



For Immediate Release

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LOOKING BACK ON A BANNER YEAR FOR BIRTHS AT ZOO ATLANTA

Just how many babies were born at your Zoo in 2011?

ATLANTA – January 27, 2012 – Members and guests may have heard plenty about Sohni and Sanjiv the tiger cubs, Lily the giraffe, Merry Leigh the gorilla, or Beaugard the bongo, but these were just five of the babies born at Zoo Atlanta in 2011. In fact, nearly 260 little ones were born or hatched in what proved to be a banner year for births at the Zoo.

New arrivals represented species from across the animal kingdom, from a chinchilla no larger than a chicken egg, to a foursome of unusual aquatic snakes, to a bevy of little whistling ducks. Of the year's 259 babies, 56 were mammals, 121 were reptiles, 81 were birds, and one was an amphibian. In many cases, the bundle of births gave visitors a chance to observe the many faces of parenthood in the Zoo. Kateena the red kangaroo joey, for example, grew from the size of a jellybean in her mother's pouch; Betelgeuse the wreathed hornbill fed his offspring and mate through a tiny slit in a mud nest; and the 62 Burmese black tortoise hatchlings had no parental care whatsoever.

"Every birth at the Zoo is important. Guests are very drawn to babies, and we have a chance to educate our visitors, particularly when it comes to endangered or critically endangered species," said Dwight Lawson, PhD, Deputy Director. "Births also give guests a golden opportunity to see how various species rear their young, for a better understanding of the strategies and adaptations animals use to succeed in the wild."

Now, the fun lies in watching the nursery class of 2011 grow up. The latest to make his debut is Beaugard the bongo, now almost 2 months old and on exhibit regularly, weather and temperatures permitting. Visit zooatlanta.org for a closer look at the year's highest-profile babies.

[About Zoo Atlanta](#)

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. Complex Carnivores, a new series of exhibits featuring bush dogs, fossa and binturong, opened in April 2011. Zoo Atlanta is also proud to be one of only four zoos in the U.S. that giant pandas call home: Lun Lun's newest cub, born November 3, 2010, made his public debut in spring 2011. Other highlights include the nation's largest collection of western lowland gorillas, the nation's largest zoological collection of orangutans, and a global center of excellence for the care and study of vanishing reptiles and amphibians. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.

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