

NEWS RELEASE



Contact: Winfield Danielson
Marketing and Public Relations Manager
Office: (757) 441-2374 ext 223
Cell: (757) 777-7899
Email: winfield.danielson@norfolk.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 18, 2011

VIRGINIA ZOO ANNOUNCES DEATH OF BABY GIRAFFE

NORFOLK, Va. – The Virginia Zoo is deeply saddened to report the death of its baby giraffe during the night on August 17.

“The baby giraffe’s loss is a tragedy,” said Greg Bockheim, executive director of the Virginia Zoo. “In his short time here, our staff and visitors had already grown attached to him.”

The baby giraffe was found deceased in his enclosure this morning when keepers did their regular morning check at the start of the day. He was bright, alert and responsive yesterday, and did not show any signs of illness. He had been eating and acting normally, and had gained 28 lbs since birth.

Necropsy results revealed that the baby giraffe died from peritonitis. Peritonitis is an inflammation of the peritoneum, the thin membrane that lines the abdominal wall and covers the organs within. The inflammation is caused by a bacterial or fungal infection of this membrane. The more common type of peritonitis, called secondary peritonitis, is caused when the infection comes into the peritoneum from the gastrointestinal or biliary tract.

BABY GIRAFFE

The Masai giraffe is the largest subspecies of giraffe and the tallest land mammal on Earth. Masai giraffe have jagged spots on their bodies and are found in Kenya and Tanzania. Smaller animals in the wild rely on them as an alarm system. With their excellent sight and long necks, they spot danger before their smaller companions. When giraffe begin to run away, other animals use that as a signal to flee an area as well.



Baby giraffe at the Virginia Zoo photo taken July 29, 2011 (Virginia Zoo photo by Craig Pelke).

#

As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits over 350 animals, beautifully manicured grounds and offers a fun-filled day for all. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to wildlife, conservation and education. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors (age 62 and over), and \$9.00 for children ages 2-11. Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.