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Note: Toledo Zoo's director of animal programs, Terry Webb, and San Diego Zoo's senior koala keeper, Jenny Roesler, will both be available for interviews today from 10 to 11 a.m. RSVP to the Communication team, if planning to attend. Pictures of the koala are also available by contacting the Communication team.

Spend Koala-ty Time at the Toledo Zoo

TOLEDO, Ohio — Yes, you inferred correctly...the Toledo Zoo is now home to a koala! The captivating, tree-hugging creature will be on exhibit in the Aviary as of this Friday, May 5!

The new koala, Coedie, was brought to the Zoo through the San Diego Zoo's Koala Loan Program, which has placed koalas in more than 85 cities and 12 countries across the globe. San Diego's senior koala keeper, and previous Toledo Zoo koala keeper, Jenny Roesler, accompanied Coedie on his transfer and stayed to help train staff and acclimate the koala to his new home, a newly- renovated exhibit in the historic Aviary. Coedie, whose name means boy in aboriginal, is 3 and a half years old and weighs approximately 16 pounds.

Interestingly, Coedie is the son of Mundoogie, the first male koala born at the Toledo Zoo in 2000. Through its participation in the Koala Loan Program, Toledo Zoo is also supporting koala habitat conservation in Australia.

Koalas (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) are easily recognized by their unique physical characteristics: large, leathery nose and lean yet rounded body with long limbs for support and balance, big ears and no visible tail. Another fun fact is that like humans, koalas have individual fingerprints.

Koalas are naturally solitary and basically sedentary creatures that reside in eucalyptus forests and woodlands, along the eastern coast of Australia. Because their diet of eucalyptus leaves and a small amount of dirt to aid in digestion does not provide much nutritional value and takes a long time to digest, koalas sleep between 18 and 22 hours a day and are active at night. Eucalyptus, the only food in a koala's diet, is harmful to most animals. However, in their digestive tract koalas have a special bacteria that breaks down the harmful compounds, allowing an individual to eat one to two pounds of eucalyptus leaves a day!

The IUCN Red List for Threatened Species lists koalas as vulnerable with declining population numbers due to loss of habitat, predation from dogs, disease and the effects of climate change. Current estimates are that more than 80% of koala habitat has disappeared and it is thought there are only 43,000 to 80,000 koalas left in the wild. In addition to visiting Coedie on or after Friday, Zoo guests can also support koala conservation by taking the new Oceania Conservation Tour around the Zoo to learn more, purchasing a koala Zoo PAL sponsorship or koala merchandise in Zoo gift shops.

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 toledozoo.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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