



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 20, 2009

ZOO ATLANTA'S NAKED MOLE RAT QUEEN GIVES BIRTH *Unique monarch is first-time mom*

WHAT: Zoo Atlanta's naked mole rat queen has given birth to her first litter of pups. The Animal Management and Veterinary Teams discovered at least six newborn members of the Zoo's strangest animal society on May 19.

Hairless, sightless and roughly an inch long, the new arrivals are estimated to weigh between 1 and 2 grams. The pups have already been observed crawling over a tight formation of adult colony members, who remain huddled in the nest for the infants' warmth and protection.

The queen may nurse her offspring for up to 2 months, but the entire colony is tasked with their care. Workers are also responsible for the transport of the pups in the event that the queen selects a new nesting area. The pups' eyes should open at 20 to 30 days, at which time the juveniles may also start eating solid foods.

To avoid disrupting the colony, the Animal Management and Veterinary Teams will wait days before resuming any maintenance activities that could disturb the queen or her pups. Fortunately, there's no wait for curious guests! Visitors can see the Zoo's unusual underground family and their exciting additions in their habitat daily.

WHERE: Zoo Atlanta
800 Cherokee Avenue, S.E.
Atlanta, GA 30315

CONTACT: Keisha N. Hines Davis, Director of Public Relations and Communications
404.624.5980 – office
404.309.2238 – cell
Khines-davis@zooatlanta.org

Rachel MacNabb
Communications Manager
404.624.2812
rmacnabb@zooatlanta.org

ABOUT:**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. The Zoo's newest attraction, Boundless Budgies: A Parakeet Adventure, opened in April 2009. The interactive new experience is the largest of its kind in the Southeast. Zoo Atlanta is also the proud home of Xi Lan, the only giant panda cub born in the U.S. in 2008. Other highlights include one of the nation's most recognized collections of great apes and a global center of excellence for the care and reproduction of vanishing amphibians and reptiles. Zoo Atlanta 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 go to zooatlanta.org.

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