

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indianapolis Zoo Welcomes African Elephant Calf, Makes History on a Special “Labor” Day

INDIANAPOLIS — This Labor Day was history-making for the Indianapolis Zoo with first-time elephant mother Zahara bringing a male calf into the world. The newest member of the Zoo’s African elephant herd arrived Monday evening shortly after 5:30 p.m. The birth made history as the first elephant in the world (African or Asian) to be born through artificial insemination to a mother who was also born through the same procedure.

Elephant care staff began staying overnight on Friday when routine blood tests alerted them to the impending birth. Assistant Curator of Elephants Niki Kowalski reported that the calf arrived only 20 minutes after the initial signs of labor. “Zahara’s mother Ivory is known for her short labor times, and this baby came quickly as well,” said Kowalski. The calf weighs 262 pounds, which is a healthy birthweight. Average birthweight for African elephant calves is 226 pounds, with males typically weighing heavier than females. The calf is strong and was standing within 10 minutes of birth. Mom and baby are doing great and have bonded quickly. “What a great way to celebrate Labor Day,” Kowalski added.

Prior to the calf’s birth, Zahara was the Zoo’s youngest elephant, at age 17. Her calf is the seventh to be born at the Indianapolis Zoo. “We are especially excited as this calf will begin a third generation in the herd at the Zoo,” said President & CEO Robert Shumaker. The Indianapolis Zoo is recognized as a leader in African elephant reproduction. The first and second African elephants in the world to be conceived and successfully born through artificial insemination were at the Zoo in 2000. Multi-generational herds are the most natural and healthy social setting for elephants. They are also essential to educate Zoo visitors which creates a conservation ethic to further elephant survival in the wild.

Photos and videos are [available here](#) for download and use. Today, Sept. 5 at 2:30 p.m., journalists will be able to talk with elephant care staff at the Zoo.

By visiting zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, guests are contributing to the fight against poaching and helping to save elephants. Visitors help make possible the field conservation, research, habitat restoration, reduction of human-elephant conflicts and community-based initiatives necessary to protect wild populations. To learn more, go to IndianapolisZoo.com/exhibits/plains/african-elephant/.

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About the Indianapolis Zoo

The Indianapolis Zoo empowers people and communities, both locally and globally, to advance animal conservation. Located in White River State Park downtown, the Indianapolis Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the American Alliance of Museums as a zoo, aquarium and botanical garden. Visit IndianapolisZoo.com

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