

# MARYLAND ZOO

## NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MARYLAND ZOO MOURNING SITATUNGA HURLEY**

**BALTIMORE** -- The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is saddened to announce the death of Hurley, the Zoo's 13-year-old male sitatunga. Hurley, currently the only male sitatunga in the herd, was humanely euthanized on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.

"Hurley had been undergoing treatment for several age-related health issues, including arthritis, since 2016. The median life expectancy for a male sitatunga is 5.4 years, so at age 13 he was quite a geriatric animal," stated Erin Grimm, mammal collection and conservation manager for the Zoo. "We recently had been monitoring a significant decline in his weight and mobility, and made the difficult decision to euthanize him. Hurley was a very special sitatunga, and a staff favorite. We will all miss him."

"Hurley had been on multimodal treatments for the past four years to successfully manage his age-related and slowly progressive arthritis, which is no small task and can be attributed to the excellent training program developed specifically for him," explained Dr. Ellen Bronson, senior director of animal health, conservation and research for the Zoo. "The animal care and veterinary teams provided him with the right environment that allowed him to have an excellent quality of life, as well as the right medications to keep him comfortable and the right training that allowed us to hand-inject him with joint supplements and other medications to individually modulate his care."

"Hurley was always interested in the training sessions with his animal care team, and the animal keepers and veterinary technicians worked with him to accomplish the injections of medications that were vital to his treatment," stated Grimm. "We cannot overstate the importance of the training program and the diligent care he received day-in and day-out from the animal caregivers during the past several years."

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 but they are a little known species and the Zoo is a leader in their management and conservation.

The Maryland Zoo's sitatunga herd of nine can be found in two habitats along the boardwalk in the African Journey section of the Zoo.

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

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