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Endangered Bonobo Born at the Zoo

August 10, 2016-- *Jacksonville, FL* – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (JZG) is happy to announce the birth of a male bonobo on Saturday morning, August 6. The infant is the fifth for mother, Kuni, and the eighth bonobo born at JZG.

Bonobo offspring are born after eight months of gestation and are cared for by their mothers for around five years. They have black coats and although they are physically similar to chimpanzees, bonobos have a more petite body structure and are born with a black face while chimpanzees are born with a pink face. Bonobos and chimpanzees are man's closest living relatives.

Bonobos, native to the Democratic Republic of Congo in central Africa, are highly intelligent and social animals. They live in large groups and spend most of their time high in the trees, feeding on fruits and plant material. As one of only seven zoos in the country to house the endangered bonobo, this birth is important to the Bonobo Species Survival Plan, which serves as an assurance population for wild counterparts. JZG supports the Bonobo and Congo Biodiversity Initiative, working to protect these incredible creatures in the rainforests of central Africa.

The young male will be on exhibit with mother, Kuni, and other members of the group at least part of each day, weather permitting. He has been given the name Budir (pronounced "boo-dear") which has special meaning to his keepers.

Photo Credit: Lynde Nunn and Becca Ledesma

About Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit organization and a portion of every ticket sold goes to the over 45 conservation initiatives Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens supports around the world, and here in NE Florida. JZG is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit jacksonvillezoo.org.