



## MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DECEMBER 2, 2011

### EASTERN BONGO BORN AT ZOO ATLANTA

*First-time mother Matilda delivers newest ambassador for critically endangered species*

**WHO:** Matilda, a 3-year-old eastern bongo, gave birth to a calf on December 2, 2011. The calf is the first for Matilda and 3-year-old male Tambo.

**WHAT:** The newborn is the newest representative of one of the rarest species in residence at Zoo Atlanta. Believed to number fewer than 500 in the wild in their native Kenya, eastern bongos face extinction as a result of habitat destruction, poaching and hunting for the bushmeat trade. Matilda and Tambo were recommended to breed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) Species Survival Plan, which seeks to maintain a self-sustaining, genetically diverse population within North American Zoos and has reintroduced captive-born bongos to eastern Africa.

"Naturally, we're delighted about any birth here at the Zoo, but Matilda's calf also illustrates the role zoos can play in wildlife conservation," said Raymond King, President and CEO. "This is a species on the brink of extinction. Sharing the hope and joy of a new baby helps us educate our guests about these majestic animals and the need to preserve them in the wild."

Known for their deep reddish coats and magnificent curved horns, bongos are the largest of the African antelope species. Largely due to their elusive nature, the animals were the subjects of legends and superstitions prior to their relatively recent discovery by western science in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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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 [zoatlanta.org](http://zoatlanta.org).

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