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MARYLAND ZOO IN BALTIMORE WELCOMES COLOBUS MONKEY BABY

BALTIMORE, MD -- The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is pleased to announce the birth of black-and-white colobus monkey baby born on exhibit on Saturday, April 21, 2012. “We have been hoping that this pair would breed successfully, however they are secretive breeders and we were not certain she was pregnant,” stated Mike McClure, general curator. “We were very happy to see this new offspring arrive this morning.”

The Maryland Zoo’s colobus pair, Keri, age 14 and Bisi, age 19 are the first time parents of the infant, whose gender is not known at this time. “We want the mother and baby to be as comfortable as possible, so we are not attempting to bring them off exhibit to check on the infant at this time,” continued McClure. “The staff are monitoring the colobus very closely, and they have seen the baby nurse. We will continue to observe the monkeys and when appropriate we will do our first veterinary check.”

Colobus monkeys (*Colobus guereza*) are found in all types of forests in equatorial Africa. They are easily distinguishable by their black bodies and long white tails. They are highly social animals that spend most of their time sitting in the treetops eating and socializing. They take turns sleeping at night so that one member of the troop is always awake and watching for predators. The species is considered “in decline” as they are threatened by loss of forest habitat across equatorial Africa, and are also hunted for their meat and fur. The Maryland Zoo now has four colobus monkeys, two adult females, an adult male and the new infant.

The colobus monkey birth is the result of a recommendation from the Colobus Species Survival Plan (SSP) coordinated by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). SSPs provide breeding recommendations to maximize genetic diversity and appropriate social groupings, with the goal of ensuring the long-term survival of the captive population and the health of individual animals.

Zoo visitors can see the colobus monkey troop inside the Chimpanzee Forest. They share the exhibit with red tailed guenons, rock hyrax and African porcupines. “The infant is covered in white fur and you have to look closely to see it clinging to Mom’s belly,” concluded McClure. “As the baby grows, the white fur will gradually change to the sharp black-and-white coloration of the adult colobus.”

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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