CHATTANOOGA ZOO ANNOUNCES NEW AFRICAN SPECIES

Chattanooga, Tennessee- The Chattanooga Zoo is excited to expand its animal collection once again and welcome blue duikers to the Makazi ya Twiga exhibit area. This new species is being housed in one of the indoor habitat spaces inside the newly constructed giraffe barn. The Makazi ya Twiga area of the zoo now houses giraffes and blue duikers, with more African species to be added as more phases of this project are complete.

Through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP), the Chattanooga Zoo has acquired two blue duikers, one male and one female, as a recommended breeding pair. The SSP is a population management and conservation program created by the AZA to ultimately enhance the preservation of threatened species in the wild by monitoring the placement, breeding, and propagation of these selected species within AZA-accredited institutions. The male, Branch - age 6, came to us from the Kansas City Zoo in Kansas City, MO, and the female, Poppy - age 1, came from the Maryland Zoo in Baltimore, MD. The pair arrived at the zoo about a month ago and have been acclimating to their new home and caregivers.

“We are excited to continue to grow and diversify our animal collection with this new species, says Dardenelle Long, Chattanooga Zoo CEO and President. “The addition of our adorable blue duikers is indicative of our commitment to provide an engaging experience to help connect our visitors with our animals.”

The blue duiker is a small antelope species that inhabits a variety of forests and woodlands throughout central, eastern, and southern Africa. Blue duikers spend most of their time foraging for fruits and plants to eat on the forest floor. Duikers get their name from the Dutch word for “diver” referring to their tendency to dive into dense underbrush and hide when they feel threatened. According to the IUCN Red List, blue duikers are classified as “least concern” but are threatened in the wild by hunters and natural predators.

The Zoo’s blue duikers are now in their habitat and are viewable by the public. We invite the media and the public to come to welcome the newest residents to Chattanooga.
As a reminder, the Zoo has new guidelines for visitors in response to the current pandemic. As directed and mandated by the Hamilton County Health Department, all guests ages 12+ are required to wear a face mask when entering the Zoo, in indoor spaces, during zoo experiences and activities, and outdoors when unable to substantially maintain appropriate social distancing from others. Please see Hamilton County’s mandate for more information and for a list of exemptions. For more information on the Zoo’s current COVID-19 guidelines, please visit the Zoo’s website.

For more information, please contact the Chattanooga Zoo at 423-697-1322 x 5703 or hhammon@chattzoo.org.

To learn about our daily activities and monthly events, please follow us on social media and stay up-to-date.