



**News Release**      **Contact:** Tim L. Tetzlaff, Director of Conservation & Communications  
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# First Ever Giraffe Herd in Naples!

## Naples Zoo Premieres Five Reticulated Giraffe in Temporary Home

**Naples, FL** - Naples will soon publicly welcome its first ever giraffe herd. Five representatives of the world's tallest animal will make their debut on Saturday, July 31st at Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens. Guests will enjoy looking up at the giraffe in their temporary home daily between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Naples Zoo is currently fundraising for the giraffe's permanent home. The Zoo brought the giraffe in early as it is best to transport these giant creatures while they are young. All five are male reticulated giraffe between one and two years old and already average between 10 and 12 feet high.

The giraffe arrived earlier this summer from three different facilities nationally accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums: Denver Zoo, Lion Country Safari, and San Francisco Zoo. All the introductions went smoothly and the herd is now ready to meet Zoo guests.

The new giraffe are currently living in the northern portion of the zoo. The herd will be quite comfortable while they wait for their new habitat to be created as even this temporary home is six times larger than the state requirements. Their future home will be in the southern portion of the zoo and will be the first major habitat in the Naples Zoo Master Plan's Coastal Africa region. The permanent exhibit will allow guests to get face-to-face and even feed the giraffes. To help make that happen as soon as possible, the Zoo's upcoming fundraiser in February at The Ritz-Carlton, Naples will help create the new habitat. The patron event will be held at the Zoo with the giraffe herd and will feature journalist Lynn Sherr, author of *Tall Blondes: A Book About Giraffes*.

Although one of the planet's most recognizable species, most people know little about these skyscrapers of the savannah. Naples Zoo Executive Director David Tetzlaff explains, "Being that tall can be an anatomical nightmare. Giraffe need to constantly pump blood all the way up that neck. They also need to prevent blood from pooling in

their legs. And they need to perfectly control the blood flow so they don't pass out every time they raise their head up after taking a drink." Giraffe have the highest known blood pressure of any animal and have a sophisticated circulatory system including a heart twice the size of what would be expected in an animal of similar size as well as tight skin and muscular legs which act like a pressure suit to keep blood moving. Research about how giraffe have solved these problems may yield medical benefits as well as technology for jet pilots and astronauts.

Other little known facts are that giraffe can sleep as little as 20 minutes a day and can go weeks without drinking. Their tongues are over a foot and a half long and have a dark blue color. And at birth, a giraffe calf is already taller than most people.

Naples Zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Daily presentations include Alligator Bay Feeding, Meet the Keeper Series, Snake Sunbathing along with two premiere presentations: Planet Predator and Serpents: Fangs & Fiction. Both of these feature shows take place in the Safari Canyon Theater where guests see live animals from feline predators to venomous snakes along with exciting video footage. On Sundays, the Tropical Plant Trek offers guests a guided tour in the historic botanical garden. And one of the zoo's most popular activities is the Primate Expedition Cruise where guests embark on a guided cruise through islands inhabited by monkeys, lemurs, and apes.

The all day pay-one-price ticket includes admission to both the nationally accredited zoo and historic garden along with all shows, tours, exhibits, and the boat ride. (\$19.95 adults age 13+ / \$11.95 children 3 to 12, under 3 free. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age). **Annual memberships and discount tickets are also available online at [www.napleszoo.org](http://www.napleszoo.org).** Visitors enjoy healthy meals at *Wynn's at the Zoo* and shop for wild gifts at tame prices in The ZOO Gift Shop. Naples Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:00 to 5:00 with the last ticket sold at 4:00 and is located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road across from the Coastland Center mall in the heart of Naples. To learn more, click [www.napleszoo.org](http://www.napleszoo.org) or call (239) 262-5409.

Images available on request by e-mailing [tim@napleszoo.org](mailto:tim@napleszoo.org)

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