



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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Baby Elephant Makes Public Debut at Rosamond Gifford Zoo, Naming Contest Begins

Syracuse, N.Y. (May 26, 2015) – Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney joined staff at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo today to introduce the zoo's newest resident to the public, a male Asian elephant calf born Tuesday, May 12. The calf was born after a 642-day gestation, weighing 281 pounds and standing 36.1 inches tall (just over 3 feet). His parents are 18-year-old Mali and 17-year-old Doc.

The County Executive also shared that the community will have the opportunity to help the zoo name the young bull. Complete details and instructions for the naming contest are available on the zoo's website at rosamondgiffordzoo.org/naming-contest (and at the end of this release).

"We are thrilled to introduce our new baby elephant to the community," said County Executive Joanie Mahoney. "His birth is another milestone for the zoo's Asian elephant program and I would like to thank the zoo staff and veterinarians for their exceptional care of both mother and baby."

"This Asian elephant birth is significant to long-term survival of the species and is one of just a few third-generation Asian elephant calves born in North America. With three generations in our herd, it replicates the typical makeup of a family group in the wild," said Zoo Director Ted Fox.

"On behalf of Friends of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and our board of directors, we are so pleased to support the efforts of our county partners and congratulate all on this momentous occasion," said Janet Agostini, president and CEO of Friends of the Zoo.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is home to a herd of six adult Asian elephants. The group includes the calf's parents, Mali and Doc, in addition to females Targa, Kirina (expecting a calf later this summer), Romani and Siri. Asian elephants are intelligent and extremely social animals. They are also highly endangered: there are fewer in the wild (~35,000) than there are seats in the Carrier Dome (49,250).

The management of Asian elephants under human care is essential to their survival. The Rosamond Gifford Zoo has been in cooperation with AZA's Species Survival Plan

(SSP) for Asian elephants since 1981. The SSP helps manage specific, and typically threatened or endangered, animal populations.

Mother Mali was born at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo to Targa in 1997. Grandmother Targa is also part of the zoo's herd. The calf is Mali's second offspring; she delivered her first bull calf, Chuck, in 2008 while at African Lion Safari (ALS) in Ontario, Canada, during the planning and construction of the zoo's premier exhibit, Asian Elephant Preserve. Chuck returned to ALS in 2013.

"Support from the other females in the herd will be crucial to Mali as a mother and to the calf's development. Elephants are matriarchal, with females serving as head of the family group. Other females in the herd, often called 'aunties' or the allo-mother, help elephant mothers in raising their babies. Because Mali is an experienced mother, this is also an important time for soon-to-be first-time mom, Kirina, to learn mothering skills by watching Mali," said Fox.

Prior to coming to the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in 2012, father Doc had already sired one calf. Doc was brought to the zoo in an effort to help sustain the North American elephant population by presenting the herd with a new, unrelated bloodline. He was donated from the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation (CEC) in Florida, where he was born in 1997.

The elephant calf is now on view at Asian Elephant Preserve, located on the Wildlife Trails area of the zoo. Check the zoo's website and social media for further elephant updates.

BABY ELEPHANT NAMING CONTEST

Members of the community are invited to enter the zoo's online contest to help select the name of the male elephant. The contest begins today.

Given the native habitat of Asian elephants, names related to the culture and heritage of India, Myanmar, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Thailand are preferred and strongly encouraged. Contest entrants should also include a brief explanation of why they suggested the name.

Guidelines:

- Name suggestions will be taken for 5 days, May 26-30, on the contest page: rosamondgiffordzoo.org/naming-contest.
- All entries must be received by 4 p.m. on May 30.
- The contest is open to ages 5 and older, with a limit of 1 submission per person.
- Classrooms, scout troops and other community groups are encouraged to enter.
- A committee at the zoo will select the top 5 names from those suggested.
- Top names will be posted on the contest page for voting for 5 days, June 8-12.
- Voting closes at 4 p.m. on June 12.
- The name that receives the highest number of votes will be selected as the winner.

- The winning name will be announced via a media alert and on the zoo's website and social media platforms on June 16.
- The winner will receive an Asian elephant Adopt an Animal package courtesy of Friends of the Zoo.

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Founded in 1914, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is among the top 10 percent of zoos in the country as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is dedicated to connecting people to the natural world by providing engaging guest experiences, exceptional animal care, and unparalleled conservation education.

The zoo actively collaborates with Friends of the Zoo to provide its guests "the best day ever," ensuring experiences that excite, memories that endure, and knowledge that inspires worldwide conservation.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults (19-61), \$4 for youth (3-18) and \$5 for seniors (62+). Children two and under are free. For more information, call the zoo at (315) 435-8511 or visit rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

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www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org

County Executive, Joanne M. Mahoney • Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Bill Lansley
Rosamond Gifford Zoo Director, Ted Fox • Friends of the Zoo President, Janet Agostini

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