



MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 20, 2011

UPDATE ON BLAZE THE ORANGUTAN

Ultrasound indicates that first-time mom-to-be is progressing well

WHO: Blaze, a 15-year-old Sumatran orangutan at Zoo Atlanta, is progressing well as she enters the final months of her first pregnancy, according to a recent ultrasound performed in early July. The first-time mother was confirmed to be expecting in March 2011.

WHAT: Blaze's date of conception is uncertain, but the Animal Management and Veterinary Teams had initially estimated a birth window of November to December 2011. Based on physical signs and development of the fetus, however, Zoo staff now believes Blaze may be further into her 8.5-month gestation period than originally anticipated.

"Blaze is doing very well. The fetus appears to be healthy and developing normally," said Sam Rivera, DVM, Associate Veterinarian, who performed the latest ultrasound. "It's very exciting to be able to track the developing infant's progress in much the same way we would a human infant's, thanks to outstanding training achievements by Blaze's keepers, the Veterinary Team, and, of course, Blaze herself."

Zoo Atlanta houses the nation's largest zoological collection of orangutans, with 13 individuals, and is home to both the Bornean and Sumatran species. Sumatran orangutans are critically endangered, with as many as 3,000 to 5,000 apes believed to be lost every year as a result of habitat conversion to palm oil plantations, over-harvesting of timber and human encroachment. Experts predict that the species could be extinct within 10 years without targeted conservation efforts.

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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. Complex Carnivores, a new series of exhibits featuring bush dogs, fossa and binturong, opened 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.

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