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MARYLAND ZOO IN BALTIMORE ANNOUNCES BIRTH OF FOUR WARTHOG PIGLETS!

BALTIMORE, MD – The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is pleased to announce the birth of four common warthog piglets, born on Wednesday, April 4 to Kumari and Kijani, the Zoo’s warthog pair.

The piglets were found in the morning by the Zoo’s animal department staff who had been keeping a close eye on the pregnant female waiting for her to deliver. This is the second litter for Kumari, the 7-year-old female warthog. “Kumari is very protective of her litter and is doing a great job caring for her newborns,” stated Meredith Wagoner, mammal collection and conservation manager at the Zoo. “The three females and one male piglet are nursing regularly and appear to be thriving.”

“Females give birth to three piglets per litter on average, so Kumari’s large litter was quite a surprise,” continued Wagoner. “During their first veterinary exam, the piglets weighed approximately 1.5 pounds each. Currently they weigh 2.5 pounds apiece.” Mother warthogs nurse and care for their offspring until they are about 21 weeks of age, at which point they have to fend for themselves. Kijani, like all male warthogs, will not participate in rearing his offspring, and is living separately from Kumari and the babies.

The common warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*) is a species of wild pig native to Africa. They are commonly seen in Africa’s open grasslands but also seek out denser vegetation. Warthogs can also survive in desert fringes. The Maryland Zoo’s warthogs are in the African Journey section of the Zoo near the Giraffe Feeding Station.

“We hope to have Kumari and the piglets on exhibit by mid-May, once the weather is a bit warmer more consistently,” said Wagoner. “When they do go into the exhibit, it will be for half of the day so that Kijani, the male, can be outside for the other half. For now though, they are bonding with Mom in their nice warm barn.”

The birth is the result of a recommendation from the Warthog Population Management Plan (PMP) coordinated by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). PMPs provide breeding recommendations to maximize genetic diversity, with the goal of ensuring the long-term survival of the captive population and the health of individual animals. The warthog PMP will also determine where the piglets are to live, based on an assessment of the warthog population in American zoos.

The AZA Small Population Management Advisory Group (SPMAG) at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago to helps develop breeding recommendations for the advancement and sustainability of warthogs in AZA-accredited zoos.

About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo's varied natural habitat exhibits in areas such as Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children's Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit www.marylandzoo.org.

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