuckoo is still rare in United States zoos, with only about 30 being housed in zoo settings, and The Toledo Zoo is believed to be only the third institution to rear them. The Crested coua is notable for the highly unusual markings that chicks display on their inner beaks, video of which can be seen on the Zoo's YouTube channel (click on the YouTube icon at www.toledozoo.org).

In addition, a Violet-backed starling was hatched and reared by its parents in the African Walkthrough. The Toledo Zoo was the first U.S. zoo to breed this species in 1984, but this is the first chick to be hatched at the Zoo since 2005. A White-breasted wood swallow chick also fledged earlier this year; The Toledo Zoo is the third U.S. zoo to rear this species. Other species successfully raised at The Toledo Zoo this year include the Elegant crested tinamou, the Snowy-headed robin chat, the Guira cuckoo, the Red-crested cardinal, the Oriole warbler, the Luzon bleeding heart pigeon and the Goldie's lorikeet.

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 committed to inspiring others to join in caring for animals and conserving the natural world. As part of that mission, The Toledo Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a leader in global wildlife conservation. AZA member institutions are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and a better future for all living things.

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