

# MARYLAND ZOO

## NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MARYLAND ZOO WELCOMES NEW ADDITION TO SITATUNGA HERD**

**BALTIMORE, MD** -- The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore welcomed a female sitatunga calf to its growing herd on Thursday, February 4, 2021.

“We are very happy to welcome June, born to Cricket earlier this month. This little one did not appear to nurse as quickly as we hoped, but with some encouragement she did finally get the hang of it. So, we are very pleased that she is thriving under the care of her mother, who was born here in 2013,” stated Erin Grimm, mammal collection and conservation manager at the Zoo. “This is Cricket’s second offspring and as a proven mother she is 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 10 animals, including the new calf, and can be found in two habitats along the boardwalk in the African Journey section of the Zoo.

“For now Cricket and June will stay behind-the-scenes together,” said Grimm. “As the weather warms up we will make a determination about when they can make their public debut outside in the Sitatunga Yard with the rest of the herd.”

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 June and the sitatunga herd, please visit [www.marylandzoo.org](http://www.marylandzoo.org) and [www.facebook.com/marylandzoo](https://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](http://www.marylandzoo.org).

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