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Note: Associate curator of mammals, Michael Frushour, will be available for interviews tomorrow, September 6, 2017 from 9-10 a.m. Please RSVP to Communication Team. A picture of the new gorilla is attached- please credit Toledo Zoo.

New Gorilla at the Toledo Zoo

TOLEDO, Ohio – The Toledo Zoo is excited to announce the addition of a new western lowland gorilla to our troop! Sufi Bettine, a 15 year old female, now calls Toledo Zoo home.

Sufi was born at the Bronx Zoo on December 27, 2001. She came to Toledo from the Houston Zoo this past spring on a Species Survival Plan breeding recommendation. After the standard quarantine period required for all new-to-the-Zoo animals, Sufi was slowly introduced to her new troop. Like any new addition to an established group, the process had its ups and downs, but the troop has accepted Sufi and all are now residing together on and off public exhibit.

Other members of the Zoo's gorilla troop are: 29 year old silverback male, Kwisha; 29 year old female, Johari; 23 year old female Kitani; and 14 year old female, Nia Lewa. Visitors can distinguish Sufi from the other females, as she is the smallest gorilla on exhibit.

Western lowland gorillas (*gorilla gorilla gorilla*) are four to six feet tall as adults and can weigh anywhere from 150 to 400 pounds. They live in the heavy rainforests of west central Africa and eat a vegetarian diet of roots, fruits and plants. Western lowland gorillas are known to live in the smallest troops of gorillas, consisting of four – eight animals, with one silverback male, a few females, young offspring and occasionally a few young males maintaining a $\frac{3}{4}$ to 16 square mile home range. Western lowland gorillas are listed as critically endangered and declining on the IUCN Red List for Threatened Species due to three main interconnected threats: habitat loss, bushmeat hunting and human encroachment.

The Zoo invites everyone to visit Sufi and the rest of our gorilla troop on exhibit daily in Kingdom of the Apes.

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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