



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ELDERLY CHEETAH EUTHANIZED AT THE MARYLAND ZOO IN BALTIMORE

BALTIMORE, MD -- The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is saddened to announce the death of female cheetah, Alix (pronounced Allie). Considered geriatric at age 15, Alix had been suffering from kidney disease, spinal arthritis, and other age-related ailments, but had remained in fairly good health until recently. During the past few weeks, her quality of life declined and she was humanely euthanized today.

"Kidney disease is a common ailment in older cheetahs, and it is rare to have a cheetah live this long in this good of health," stated Dr. Ellen Bronson, chief veterinarian for the Zoo. "Alix was an especially personable cat and had a strong bond with her keepers, who were able to train her for several medical procedures, allowing our veterinary technicians to voluntarily draw blood from her tail. With our ability to collect blood from her without anesthesia, we were able to monitor her carefully and adjust treatments as necessary. This enabled us to effectively manage her multiple ailments over time and would not have been possible without the daily efforts of the animal staff."

Alix came to The Maryland Zoo from the Phoenix Zoo. Median life expectancy for cheetahs is 11.3 years, according to experts with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. (AZA). "For this elderly cheetah, the focus has been to keep the level of care consistent to slow the progression of her ailments. Unfortunately, it became apparent that her quality of life was in decline and we made tough decision to euthanize her," continued Bronson.

Cheetahs live in small, isolated populations mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. Many of their strongholds are in eastern and southern African parks. Due to human conflict, poaching, and habitat and prey-base loss, there are only an estimated 7,500 to 10,000 cheetahs left in the wild. The International Union for Conservation of Nature considers cheetahs vulnerable to extinction.

Working with the Cheetah Species Survival Plan (SSP) of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the Zoo is planning to bring two cheetah to Baltimore in the next few months. After they clear the mandatory 30 day quarantine, the cheetah will take up residence alongside the African Boardwalk.

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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