



city of
greenville

News Release

GREENVILLE ZOO ANNOUNCES GIRAFFE PREGNANCY

(Greenville SC) Greenville Zoo officials have announced that Autumn, the zoo's nine-year-old Masai giraffe, is pregnant. The zoo's veterinary staff confirmed the pregnancy through hormone analysis, and after reviewing zoo keepers' daily logs, have determined that Autumn could give birth as early as February. Like a majority of the animals at the Greenville Zoo, Autumn and Walter, the zoo's 10-year-old male Masai giraffe, are part of a cooperative breeding program known as an SSP or Species Survival Program. The purpose of a cooperative breeding program is to monitor captive populations and make breeding recommendations based on genetic variability and spaces available at other accredited institutions to ensure a long term viable population without removing animals from the wild. Both Autumn and Walter came to the Greenville Zoo in 2007 as part of a breeding loan. Autumn came from the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston, and Walter came from the San Diego Zoo. Their first calf, Kiko, was born on October 22, 2012. Their second calf was stillborn on August 20, 2014. At the recommendation of the SSP, Kiko was transferred to the Toronto Zoo earlier this year to join two female giraffes with the hope that they will breed and produce offspring.

"With the births of our siamang, red panda and ocelot babies, this has been an extraordinary year for the Species Survival Programs that we participate in," said zoo director Jeff Bullock. "And now with Autumn's pregnancy, it's an even more exciting time for the Greenville Zoo family."

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About the Masai Giraffe

The tallest animal on earth, giraffes can grow to stand 19 feet and weigh more than 3,000 pounds. The Masai giraffe, also known as the Kilimanjaro giraffe, is the largest of the up to nine subspecies of giraffe recognized. Giraffes are best known for their long necks, which have only seven vertebrae—similar to a human's neck. This physical characteristic allows them to browse on high ranging foliage beyond the reach of competing antelopes and to watch for predators such as lions. In the wild, giraffes can be found living in loose open herds in the savannas of Africa. Their pale buff coats are boldly marked with irregular chestnut or dark brown blotches which help to camouflage them in their

surroundings. Giraffe markings are as unique as human fingerprints; no two animals display the same. Giraffe births are a bit unusual in that they give birth while standing, and the baby is born hoovesfirst. A newborn calf, which can weigh between 120-150 pounds and stand 6-feet tall at birth, will usually take its first steps within an hour of its birth. Giraffes are one of the few animals born with horns on their heads. Giraffes have an unusually long lifespan compared to other ruminants, up to 25 years in the wild and often longer in zoos. There are currently 146 Masai giraffes in zoos around the world.

About the Greenville Zoo

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the Greenville Zoo is rated one of the best tourist attractions in South Carolina, attracting 300,000 people annually. Operated by the City of Greenville, the 14-acre facility features wildlife from around the world, including orangutans, giraffes, monkeys and giant tortoises. Visitors can also enjoy one of the zoo's most popular exhibits, the Reptile Building, which is home to a variety of lizards, frogs, turtles and snakes. The Greenville Zoo is open seven days a week, except on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Zoo entry ticket sales close at 4:15 p.m. Admission to the Greenville Zoo is \$9.00 for adults and \$5.75 for children (ages 3-15 years old). For more information about the Greenville Zoo, visit www.greenvillezoo.com or follow the zoo on Facebook at www.facebook.com/greenvillezoo.