



NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST EVER ENDANGERED GOLDEN LION TAMARIN BORN AT THE SANTA BARBARA ZOO

- Highly Endangered in Native Rainforests Due to Development
- Born May 14 to New Female and Resident Male
- Baby Roughly the Size of a C-Battery
- On View Periodically at Exhibit Near Train Station
- Efforts by Zoos Return GLTs to Wild Habitats

Santa Barbara, CA (June 1, 2010) – On the morning of Friday, May 15, staff at the Santa Barbara Zoo observed that an infant golden lion tamarin, born on exhibit the night before, was clinging to its mother's back.

This is the first viable birth at the Santa Barbara Zoo of this small endangered species of monkey from the Brazilian rainforests (called "GLTs" by keepers). Adults weigh about a pound and are roughly ten inches tall, plus 16 inch tails; the infant is currently about the size of a C-battery. It has not yet been examined by the Zoo veterinarian so sex, weight and other details are not available. The Zoo has exhibited GLTs since 1983.

The golden lion tamarin family are on view in their exhibit near the Train Station. They have free access to their inside, off-exhibit area and may not be visible at all times.

Golden Lion Tamarins at the Santa Barbara Zoo

"Golden lion tamarins have a really interesting story," notes Assistant Zoo Director Alan Varsik. "They were one of the first species that zoos were able to successfully reintroduce to the wild. Their numbers had dropped precipitously and captive breeding by zoos was integral to the success of the reintroduction effort. Though our young GLT isn't identified to go to the wild, the birth here just creates more attention to the species and their story in the wild."

Zoo staff was elated that a new female GLT, who arrived earlier this year from the Potawatami Zoo (Indiana), had produced an offspring with the Zoo's resident male. The Zoo's

other resident female had never successfully reproduced and is now too old to breed. She, and a new elderly male golden lion tamarin from the Los Angeles Zoo, were recently moved in with the toco toucans for their senior years, offering stimulus to both species.

The Santa Barbara Zoo now has five GLTs: the family on exhibit near the Train Station, and the pair housed with the toco toucans near the Humboldt penguin exhibit.

About Golden Lion Tamarins

Golden lion tamarins were first described to the European world by the Jesuit Pigefetta, chronicler of Magellan's voyage who described them as "beautiful simian-like cats similar to a small lion."

The small monkeys have a silky, golden coat and lion like mane around a dark face, giving the lion-like impression. They live in the forest canopy, 30 feet above the forest floor, in the Coastal rainforests of Brazil. They face huge challenges in the wild as more than 99 percent of their forest habitat has been cut down for agriculture or housing construction.

Adults are monogamous and share in the care of their young. Upon birth, the young climb atop their mother's backs, leaving only to nurse. Both parents are involved in raising the young, who are weaned at five to six weeks.

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The Santa Barbara Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for children 2-12 and seniors 60+, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$5.

The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). AZA zoos are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great visitor experience, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and is the public's link to helping animals in their native habitats.

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