



For Immediate Release

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INFANT ORANGUTAN PASSES AT ZOO ATLANTA
Sandar had been under round-the-clock care since birth

ATLANTA – July 1, 2010 – Sandar, a 3-month-old male Bornean orangutan at Zoo Atlanta, was euthanized on July 1, 2010 following multiple health complications since birth. The Animal Management and Veterinary Teams made the difficult decision based on a progressive deterioration in his condition over the last two weeks and no hope of improvement in his prognosis.

“The Zoo staff and the many dedicated nurses, doctors and specialists from Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta went above and beyond the call in doing everything possible to combat Sandar’s many challenges and health complications. With his physical and developmental problems, he would never have survived this long in the wild,” said Dr. Dwight Lawson, Senior Vice President of Collections, Education and Conservation.

A critical care resident of the Zoo Atlanta Veterinary Clinic since shortly after his birth to 18-year-old Miri on March 30, Sandar had experienced a series of recurrent illnesses that left him reliant on supplemental oxygen provided by Cornerstone Medical and a nasogastric feeding tube. Despite round-the-clock care by Zoo veterinarians and nurses from Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta and ongoing efforts by pediatric specialists, Sandar’s prognosis had been recently downgraded from guarded to grave.

“The Zoo Atlanta family is saddened by the passing of Sandar, particularly given the daily acts of determination and commitment that went into his treatment,” said Raymond King, President and CEO. “The level of dedication and devotion that defined his care is unprecedented.”

Had Sandar’s condition improved, the Animal Management and Veterinary Teams were planning to reintroduce the infant to his parents, Miri and Sulango, and his brother, 6-year-old Satu. A future reunion with Miri or a surrogate orangutan parent would have been critical to Sandar’s development, as orangutan infants are entirely reliant on their mothers for critical life skills such as foraging and problem-solving. Orangutans have a longer dependent childhood than any other species, excepting only humans.

As is the case with all animal deaths, regardless of age, a necropsy will be performed at the University of Georgia through Zoo Atlanta's partnership with the Department of Pathology in the College of Veterinary Medicine.

"Zoo Atlanta is deeply grateful to the nurses from Children's, as well as to the specialists who devoted such energy and empathy to trying to help Sandar survive," King said. "We are also deeply grateful for the support of the many members of the community who have followed his story."

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, Trader's Alley: Wildlife's Fading Footprints, featuring the debut of two new sun bears, opened in June 2010. 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. Zoo Atlanta is also proud to be one of only four zoos in the U.S. that giant pandas call home. 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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