



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: JJ Vitale ▪ 904.757.4463, ext. 145 ▪ cell: 904-635-5035 ▪ [vitalej@jacksonvillezoo.org](mailto:vitalej@jacksonvillezoo.org)  
Janet Wesley ▪ 904.757.4463, ext. 210 ▪ cell: 904-472-3699 ▪ [wesleyj@jacksonvillezoo.org](mailto:wesleyj@jacksonvillezoo.org)

## **Adorable Addition to the Giraffe Family at the Zoo**

May 25, 2016-- *Jacksonville, FL* – Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens (JZG) is delighted to welcome a new Reticulated giraffe to the family. The healthy baby female was born Saturday, May 21 at 3:40 in the afternoon. Much to the amazement of Zoo guests, the first stages of the calf's delivery occurred while mom, Luna, was still on exhibit and able to be seen from the Giraffe Overlook.

This calf is the third for Luna and whopping 15<sup>th</sup> for sire, Duke. Our most recent addition marks the 38<sup>th</sup> giraffe calf born at the Zoo. Keepers felt so confident in Luna's previous birth experiences and her healthy pregnancy, she was encouraged to roam freely and comfortably with the rest of the herd. A giraffe Exhibit Guide noticed the start of the delivery process at 2:45 p.m., at which point the keepers called Luna back to the birthing suite in the barn. The beautiful girl was born a short time later weighing 145 pounds and measuring a lanky 5'11".

Zoo keepers and animal health staff have been keeping an eye on the mother and calf, and say she's nursing well. Mom and baby are being given access to the side holding yard and are visible from the train.

Mammal Keeper LeShea Upchurch tells, "Luna is a great mom. She is protective of her calf and the two spend a lot of time napping and nursing. We are all excited to see her grow and especially to introduce her to the rest of the herd."

Zoo keepers expect the mother-daughter duo will move to the primary exhibit for limited hours starting Friday and going through Memorial Day weekend. The opportunity to name our newest giraffe was a favorite auction item at ExZOOberation, JZG's annual fundraising gala, and will be announced soon.

While the Zoo welcomes our newest girl, it prepares to say goodbye to two of the young male giraffe who are headed to Columbus Zoo and Aquarium this week. Also departing are two of the three male warthogs as the Zoo makes room for a female. A Yellow-backed duiker will be joining the bongos in the big mixed-species habitat off of the African boardwalk.

The Zoo is celebrating the exciting additions with an admission special that allows up to three children general admission free with the purchase of an adult ticket through the end of May. Members to the Zoo are being offered their choice of Destination: DINO, Butterfly Hollow or Stingray Bay whenever they visit through the end of May.

Photo Credit: Janel Jankowski and Aree Kongmuang

\*\*\*\*

### **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 an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit [jacksonvillezoo.org](http://jacksonvillezoo.org).