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***Note:** Media filming and viewing will be allowed, but only in small groups, on August 3 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Curator of Birds, Robert Webster, will also be available for interviews during this time. Please RSVP to the Marketing & PR Department. Digital images of the chick are also available on request.*

**Rare Kori Bustard Chick Hatches at Toledo Zoo**

Toledo, OH – A Kori Bustard chick is the latest addition to the Toledo Zoo and a new first for the Zoo’s Avian Breeding Center (ABC), an off-exhibit facility dedicated to breeding rare and endangered birds. The male chick weighed 3.5 ounces when animal care staff assisted his hatching on June 27. Zoo animal care staff are hand-rearing him, which is the practice recommended for this species. Public exhibit plans have not been finalized at this time.

The Toledo Zoo is just the tenth zoo in the U.S. to successfully breed Kori Bustards, joining the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., Dallas Zoo (Texas), the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, La., and a handful of others. Currently 58 Kori Bustards live in U.S. zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

The chick’s parents – father, Kiva and mother, Kanoni -- are on exhibit at the Zoo near the Great Apes. Kiva (KEE-vah), 12 years old, came to the Zoo from the Smithsonian National Zoological Park in 2004; Kanoni (Kah-NO-nee), also 12, came to the Zoo from the Dallas Zoo in 2005. Their breeding was recommended by the AZA as part of a Species Survival Plan (SSP), a cooperative breeding management program.

“These are very challenging birds to manage, so it is extremely rewarding to have proof (in the form of this chick) that we’ve been doing it well!” said Robert Webster, the Toledo Zoo’s curator of birds. “Also, I think that what we’ve learned, as the northernmost U.S. zoo to breed ‘Koris,’ will open new opportunities for this species in other zoos.”

Sara Hallager, a biologist with the National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C., coordinates the SSP for Kori Bustards. She said the Toledo Zoo chick is one of fewer than five hatched this year at U.S. zoos. “It’s an important breeding because these are captive-bred birds and genetically valuable,” she said. “It’s definitely a positive for the SSP in terms of new genetic lines for the population, and it’s very encouraging that northern zoos can indeed breed Koris.”

Male Kori Bustards, weighing up to 40 pounds, are one of the world’s largest flying birds; females weigh about 15 pounds. In their native eastern and southern Africa, Kori Bustards inhabit dry savannas. While not endangered, habitat loss, illegal hunting and low reproduction rates have led to their decline.

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