

“Tatu” the Baby Giraffe in good health, on limited display

Eric Connor, econnor@greenvillenews.com 8:29 p.m. EST February 12, 2016

It's a boy, and his name is Tatu.

The Greenville Zoo's newest addition — a baby giraffe born earlier this month as a legion of fans looked in via [EarthCam](#) — is the third calf born to parents Autumn and Walter.

In fact, the name “Tatu” is an African-Swahili translation for “third child.”

The zoo's first baby giraffe, Kiko, was born in 2012. Autumn also gave birth to a still-born calf in August 2014.

Three local residents submitted the name “Tatu” as part of an online naming contest that brought in nearly 200 suggestions.

Tatu was considerably larger at birth than his sibling Kiko.

Kiko, who now lives in the Toronto Zoo as part of a preservation effort to create genetic diversity in breeding, was 118.4 pounds and 5 feet, 11 inches tall at birth. Tatu was 157.8 pounds and 6 feet, 1 inch tall when he was born at 6:16 a.m. on February 2.

The Greenville Zoo had withheld the gender and name until a press conference on Friday where zoo officials described the birth and plans for exhibition.

Tatu was the 29th birth of a Masai giraffe over the past 12 months spread across 11 different confined habitats, Greenville Zoo administrator Jeff Bullock said.

The birth required little intervention by staff, he said.

Walter is currently separated from Tatu and Autumn to facilitate the bonding process. At first during these expected cold weeks, Walter will spend the early part of the day outside alone.

The mother and child will come outside later in the day as temperatures rise.

“We're eager to get (Tatu) on exhibit, but the temperature constraints are a bit of a concern,” said Nick Kapustin, the zoo's new deputy administrator and veterinarian.

The zoo re-opens tomorrow after a routine two-week maintenance closure, but viewing of the baby giraffe could be limited and determined by weather conditions.

The zoo staff will provide updates on the zoo's Facebook page to inform the public on the chances that Tatu will be on exhibit on a particular day, and if he's not on exhibit, he can still be seen on the Giraffe Cam.

