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Seneca Park Zoo Announces Death of Female African Elephant Chana

Zoo and Lower Seneca Park are closed on Tuesday

Seneca Park Zoo is sad to announce the death of Chana, a 37-year old female African elephant.

For two years, Chana has had a chronic issue in one of the nails of her left front foot, and despite treatment from veterinary and animal care staff, the injury became infected. When this infection began to impact a bone in her foot, the Zoo team employed heroic efforts, including foot soaks and nail trimming, stem cell therapy, and a custom-made boot with daily bandage changes. Chana's condition and innovative treatments are the subject of an article in the October issue of *ZooNooz*, a publication of Seneca Park Zoo (available [here](#)).

On Monday morning, Chana exhibited lameness in her left rear leg and found it increasingly difficult to place weight on it, throughout the day. Veterinary care was initiated immediately; however, her condition continued to deteriorate. On Monday evening, she lowered herself into a kneeling position and was unable to stand, despite extensive assistance. At this point, Zoo officials made the difficult decision to euthanize Chana, and she was pronounced dead at 11:30 pm.

"Our dedicated team at Seneca Park Zoo handled this very difficult situation professionally and compassionately," said Larry Staub, Director of Monroe County Parks and Seneca Park Zoo. "I am incredibly proud of their outstanding efforts on Chana's behalf. As a Zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the welfare of the animals in our care is our top priority. The final years of Chana's life were greatly enriched at our world-class facility."

Chana arrived at Seneca Park Zoo in 2015 from Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens with Moki, another 37-year-old female African elephant. Prior to Jacksonville, Chana was at Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City, Kansas. Moki and Chana were donated to the AZA-accredited facility by a private owner.

Over the last two years, Chana has also experienced a variety of other conditions which required veterinary care, including an autoimmune skin disease, general loss of body condition, and degenerative joint disease. These conditions likely contributed to her inability to recover from her most recent issue. A necropsy will be conducted, but results will not be available for several weeks.

Based on statistics from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), the median life expectancy for a female African elephant is 38.6 years. The Zoo's remaining African elephants, Genny C (41), Lilac (41), and Moki (37), all of whom are females, are closely monitored for signs of age-related conditions.

This has been a very difficult week for Seneca Park Zoo, whose spotted hyena, Lou – the oldest hyena in human care – was euthanized over the weekend due to age-related illness. “Losing two beloved animals in the same week is very difficult for the Zoo family,” commented Staub. “While these two deaths are unrelated, it’s very sad for our staff, members, guests, and the whole community.”

The Zoo and Lower Seneca Park will be closed on Tuesday as staff deals with Chana’s death.

***Internationally, and in our own backyard, Seneca Park Zoo plays a key role in species survival. Chartered as an educational institution in 1957 by New York State, the Seneca Park Zoo Society plays an integral role in supporting Monroe County, the owners and operators of the Zoo. Together, we are working to bring animals back from the brink of extinction.