



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 7, 2017

CONTACT: Shayla Moriarty, director of communications
419-385-5721 ext. 2155 or Shayla.moriarty@toledo zoo.org

Note: Toledo Zoo's director of animal programs, Terry Webb, will be available for interviews today from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. Due to the sensitive nature of this situation, pictures and video of the new giraffe will only be available from the Zoo's communication team.

It's a Girl!

TOLEDO, Ohio — No tall tales here. The Toledo Zoo has some big news to share... Please join us in welcoming to the world a new female Masai giraffe, born in the evening hours of Monday, April 3. The new female, named Kipenzi which means beloved or precious one in Swahli, weighs 130 pounds and stands approximately 67 inches tall. Both mother, Elli, and Kipenzi are doing well and bonding off exhibit. The new family will remain off exhibit until examined and cleared for debut by Zoo veterinarians and animal care staff.

Giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis*) are the tallest land mammals, standing 14-18 feet tall as adults. There are nine recognized sub-species of giraffes from all across southern and eastern Africa. Each giraffe has a unique spot pattern, but giraffes from the same geographical area appear similar. The Zoo's Masai giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi*) are native to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and have distinct oak leaf spot patterns that serve as camouflage in the African plains.

Giraffes typically give birth standing up. The offspring are known as calves and are born front feet and head first. The calf takes a dramatic but not harmful approximate six foot fall to the ground, causing it to take in a big deep breath. After about an hour the calf can walk and nurse and will begin eating vegetation at around a week old.

In the wild, until the calf is old enough to join the tower, it is hidden in vegetation to protect it from predators. When the calf finally joins the group, all the females will take turns looking after the offspring while the mother feeds. This not only helps the calf to develop physically standing up but also to socialize it while in the safety of the group. The calf will continue to nurse until six to nine months of age.

Giraffes are listed on the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) as a vulnerable species with declining population due to four main causes: habitat loss, civil unrest, illegal hunting/poaching and ecological changes. The Zoo participates in an [Association of Zoos and Aquariums \(AZA\) Species Survival Plan \(SSP\)](#) to help preserve a healthy and genetically diverse captive population of this intriguing species.

Once on public display, the giraffes will join zebras, wildebeests, kudus, warthogs and more in the Africa! exhibit on the North Side of the Zoo. And there you have both the long and short of it!

Please [click here](#) for exclusive video of Kipenzi provided by Toledo Zoo.

The Zoo is open daily at 10 a.m. and is located on the Anthony Wayne Trail (US 25), four miles south of downtown Toledo. For more information, please visit toledo zoo.org or call 419-385-4040. Lucas County residents are admitted free of charge on non-holiday Mondays from 10 a.m. - noon. Valid ID showing proof of residency is required.

The Toledo Zoo is committed to inspiring others to join us 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. Submitted by: Kim Haddix

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