

Baby's first exam: Gender revealed for Greenville's new giraffe calf

By Lynn Riddle February 21, 2021



The baby giraffe at the Greenville Zoo is a girl - 6 feet tall and 148 pounds.

GREENVILLE, S.C.

The Greenville Zoo's giraffe calf is a girl who weighs 148 pounds and stands 6 feet tall.

Medical personnel waited until Monday afternoon to examine the baby, 24 hours after she was born to give time for mother Autumn and the yet-unnamed baby to bond.

The Greenville Zoo announced on Nov. 16 they were on baby watch.

And so people watched online on [Earthcam](#). And they watched. And watched. Millions of views were recorded over the months by people from all over the world.

Sunday, their watching paid off when Autumn, a Masai giraffe, gave birth.

The birth was something to see.

About noon, Autumn was in the paddock with Miles, the daddy, and Kellan, their almost 2-year-old. It was chilly but sunny, and people flowed past the giraffe exhibit regularly.

Then, it looked like legs had appeared. A zookeeper quickly got Autumn into her stall in the barn and opened the stall next door where Miles and Kellan have been staying.

Then came the wait.

Autumn paced. She stopped, legs apart, neck down as if this was it. It wasn't.

Then more pacing and hunching. She stopped a few times at the trough for a nibble. Then went back to laboring in earnest.

She would crane her long neck around to see what was going on back there. Not a lot.

Then finally the head appeared, and it was just a short time before the calf was born at about 2:30 p.m.

Autumn checked the calf out, walked around a bit and then stood guard over top. Miles came in for a few seconds.

Before long, the baby tried to stand and became covered in mulch from flipping around like a fish.

The baby rested for a bit, watched over by mama.

About 45 minutes after birth, the baby stood up with one heave-ho, and Autumn was there for a nuzzle.

Zoo officials have posted several times on Facebook since the birth, garnering almost 2,000 comments and thousands more likes from around the world.

“Such a wee cutie,” a woman from Scotland said on the zoo’s Facebook page.

A woman from Australia said on Facebook, “What a delightful little girl she is.”

This was Autumn’s sixth [pregnancy](#).

City of Greenville spokeswoman Beth Brotherton said in a news release, “The calf will nurse for nine to 12 months but will begin eating foliage at around two-months-old. The giraffe will double in size in its first year of life. Giraffes have their own individual spot-like markings and no two giraffes have the same pattern.”

No name has been selected, she said.

Zoo director Bill Cooper was quoted in the news release as saying the birth helps ensure the future of Masai giraffes.

Giraffes have a 15-to-16-month gestation period and can live as long as 30 years in captivity. Autumn is 14. Some on Facebook suggested zookeepers give her a rest.