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CONTACT

Lauren Delgado, Communications Manager  
321-254-9453, ext. 236  
[ldelgado@brevardzoo.org](mailto:ldelgado@brevardzoo.org)



**Brevard Zoo mourns loss of giraffe**

MELBOURNE, Fla., January 10, 2022 — Brevard Zoo's giraffe matriarch, 21-year-old female Johari, passed away this weekend following a medical procedure.

Last week, animal care staff noticed that Johari had stopped eating and become lethargic. She was also observed to have a loose tooth, which offered a reason for her lack of appetite. Because inappetence is especially dangerous for giraffes, animal care staff immediately became involved, starting Johari on antibiotics and pain medication.

Following several days of treatment, Johari's symptoms remained, and she continued not eating. Preparations were made to do a standing sedation procedure on January 8 to remove the tooth and look for any more oral health issues.

During the procedure, veterinary staff removed one of her teeth and did not find any other dental issues. While she did well during and initially after the procedure, about 45 minutes into recovery, Johari became unsteady on her feet and went into cardiac arrest. The animal care team immediately began performing CPR, but Johari was unable to be revived.

Based on her decline, the animal care team suspects a more serious underlying illness played a part in her sudden heart failure. At 21 years old, Johari was considered geriatric for her species and had chronic kidney disease and rumen inflammation, both common diseases for older giraffes. A full necropsy will be performed by the UF Pathology Services.

Johari had called Brevard Zoo home since before the opening of Expedition Africa in 2003.

"Our Zoo family is heartbroken. Like the rest of our giraffes, she was very beloved by our community and a favorite sight on any visit for our guests," said Andrea Hill, marketing and communications director of Brevard Zoo. "Johari was usually the first one up at the platform to eagerly take snacks from visitors and could be quite persistent about it. Her personality was one-of-a kind. She will be deeply missed by all of us."

Having given birth to nine calves, Johari's legacy lives on through Mapenzi and Floyd, who remain at Brevard Zoo, and the others who reside at zoos across the country. Animal care staff described Johari as a "calm and confident matriarch" who enjoyed people watching and eating leaves from guests at the giraffe platform.

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*Brevard Zoo is home to more than 900 animals representing 195 species from all over the world. As a not-for-profit organization, it is a leader in the fields of animal wellness, education and conservation. More information is available at [www.brevardzoo.org](http://www.brevardzoo.org).*

*Treetop Trek features five aerial obstacle courses that whisk guests above parts of the Zoo and through lush Florida landscapes. More information is available at [www.treetoptrek.com](http://www.treetoptrek.com).*

*The Aquarium Project is a plan to construct a world-class aquarium and conservation center at Port Canaveral. More information is available at [www.theaquariumproject.org](http://www.theaquariumproject.org).*