



Audubon Zoo  
*A Facility of Audubon Nature Institute*

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**JULY 6, 2020**

## **Audubon Zoo Expecting First Critically Endangered Gorilla Baby in Over Two Decades**

(New Orleans, La.) - One of Audubon Zoo's critically endangered western lowland gorillas is expecting. This will be the first gorilla birth at Audubon Zoo in 24 years and the first offspring for 13-year-old Tumani, who came to Audubon from Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in 2017.

This pregnancy is the result of successful breeding between Tumani and Okpara, a 26-year-old silverback gorilla, who came to Audubon from Franklin Park Zoo in [2017](#). The offspring, due in late summer, will be Tumani and Okpara's first. Tumani's birth window for the infant is July 15 through August 20.

The infant will be welcomed by the rest of the troop: females Alafia, who raised her own offspring at Woodland Park Zoo, and Praline, the last gorilla infant born at Audubon Zoo in 1996.

"We are working closely with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' gorilla birth plan to guarantee that Tumani and the infant are receiving the best prenatal care," said Audubon Zoo's Senior Veterinarian Dr. Robert MacLean. "There are many risks involved with gorilla births, especially in a troop unfamiliar with an infant, but we are working with the entire troop to ensure they are ready for the new addition."

As they do with all primate moms-to-be, Zoo animal care staff are working with Tumani through daily training and enrichment activities to prepare her to be comfortable with the possibility of staff assisting her with feeding or caring for the infant. Alafia is also receiving daily training to prepare her in the event that she would need to help Tumani care for the infant or act as a foster mother.

Audubon Zoo's gorillas are part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums [Species Survival Plan](#). The Gorilla Species Survival Plan manages 354 gorillas in 48 North American zoos to ensure a genetically diverse population and the long-term sustainability of the species.

“So much hard work and dedication has gone into welcoming our first gorilla birth in more than two decades,” said Audubon Nature Institute President and CEO Ron Forman. “By visiting an AZA-accredited zoo like Audubon, you are supporting our conservation efforts for critically endangered species like western lowland gorillas.”

Many gorilla populations have declined or disappeared over the past few decades. Western lowland gorillas have been assessed by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) as critically endangered, with a population decline of more than 80%, mainly due to illegal hunting, disease, habitat loss, and an increase in poaching.

Audubon would like to thank its Reopening Partner, [Children's Hospital New Orleans](#), for helping welcome guests back to Audubon Zoo.

“Children’s Hospital New Orleans and Audubon Nature Institute share a deep commitment to the families of New Orleans and to nurturing the youngest members of our community, be they human or animal,” said President and Chief Executive Officer of Children’s Hospital New Orleans John R. Nickens IV. “We are thrilled to work with Audubon as its Reopening Partner and support their important conservation efforts breeding endangered species and sharing the joy and wonder of new life with our community.”

Audubon Zoo reopened to the public on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, following a nearly three-month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following State and City public health directives, Audubon is reopening its family of parks and museums following a phased approach that strictly limits attendance and programming. Advance tickets to the Zoo are required and can be reserved [here](#). Audubon Aquarium of the Americas and Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium remain temporarily closed.

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