



ADAM J. BELLO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



Friday, July 29, 2022

Contact: Beth LaPierre
Director of Communications and Engagement
(585) 336-7201 or blapierre@senecazoo.org

Seneca Park Zoo Announces Death of Giraffe Calf Born July 12, 2022

Rochester, N.Y. – Seneca Park Zoo is deeply saddened to announce that Zoo veterinary staff have made the difficult and compassionate decision to euthanize the male giraffe calf born on July 12, 2022. The calf was born with a congenital abnormality of his front fetlock joint and has not shown signs of improvement despite constant therapy and care from veterinary and animal care staff.

“The calf was showing additional signs of degradation. He was increasingly lethargic, nursing less, and showing signs of stress, which indicate decline in the quality of life,” said Dr. Chris McKinney, “While some fetlock issues can heal, the calf’s limb abnormality was especially pronounced.”

According to Dr. McKinney, giraffes bear most of their weight on their front limbs, making it very difficult for them to recover from the joint abnormalities. The day of his birth, the calf was placed in a splint to assist with walking until the leg was stronger. He showed no signs of improvement, and his overall condition was in decline as he grew rapidly.

“After consulting with giraffe and veterinary experts at Columbus, San Diego, and Bronx zoos and Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, the team made the incredibly difficult decision to euthanize,” says Dr. McKinney. “We attempted multiple therapies and explored all options, but the joint continued to be too weak to stand up to the normal stress of movement.”

“Our animal health and animal care staff are heartbroken,” said Seneca Park Zoo Director Steve Lacy. “Our staff worked around-the-clock doing everything we possibly could to ensure viability. The level of care the calf received was nothing short of exemplary.” Lacy continues, “I would like to also thank our colleagues at Columbus Zoo, Bronx Zoo, and San Diego Zoo, as well as Dr.

Noha Abou-Madi from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, for their expert guidance and invaluable input to the care of the calf.”

Although he was only with us a short time, the calf captured the hearts of Zoo staff and the public. We ask that you keep all impacted by this loss in your thoughts.

The calf named Olmsted or Olmy, born in April 2022, continues to thrive. The Zoo’s Animals of the Savanna building may remain closed at least through this weekend so that animal care teams can monitor stress levels in the giraffe herd.

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.