



Freeport-McMoRan Audubon
Species Survival Center
A Facility of Audubon Nature Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Audubon Nature Institute Starts Spring with Giraffe Birth at
Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center**

(New Orleans, La.) - While life has been put on pause for many of us, it continues at Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center in Lower Coast Algiers. Sue Ellen, a middle-aged giraffe, has given birth to her second calf.

The 6-foot-tall (a typical height for a newborn) female reticulated giraffe calf weighed in at an impressive 189 pounds when she arrived on the morning of April 6 at the FMASSC campus on the West Bank of New Orleans. The average labor for a giraffe is one to two hours. Sue Ellen likely gave birth around 4:00 a.m.

“Things can feel very overwhelming right now,” said Michelle Hatwood, curator of the Species Survival Center. “But life does go on, and we have essential staff coming to work, so our animals receive the best care every single day.”

Hatwood and her staff have known for 15 months that a calf was on the way, but a giraffe’s 14-16-month gestation period can make it tough to pinpoint a likely delivery date.

Sue Ellen and her new calf, named “Hope,” are part of the [Species Survival Plan](#) administered by the [Association of Zoos and Aquariums](#). The plan ensures healthy, genetically diverse animal populations throughout its accredited facilities.

“What name could be more fitting than ‘Hope’ in these challenging times?” said Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman. “Hope is what has sustained our community through seemingly insurmountable crises in the past and what we must hold onto as we continue on in the coming days and weeks. May we all take comfort in the reminder that, even in the darkest of days, life continues, undaunted.”

The species occupied much of the African continent several decades ago, but giraffe currently face threats to survival including habitat loss, poaching, human encroachment, and disease.

With the new addition, the Species Survival Center is home to thirteen giraffes; this is the eighth giraffe calf born at FMASSC as part of the Alliance for Sustainable Wildlife conservation breeding partnership with San Diego Zoo Global. The giraffe reside in a 46-acre forested area and spend most of their day foraging and looking for their favorite leaves to eat.

While Audubon facilities are closed, supporters can help the dedicated staff who continue to provide outstanding care for the animals and the parks loved by the New Orleans community by donating to the [Audubon Recovery Fund](#).

Audubon is also asking supporters to reach out to the White House and Congress to ask for assistance in providing larger nonprofits such as zoos, aquariums, and museums in upcoming legislation for economic assistance. The recently passed CARES Act was a tremendous effort to support those individuals and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation omits, however, any assistance for zoo's, aquariums and museums that employ more than 500 people, such as Audubon. Followers can click [here](#) for further details.

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