

## Greenville Zoo awaits birth of baby giraffe LIVE on GiraffeCam

By Anna Lee

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You can't blame Autumn for being a little camera shy.

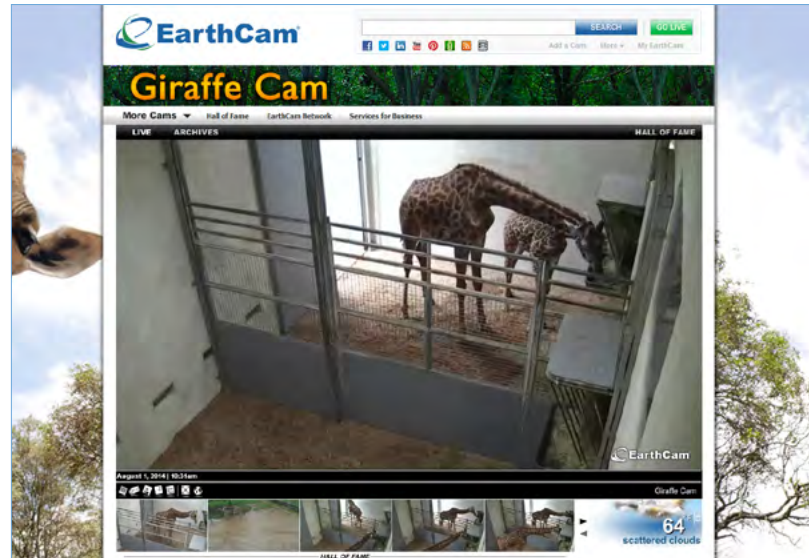
The Greenville Zoo's 7-year-old Masai giraffe is expected to give birth any day now, and she will have to do it with the whole world watching.

It will be the second calf for Walter and Autumn, who gave birth to Kiko in a few anxious minutes on Oct. 22, 2012. Nearly a million viewers watched live via the zoo's webcam as Kiko dropped from his mother's womb just before midnight

People who missed the first pregnancy will get another chance to tune in on [EarthCam.com](http://EarthCam.com).

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While it's hard to say exactly when Autumn will go into labor, keepers expect it will happen before late August, said Keith Gilchrist, the zoo's general curator.



"We're getting a little bit closer every day," Gilchrist said. "You can see the calf moving around and kicking in her stomach."

Autumn has also started having sporadic contractions, which is typical for giraffes in the month leading up to birth.

The first sign of labor will be when her sack comes out, Gilchrist said, which is similar to when a human mother's water breaks. You will then be able to see the calf's front hooves, its head and neck.

Once the shoulders pass, the calf will drop to the ground and be up on its feet within about two hours, Gilchrist said. Newborn giraffes can weigh between 120-150 pounds and stand 6 feet tall at birth.

Keepers aren't the only ones keeping a close eye on Autumn.

The zoo's Facebook page has plenty of comments from GiraffeCam viewers who give regular updates.

"Autumn is pacing, mouthing the partition and has her tail up a lot," said one post from earlier this week.

Another Facebook post on Wednesday said: "Autumn is resting in the middle stall. She likes being near the rest of the family."

The zoo has already separated the family while they are on exhibit in case Autumn goes into labor, and Walter and Kiko get a little too curious, Gilchrist said.

Gilchrist said he was a little worried that the separation would upset Kiko, "but I think he's grown up enough to where it's not as stressful."

Walter and Autumn are on loan to the Greenville Zoo as part of a three-way breeding program.

Per the agreement, the first calf, Kiko, belongs to Franklin Park Zoo in Boston, and the second calf to San Diego Zoo. The third will stay in Greenville.

There is still time to help name Autumn's second calf. Anyone who donates at least \$10 to support Friends of the Greenville Zoo can submit one boy and girl name.

The top three will be sent to zoo staffers, who pick the official name, said Amanda Osborne, executive director of the Friends.

A portion of the donations will be used to build new shade structures for the giraffe exhibit, Osborne said.