



*For Immediate Release*

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Keisha N. Hines, Director of Public Relations and Communications  
404.624.5980 –office  
404.309.2238 –cell  
[khines@zooatlanta.org](mailto:khines@zooatlanta.org)

Simone Griffin, Public Relations Coordinator  
404.624.2809  
[sgriffin@zooatlanta.org](mailto:sgriffin@zooatlanta.org)

**GREAT NEWS FOR GREAT APES!**

*Blaze the orangutan will be first-time mom; Kudzoo the gorilla will deliver soon*

**ATLANTA – March 30, 2011** – 2011 brings exciting news for great apes at Zoo Atlanta, with a recently confirmed first-time pregnancy for Blaze the orangutan and positive signs for an impending birth for Kudzoo the gorilla, daughter of the Zoo's most legendary resident.

Blaze, a 15-year-old Sumatran orangutan, is expecting her first infant. The infant's father is 32-year-old male Benny. Orangutan gestation is approximately 8.5 months, suggesting a birth in November or December.

Meanwhile, Kudzoo the western lowland gorilla appears to be progressing well in her final stages of pregnancy. The 17-year-old is expected to deliver her second infant in late April or early May. The mother-to-be and 21-year-old male Taz have one previous offspring, Macy Baby, 5. Kudzoo and her offspring are the equivalent of Zoo Atlanta royalty, as she was the firstborn of the world-famous Willie B. Her newborn will be the third grandchild of the iconic silverback, who passed away in 2000.

The Animal Management and Veterinary Teams have monitored Kudzoo closely throughout her pregnancy, as she is known to have experienced a miscarriage in 2010. She is trained to cooperate with monthly pregnancy tests, which have continued to indicate positive results as recently as last week.

"We're delighted about Blaze's pregnancy, and looking forward to meeting Kudzoo's infant in just a matter of weeks," said Dwight Lawson, PhD, Deputy Director. "Great apes are flagship attractions at Zoo Atlanta, as well as individuals that carry very important conservation messages. We're excited about welcoming newborn ambassadors for two species in critical need of our help."

Zoo Atlanta is a recognized center of excellence for the care and study of these endangered and critically endangered great apes. The Zoo is home to the nation's largest collection of western lowland gorillas, currently numbering 23, and the largest zoological collection of orangutans in the U.S., with 13 individuals. Four great apes at Zoo Atlanta – gorillas Ozzie, Choomba, Ivan and Shamba – are over the age of 45.

Stay tuned for more details on both Blaze and Kudzoo.

**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, opens on April 1. 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, Po, 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](http://zooatlanta.org).

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