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THE ZOO WELCOMES BIRTH OF SECOND GORILLA JUST IN TIME FOR MOTHER'S DAY!

May 11, 2015 - Jacksonville, FL – Spring is in the air as the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens excitedly welcomes another gorilla birth—the second in just over 3 months. The infant was brought in to the world by mother Madini and father Lash on May 9, 2015 at 8:35 p.m. just hours before Mother's Day.

"We are super excited that Madini is getting the opportunity to experience motherhood, something we think she's wanted for quite some time," said Tracy Fenn, Supervisor of Mammals at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. "Her infant, along with Bulera's, will enrich the social environment of the gorillas for many years to come and, we hope, inspire the next generation of conservationists as well."

Madini and Lash were recommended to breed by the Gorilla Species Survival Plan (SSP)—a group of zoo professionals who cooperatively manage the gorilla population at zoos accredited by the AZA. They are responsible for making science-based breeding and transfer recommendations as well as providing support and guidance on all aspects of gorilla management at AZA institutions to maintain a healthy, diverse and sustainable safety-net population for their critically endangered wild animal counterparts.

Madini was born at the Lincoln Park Zoo in 1996 to mother Bulera (also residing at the JZG), and was transferred to the JZG in November of 2006.

Lash was born on Christmas Day in 1976 at the Cincinnati Zoo. He lived in a bachelor group with Rumpel at the JZG for 8 years before being introduced to Madini and her mother, Bulera.

Since gorillas learn infant-rearing skills from others, Kumbuka, a female gorilla from Zoo Miami, was brought to the JZG to gain significant experience from our two new gorilla mothers.

The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens currently has 3 male gorillas – Lash (age 38), Rumpel (age 30) and George (age 3 months), and 3 female gorillas – Bulera (age

26), Madini (age 19) and Kumbuka (age 19). The newborn's sex is currently unknown.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) will launch its SAFE conservation initiative on Endangered Species Day this Friday, May 15. SAFE stands for "Saving Animals From Extinction," and has selected 10 initial species, gorillas included, to provide critical protection in the wild through research, education and awareness ensuring the preservation of their species for generations to come.

About Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,400 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit organization and an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit JacksonvilleZoo.org.