

The Indianapolis Zoo will empower people and communities, both locally and globally, to advance animal conservation.

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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Indianapolis Zoo Welcomes “King of Yams” *Second Giraffe Calf Born in Five Months***

INDIANAPOLIS — The Indianapolis Zoo is celebrating the arrival of a male reticulated giraffe, the second in five months born at the Zoo. The newest addition to the Zoo’s herd was born on Wednesday, December 30, 2009. The male calf, named Ezaji [E-ZAH’-GEE], stands 6’6” and weighs in at around 170 pounds. According to his keepers, he is one of the largest and most precocious giraffe calves born at the Zoo in recent years, which perhaps relates to the meaning of his name. In Nigeria and Ghana, the yam is sacred – the king of crops – and it’s an honor to be named after this valued vegetable, as in “Eza” for King and “ji” for yam.

Proud parents Eddie and Elena are doing well and staying inside the Plains Barns with the new baby while the current Indiana winter weather roars outside. Mother and calf should be available for the public to see on exhibit once the weather warms up, and the Plains animals are able to be outdoors.



In August, the Indianapolis Zoo celebrated the arrival of another male giraffe calf, Juani, whose mother is Takasa, Elena’s daughter. The herd at the Zoo currently includes Eddie, Elena, Takasa, AJ, Juani and the new baby. Giraffes at the Indianapolis Zoo are sponsored by Meijer, and Zoo babies are presented by Community Health Network.

#### **Facts About Giraffes**

- Gestation period: 453-464 days (15 months average)
- Habitat: Africa south of the Sahara Desert; open woodland and wooded grassland
- Life expectancy: 25 years
- Endangered status: Poaching remains a problem in West Africa; recently added to the Species Survival Plan (SSP) for threatened and endangered species
- Rate of speed: Giraffes can reach speeds of 31-37 mph
- Scientific name: *Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*
- Height: Adult male - 15-17 feet; Adult female - 13-15 feet; Newborn calves – 5 ½ - 6 feet

#### ***About the Indianapolis Zoo***

*Located in White River State Park downtown, the Indianapolis Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the American Association of Museums as a zoo, aquarium and botanical garden. The Indianapolis Zoo will empower people and communities, both locally and globally, to advance animal conservation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting a facility dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things.*