



3930 West Land Park Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95822-1123  
sac zoo.org

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact:**

Andrea Haverland | 916-808-8811  
ahaverland@sac zoo.org

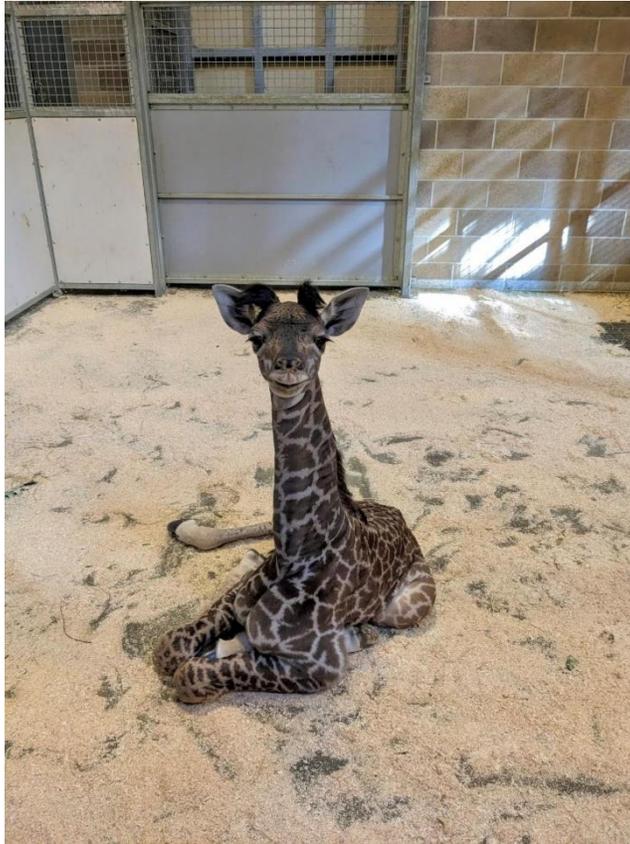
# Sacramento Zoo celebrates the birth of Masai giraffe calf

(Sacramento, CA) -- Shani the giraffe gave birth to a female calf on Sunday, January 22, at 12:28pm. Her zookeepers noted signs of an impending birth on January 18, and Shani was moved into the maternity stall of the giraffe barn to be monitored. Although animal care and veterinary teams were suspicious that she might still be pregnant, just not on her original timeline, there were no definitive signs until very recently.

We are thrilled to announce that Shani's calf is healthy and nursing well from mom. The pair will be given bonding time but may be visible at their habitat's side yard periodically over the next few weeks. The official debut date will be dependent on the health and welfare of mom and calf. Keep an eye out on our social media pages for when this new addition to our herd will be visible!

Sacramento Zoo is now home to six giraffes: one post-reproductive female reticulated giraffe, one male Masai giraffe, three female Masai giraffe including Shani, and now the new calf. This is the 21st calf born at the Sacramento Zoo going back to 1954 when giraffes were first housed in Sacramento.





The Masai giraffe is the largest giraffe subspecies and is found in southern Kenya and Tanzania. Gestation is 14 to 15 months. When a calf is born, it can be as tall as six feet and weigh as much as 150 pounds. Within minutes, the calf is able to stand on its own.

Sacramento Zoo is one of 34 institutions managing 131 Masai giraffes in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) population. The Zoo partners with and supports the Wild Nature Institute (WNI), a field research organization that is currently studying Masai giraffe demographics and the African Savanna ecosystem with photo recognition software. The zoo's partnership with WNI is critical to giraffe research and conservation efforts.

Wild giraffes are experiencing a silent extinction as their populations continue to plummet due to poaching and habitat loss. It has been estimated that the mammals' numbers have fallen by more than 40 percent over the last 30 years. Approximately 150,000 wild giraffes existed as recently as 1985, but it is now estimated that there are now fewer than 97,000, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In 2016, the IUCN moved giraffes from "Least Concern" to "Vulnerable" on its Red List of Threatened Species.

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**About the Sacramento Zoo**

The Sacramento Zoo is home to more than 400 native, rare and endangered animals and is one of more than 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Zoo inspires conservation awareness and action through exceptional animal care, education and recreation, and it welcomes an average of 500,000 visitors a year. The Sacramento Zoological Society formed in 1958 to support and raise funds for the zoo that was created in 1927 in William Land Park. In 1970, the Sacramento City Council adopted the name "Sacramento Zoo." And in 1997, as city funding continued to decrease, the Sacramento Zoological Society assumed responsibility for the Zoo's management and the majority of its financial support. For additional information visit [saczoo.org](http://saczoo.org).

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