

News Release

Contact: Denise Rendina

For Immediate Release

239.262.5409 x 122 / denise@napleszoo.com

African Forest Antelope Born at Naples Zoo

Zoo's Infant Yellow-backed Duiker Makes His Debut

Naples, FL – Naples Zoo proudly announces the birth of a yellow-backed duiker, a secretive antelope from the forests of western central Africa. Born several weeks ago after a seven month gestation period, the male calf can now be seen near the African wild dogs and lions. As the largest species of duiker, the newborn is already larger than some full grown duiker species.

Unlike their parents, infant yellow-backed duikers have not yet developed the unique coloring after which they are named. Young are born dark brown with a trace of red on their belly. The center of their back is jet black and only begins to grow yellow hair after five to nine months of life.

Adult yellow-backed duikers are blackish-brown, have a prominent patch of yellow hair on their rump, and a long tuft of hair on their head. They weigh between 100 to 175 pounds and have horns which grow up to 8.5 inches long. Their short forelegs, longer hindlegs, backward curving horns and arched body allow the duiker to slip easily through the dense forest in the wild.

In an instinctual survival technique, baby duikers remain well-hidden in vegetation during their first weeks of life. After this period, infants begin to venture out with their parents. The zoo's baby is showing this same behavior. "The duiker's home at the Naples Zoo is a great setting for the baby," explains Zoo Director David Tetzlaff. "It's important that he has a space to hide because that's exactly what they do in Africa. In the coming weeks, Zoo visitors will see more and more of this unique forest antelope."

Yellow-backed duikers are managed cooperatively by institutions accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums through a Population Management Plan (PMP). In utilizing a PMP, zoo professionals strive to ensure the long-term survival of a captive population of animals and the health of individual animals. While yellow-backed duikers are not yet endangered, their status is

-- MORE --

near-threatened. Habitat loss and commercial hunting challenge the future of these small antelope. With this latest birth added to the population, there are now 64 yellow-backed duikers managed by accredited zoos.

The calf's mother, who is four years old, came to Naples Zoo almost two years ago from Disney's Animal Kingdom. The father was born at Miami Metrozoo in 1997 and came to the Naples Zoo in 2003.

Interesting Facts

- Duiker (die-KER) means "diver" in the Afrikaans language, a reference to their habit of ducking into dense undergrowth when alarmed.
- Duikers have the largest brains relative to body size of all antelopes.
- Adult duikers communicate by means of shrill bleats and resonant grunts. When alarmed, the yellow-backed duiker erects its bright dorsal crest and whistles a shrill alert, then flees into the underbrush.
- Broken horns in females suggest they actively defend their territory, which they share with a single male.
- Duikers are herbivores that dine on fallen seeds, fruit, berries, fungi, ground moss and the bark of shrubs.
- The main predators of duikers include people, leopards, pythons, and crocodiles.

The yellow-backed duikers can be seen daily at Naples Zoo. Naples Zoo is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road across from the Coastland Center mall in the heart of Naples. In addition to innovative presentations like Serpents: Fangs & Fiction and Planet Predator, the Zoo offers a historic botanical garden and many rare animals. Guests board the Primate Expedition Cruise to glide by islands inhabited by monkeys, lemurs, and apes living in natural habitats. Admission (\$15.95 adults age 13+ / \$9.95 children 3 to 12, under 3 free) includes all shows and the boat ride. Visitors can also pick up a healthy lunch and snacks at the SUBWAY® Cafe and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. The Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:30 to 5:30 with the last ticket sold at 4:30. To learn more, click www.napleszoo.com or call (239) 262-5409.

