

MARYLAND ZOO

NEWS

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MARYLAND ZOO WELCOMES NEW ADDITION TO SITATUNGA HERD

BALTIMORE, MD -- The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore welcomed a male sitatunga calf to its growing herd on Sunday, September 29.

“Joel, named after his mother, Noel, and father, Jabari, weighed nearly eight pounds at birth,” stated Erin Cantwell, mammal collection and conservation manager at the Zoo. “This is Noel’s first baby and she is very attentive - showing great maternal instincts.”

The sitatunga (*Tragelaphus spekii*) is a species of antelope native to Central Africa. They live in swamps, marshes and flood plains. Outside of protected areas, sitatunga are vulnerable to over-hunting and habitat loss, as people drain and develop swamp land. Currently, sitatunga are not classified as threatened or endangered.

The Maryland Zoo’s sitatunga herd is made up of 12 animals, including the new calf, and can be found in two exhibit spaces along the boardwalk in the African Journey section of the Zoo.

“Right now, Noel and Joel are bonding behind-the-scenes,” said Cantwell. “Based on the weather turning colder, it will most likely be spring when they make their public debut in the Sitatunga Yard.”

The calf’s birth was the result of a recommendation from the Sitatunga Species Survival Plan (SSP) coordinated by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). SSPs provide breeding recommendations to maximize genetic diversity, with the goal of ensuring health of the individual animal, as well as the long-term survival of the species population to help save animals from extinction.

For updates on Joel and sitatunga herd, please visit www.marylandzoo.org and www.facebook.com/marylandzoo.

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 such as the award-winning Penguin Coast, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the 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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