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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 18, 2018

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SPRINGFIELD PARK DISTRICT ANNOUNCES BABY LEMURS BORN AT THE HENSON ROBINSON ZOO ON MOTHER'S DAY!

Tsidika and Female Red Ruffed Lemur Baby
Photo Credit: Jeff Mitchell

[Springfield, IL] – The Springfield Park District is excited to announce that Mother's Day at the Henson Robinson Zoo had a little extra meaning this year with the birth of two red ruffed lemurs, *Varecia rubra*.

The animal care staff discovered the new additions during their morning checks. Both parents, **Sagitarius**, father, and **Tsidka** (sa-DE-ka), mother, were observed to be attentive to the newborns.

"This parental pairing is part of the **Association of Zoo's & Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP)** breeding program and this birth is a significant contribution to the genetic diversity of the captive population. The Red Ruffed Lemur species is listed as critically endangered by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. Captive propagation is vital in retaining this species if wild threats are resolved to allow for future re-introduction." said Jeff Mitchell, Henson Robinson Zoo's General Curator.

Neo-natal exams were performed by the zoo's veterinarian a few days after the birth and confirmed that the offspring are a male and a female. Animal care staff will continue to monitor the newborns weights to ensure they are being well cared for by their mother.

Red ruffed lemurs typically nest with their newborns and within a couple of weeks they will begin to explore their surroundings. At that time the Henson Robinson Zoo will be asking for community support to help in naming the new lemurs as well as raise awareness and funds for species conservation in the wild.

The zoo will be reaching out to community children and others to enter their names for consideration and all donations for conservation will be matched by the Henson Robinson Zoo's Conservation Fund up to \$1000.



Female left and male right. Photo Credit: Shelley Lutes

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For more information on how you can get involved with our fundraising conservation efforts and helping to name our new baby lemurs! Feel free to call the Zoo at 217-585-1821 or email our Zoo Director, John Wright at jwright@springfieldparks.org

Varecia rubra – Red Ruffed Lemur

The red ruffed lemur is a large quadrupedal lemur inhabiting a very small area of northeastern Madagascar. Ruffed lemurs are some of the most strikingly beautiful of all lemurs and have a thick coat of deep chestnut red fur, well suited to the oftentimes wet and chilly environment of Madagascar’s tropical rain forests.

The red ruffed lemur is **critically endangered** in Madagascar, primarily due to hunting and habitat loss. Threats include illegal logging, deforestation, and hunting and trapping for food.

To Learn more about Red ruffed lemurs, visit Duke University’s Lemur Center website at:
<https://lemur.duke.edu/discover/meet-the-lemurs/red-ruffed-lemur/>

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For more information on any other Park District news related items, please visit our Website at www.springfieldparks.org