

**Press Release
For Immediate Release
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PHOTO CREDIT: KEN ARDILL – TORONTO ZOO

TORONTO ZOO WELCOMES FEMALE MASAI GIRAFFE CALF “MSTARI” TO THE FAMILY!

Friday, November 8, 2013, Toronto Ontario: The Toronto Zoo is excited to introduce female Masai giraffe calf ‘Mstari’, pronounced ‘mi-starry’. ‘Twiga’, the Zoo’s 23 year old Masai giraffe, gave birth on Thursday, October 17, 2013. The name ‘Mstari’ means ‘Stripes’ in Swahili and was chosen by Zoo Keepers in memory of her late father ‘Stripes’ who passed away September 29, 2012 at the age of 21. This newest addition to the Toronto Zoo family is happy and healthy, and mother ‘Twiga’ is also doing very well.

Giraffes are listed by the International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN) as least concern/conservation dependent however, recent population estimates suggest a large decline in wild numbers due to habitat destruction and poaching which will likely warrant a higher classification. "The Toronto Zoo is part of the Masai Giraffe Species Survival Plan (SSP) and the birth of this calf is very important to the North American captive population", says Maria Franke, Toronto Zoo Curator of Mammals. This is the 17th Masai giraffe born at the Toronto Zoo.

Almost everything about a giraffe seems exaggerated. Its height can range up to 6.1 metres, making it the world's tallest animal, its heart, as an adult, weighs 11.5 kg, and Mom gives birth standing - meaning that the baby, which is approximately two metres tall, has a 1.6 metre drop to the ground! In the wild, a giraffe can deliver a kick that will send a lion spinning.

The Toronto Zoo is Canada's premier zoo and a leader in animal preservation and environmental protection. More than a tourist attraction, the Toronto Zoo boasts a number of leading programs for helping wildlife and their natural habitats – from species reintroduction to reproductive research. A world-class educational centre for people of all ages, the Toronto Zoo is open every day except December 25 and attracts approximately 1.3 million visitors each year.

Make a point of stopping by the African Savanna to see our delightful little giraffe girl, “Mstari” browsing happily with Mom ‘Twiga’ and Aunt Ginetta who will be out, from time to time, in the yard, weather permitting.

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Toronto Zoo is accredited by CAZA (Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums). Look for this logo whenever you visit a Canadian zoo as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. For more information, visit www.caza.