



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
14 April 2011

**CONTACT:** Jane Ballentine  
O: 443-552-5275  
C: 301/332-1742

### **MARYLAND ZOO MOURNING LOSS OF GIRAFFE ZOE**

**BALTIMORE --** The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is sad to announce the death of Zoe, the Zoo's 16-year-old giraffe, who passed away during a medical procedure this morning.

"We are stunned by this sudden loss," stated Don Hutchinson, President/CEO of the Maryland Zoo. "Zoe was truly part of our Zoo family; she was born here, and has been a favorite of staff and visitors who were able to feed her at the Giraffe Feeding Station."

Zoe was scheduled for a critical hoof trim procedure this morning, and was placed under standing sedation in the Giraffe Restraint Device (GRD) which is inside the Giraffe House. "The giraffe are trained to walk into the GRD, which then allows staff safe access to them for medical exams and treatment," explained Mike McClure, general curator at The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. "The GRD supported Zoe during this procedure, which went smoothly, as planned."

"We were in the process of reversing the anesthesia, and initially Zoe seemed to be recovering well," said Dr. Ellen Bronson, chief veterinarian at the Zoo. "Unfortunately, she became decreasingly responsive. Despite intensive treatment and resuscitation we were unable to save her."

"For humans and animals alike, there are risks to anesthesia," continued Bronson. "On top of that, giraffes have a very complicated cardiovascular system, owing to their large bodies and long necks. We never enter into anesthesia lightly, but there are times when it is necessary in order to conduct certain medical procedures."

"A necropsy (animal autopsy) is being performed and it will take a few weeks before we have results from the tests," concluded Bronson.

Reticulated giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis reticulate*) are one of 9 recognized subspecies of giraffe. Easily the tallest species on the planet, the giraffe can browse on leaves that Africa's other grazing herbivores can't reach. Giraffe travel in loose, informal herds and can be found in eastern, central and southern Africa. They range across savannah, grasslands, and open woods in search of trees – especially their favorite, acacias – to feed upon. Giraffe are not currently threatened or endangered. They are protected from hunting in most places where they now live, but are still vulnerable to poaching and habitat loss.

-- more --

Zoe, page 2

The Zoo is home two other giraffe, 14-year-old Angel, Zoe's sister who was also born here, as well as 4-year-old Caesar.

#### **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](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

# # #