MEERKAT PUPS EXPECTED AT THE CHATTANOOGA ZOO

Chattanooga, TN - The Chattanooga Zoo is thrilled to announce that our two-year-old female meerkat Flower is pregnant through natural breeding. Chattanooga Zoo veterinary staff confirmed Flower’s pregnancy on April 16th after performing an ultrasound.

Flower was placed at the Chattanooga Zoo in October 2019 through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP), with a breeding recommendation within our mob. This pregnancy will be the second for expectant mother Flower. She gave birth to her first litter of two pups in February 2020.

“Flower has shown that she has excellent maternal instincts and has done a wonderful job raising the mob’s pups,” says Stacy Laberde, Chattanooga Zoo General Curator. “We are excited to see the growth of the mob and the new family bonds that are created.”

Meerkats have an estimated gestation of ten weeks. Zoo veterinary staff are expecting her due date to be within the next month. Flower’s ultrasound showed at least one pup, but meerkats typically give birth to two to four pups.

In preparation for birthing, Flower will have a selection of comfortable nesting boxes and tunnels placed in her habitat. Meerkats typically give birth underground in a large den so animal care staff will replicate that environment.

As of now, zoo staff continues to monitor her pregnancy and will observe her behavior as she approaches the birth of her second litter.

Dardenelle Long, Chattanooga Zoo President & CEO says, “I am so proud of our experienced animal care staff and their dedication to our animals. Thanks to their observations, we noticed that Flower was gaining weight and scheduled a sonogram which confirmed her pregnancy. Flower’s pregnancy is the bright spot we’ve all needed as we face new and unique challenges in our lives.”

Although unable to welcome visitors at this time, the Chattanooga Zoo encourages the community to observe the meerkat mob through the livestream available on their website at www.chattzoo.org.

The 14-acre Chattanooga Zoo (historically referred to as the Chattanooga Zoo at Warner Park) is accredited by the national Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), assuring the highest standards of animal care and husbandry. The Zoo is dedicated to its mission of engaging and inspiring all citizens of the community to better understand and preserve wildlife by creating meaningful connections between people and animals. With its intimate, innovative exhibits, wide-ranging education offerings and commitment to conservation, the Chattanooga Zoo fills a unique niche within the community. The Zoo is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. For more information, visit www.chattzoo.org.