

Kiko to leave Greenville Zoo

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By Stephanie Moore

GREENVILLE, S.C. —The Greenville Zoo will bid farewell to its 2-year-old Masai giraffe, Kiko, who will be leaving in mid-May for his new home at the Toronto Zoo in Canada.

Kiko will join two female giraffes with the hope that they will breed and produce offspring.

“Having to say goodbye to Kiko is going to be especially difficult for the Greenville Zoo staff and Upstate community,” Greenville Zoo Administrator Jeff Bullock said. “We followed Kiko through every milestone of his life, from watching him take his first steps to seeing him develop into an active and curious young giraffe. He will always be a part of the Greenville Zoo family, and we look forward to following the next journey of his life as he begins a new family in Toronto.”

The zoo says it’s time to move Kiko-because he is not fully grown- and his lower height will make transporting him easier.

Also, he will soon want to mate, and at the Greenville Zoo he is in an enclosure with only his mother and father.

But Bullock hinted that Kiko might soon have a brother or sister.

“Just Kiko is leaving, Walter and Autumn will remain here and we are hoping that once we do some more testing that we might have another announcement later on this summer.”

The move to the Toronto Zoo was recommended by a species survival program (SSP) of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The SSP develops long-term research and management strategies for the species. One of the most important roles of the SSP is to ensure that all giraffes are managed in a way that preserves the best possible genetic diversity.

Viewers worldwide watched the birth of Kiko on October 22, 2012, on the zoo’s [GiraffeCam](#).

Kiko was the first baby for Autumn, a 9-year-old female Masai giraffe, and Walter, a 9-year-old male. Autumn was born at the Franklin Park Zoo in Boston and Walter is from the San Diego Zoo. Both animals arrived in Greenville in July 2007 as part of a three-way loan agreement. The zoo will hold a farewell celebration for Kiko from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 16 near the Giraffe giraffe exhibit.

