



Global Wildlife Center Stretches Out June Celebration for One Legendary Giraffe, Two New Babies and 35 Years of Conservation

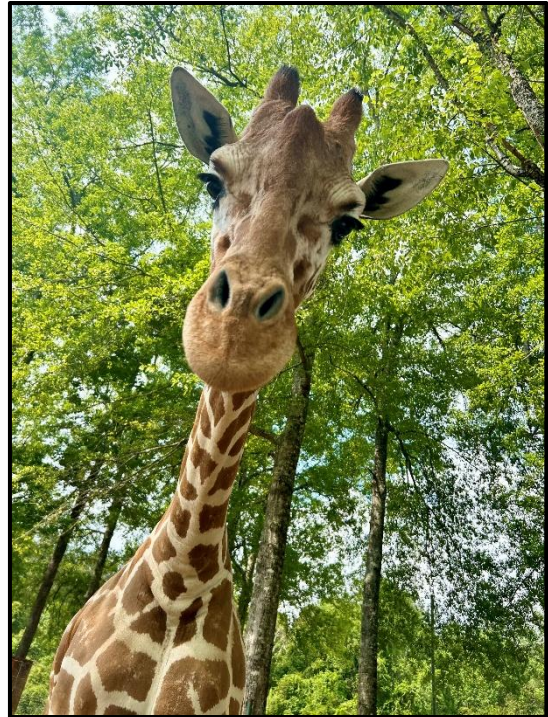
Folsom, Louisiana (May 27, 2026) – The staff at the [Global Wildlife Center](#) is going to great lengths to celebrate giraffes throughout the month of June ... and at the center of it all is **Kameel, a reticulated giraffe who will turn 33 years old on June 13**. Kameel was the first giraffe ever born at the center, back when the facility was in its own infancy, and today she's believed to be the **second oldest giraffe in North America**. Her longevity is a testament to the care she receives at Global Wildlife and the facility's commitment to protecting animals while educating its visitors about how to respect and conserve wildlife.

Kameel's big day isn't the only cause for celebration, however, as Global Wildlife Center is marking several giraffe-related milestones throughout the month. **The center opened in June 1991, which means it's preparing for its own 35th birthday**. In addition, **World Giraffe Day** takes place on June 21, when the tallest land animals on the planet are honored on the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The day has been set aside to mark the "silent extinction" of giraffes, whose populations have plummeted by nearly 30% in those 35 years since Global Wildlife opened. Finally, because part of what visitors learn about at the center is the circle of life, Global Wildlife is delighted to announce that **two baby giraffes** were born this spring and can now be seen frolicking around the property.

Global Wildlife Center opened 35 years ago with a tower (fun fact: that's what you call a group) of four adult reticulated giraffes. Soon a male named Slim and a female named Daisy paired off and did what giraffes do; 15 months later, along came Kameel, whose name means "perfect." She is now the matriarch of Global Wildlife's current tower of 11 giraffes, 10 of whom are genetically related to her. (The center's male, Jett, is not.) Over her lifetime, Kameel had 13 births, but these

days she's on birth control so she can simply enjoy her golden days as a great-grandma. Yep ... there are now four generations of Kameel's family at the center, including the newest additions.

Kameel has incredible maternal instincts and keeps a watchful eye on the whole tower. She has a commanding presence without being assertive or aggressive; in fact, she's known for her gentle and patient nature. She's incredibly tolerant of the younger giraffes' desire to play by rubbing necks with her, but her constant companion is Zira, her 24-year-old daughter. The pair is often seen reclining in the afternoons and observing the younger generations. In the wild, healthy giraffes wouldn't be so inclined to lay down because it leaves them in a vulnerable position to predators. The fact that Kameel and Zira regularly do this is proof of the sense of security they feel at Global Wildlife.



Kameel stands 12 feet, 10 inches tall and weighs 1,645 pounds. She maintains her golden-girlish figure by eating a healthy diet and snacking on apples (green are okay, but she really loves the red ones), romaine, carrots and sweet potatoes. Any or all of these treats may find their way into Kameel's birthday cake, which is being designed by Global Wildlife's staff with the goal of being as tall as she is. A few members of that staff have been at the center at least as long as Kameel has, including its current owner, Maci Matherne, who was just 2 years old when the giraffe was born. The pair grew up together as the facility also grew and changed.

"Kameel has been a special part of my life, so watching her grow up to become the matriarch of such a wonderful and multi-generational giraffe family is both personally and professionally meaningful," Matherne said. "She's a symbol of the long-term commitment that Global Wildlife Center has made to wildlife care and conservation. Her legacy is intertwined with the center's legacy, marking all we've accomplished in our past and pointing the way toward our future."

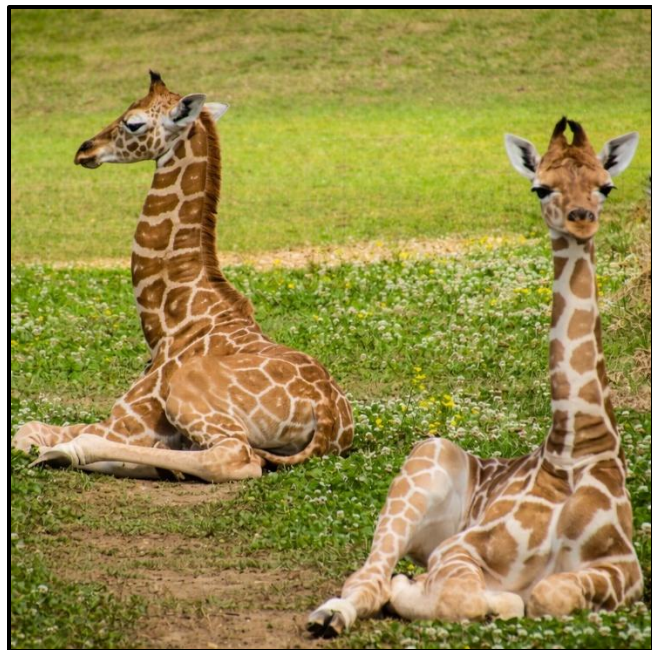
For the past few years, Global Wildlife Center has ushered in a new era that's been marked by new ownership, new administration and a new strategic plan for growth, all with the intent of living up to its mission, which is "Conservation at Work!" Today thousands of exotic, endangered and threatened animals live at the 900-acre center. Facilities and experiences have expanded over the

years, so what began as safari wagon tours has evolved into a site that features a full array of tours and encounters, a series of boardwalks that open up to immersive experiences with animals, rest rooms and a gift shop to satisfy the needs of human visitors, and modern pavilions that are excellent for hosting human birthday parties and other events.

Global Wildlife Center supports conservation efforts in the wild through its Quarters for Conservation program. In June, a portion of the ticket sales are dedicated to the [Giraffe Conservation Foundation](#) (GCF), the only non-governmental organization dedicated exclusively to the conservation and management of wild giraffe populations across Africa. The foundation is focused on conserving existing habitats for wild giraffes while also identifying and mitigating key threats to the population. According to the GCF, today there are only about 20,900 endangered reticulated giraffes in the wild.

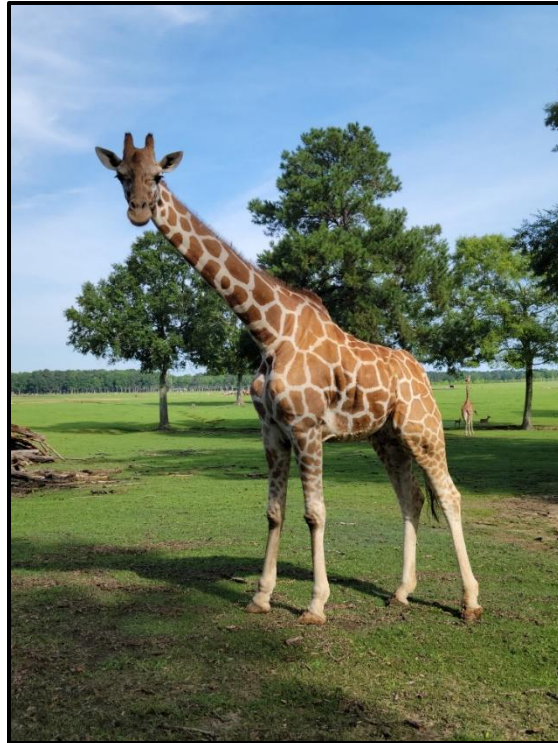
Beyond financial support for initiatives aimed at protecting and increasing wild giraffe populations, Global Wildlife Center is also committed to helping these endangered giraffes flourish in its care. To that end, the center welcomed Kameel's progeny this spring. Nova, whose name means

“new beginning,” was born on March 27, measuring 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing in at 143 pounds. She is brave and curious and bears the distinction of being Kameel's great-granddaughter, making her the fourth generation of the family to be living at Global Wildlife today. Her relative Noah was born on April 2 and arrived at a whopping 6 feet, 1 inch tall and 167 pounds. Whereas Nova is full of energy, Noah takes after his grandma Kameel, remaining calm and easygoing ... though the humans who care for him report that he certainly perks up at the sight of



alfalfa at feeding time. (And yes, you read that right. The two babies represent different generations of the family. Noah is the son of one of Kameel's children, whereas Nova is the daughter of a grandchild.) When he gets bigger, Noah will still be easily recognized by a distinctive bowtie-shaped marking on his neck.

Global Wildlife invites the public to celebrate giraffes throughout the entire month of June at a series of weekend parties designed to stretch out the fun. Each weekend, the center will host a '90s-themed birthday bash that includes games like pin-the-tail on the giraffe, educational displays aimed at teaching visitors more about giraffes, original art made by the center's tower, special photo opportunities, and décor that celebrates the center and its giraffes. The staff will be dressed in giraffe-print uniforms and encourages visitors to get into the spirit, too. To schedule a visit to Global Wildlife Center, check out <https://globalwildlife.com/>, to begin making plans.



Additional Resources

[Giraffe Fun Facts](#)

[Life in 1993](#)

About Global Wildlife Center

Global Wildlife Center is one of the largest free-roaming wildlife preserves in the United States, offering guests a unique safari experience where animals roam freely across expansive natural habitats. Located in Folsom, Louisiana, the center is home to thousands of animals from around the world and is committed to conservation, education, and interactive wildlife experiences. For more information, visit www.globalwildlife.com.

Photo Credits: Global Wildlife Center

Top and Bottom: Kameel, who is patient and gentle, will turn 33 on June 13.

Middle: Noah (left) and Nova (right) were born this spring.