

Greenville Zoo welcomes new baby giraffe

Anna Lee, February 2, 2016



Autumn, the Greenville Zoo's 9-year-old Masai giraffe, gave birth to a healthy calf early Tuesday, zoo officials said.

The calf's first hesitant steps and more were captured in a live video stream after Autumn went into labor sometime before 6 a.m.

Viewers tuned in from Ontario, Canada, as well as Wisconsin, Texas, Florida and Ohio for the special broadcast, according to the zoo's Facebook account.

Both Autumn and her calf are doing well, and the calf has met important benchmarks, such as standing and nursing successfully.

"The birth went off without a hitch, and the Greenville Zoo was once again able to share this special event with EarthCam viewers around the world," said Zoo Director Jeff Bullock. "We hope that this exposure will help people connect with giraffes, want to learn more about them and help us support giraffe conservation efforts."

In the next 24 to 48 hours, zoo staff will perform a routine neonatal exam on the calf to determine its height, weight and sex. Blood tests will also be used to see if the calf is receiving important antibodies from Autumn's milk.

Dad Walter will remain separated from the family for the next few weeks to allow Autumn and the calf to bond without interruption. The calf will need the time to gain the strength it needs to endure Walter's curiosity, zoo officials said.

Zoo officials have decided to allow the public to continue suggesting male and female names until noon Feb. 11. Click here to submit names online and go to the green GET TICKETS link to start the submission. Once the contest closes, zookeepers will select a favorite name that will be announced at a press conference the following day.

The zoo will remain closed for annual maintenance until Feb. 12. Until then, the public can follow Autumn and her calf's progress via the Giraffe Cam at greenvillezoofoundation.org/giraffecam.

Autumn is no stranger to an audience. Thousands watched for weeks leading up to the birth of her first calf, Kiko, born on Oct. 22, 2012. Kiko is now looking for a mate of his own at his new home at the Toronto Zoo.

Autumn's second calf was stillborn on Aug. 20, 2014.