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**Lucky visitors at Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch witness giraffe birth
Female calf marks 34th baby giraffe born at the ranch, raises giraffe
conservation awareness**

World Giraffe Day is Thursday, June 21

New Braunfels, Texas—Visitors at [Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch \(NBWR\)](#) received a rare opportunity to witness a giraffe birth, as NBWR welcomed its 34th baby giraffe on May 30. The female Reticulated Giraffe named Tripqua, weighed 125 pounds and stands at a little over 5 feet tall. She is the third generation of giraffe delivered at the ranch; both her mother and grandmother were born at NWBR.

“Visitors were in awe of the birth. It’s something most people do not get a chance to see,” said Tiffany Soechting, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch animal specialist. “It also was a rich educational opportunity, giving our staff opportunity to talk with guests about giraffe biology, conservation and how wild giraffe are classified as a vulnerable species by the IUCN. Basically, we risk losing giraffe in the wild.”

Tripqua is a female Reticulated Giraffe that originates from the Horn of Africa, where there has been an 80 percent loss of the wild population in the last 15 years. All giraffe species across Africa, the only continent where they roam wild, have lost 40 percent of their wild population in the last 30 years.

Soechting is a founding board member of the [Save the Giraffes](#), a non-profit organization whose mission is to guarantee that giraffes are protected and preserved in their natural habitat.

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She recently returned from a giraffe research expedition in South Africa with a team of researchers from 9 countries. The team set out to gather data from 20 giraffes in five days on the 140,000-acre Rooipoort Nature Reserve. Rooipoort was established in 1893 and is one of the oldest conservation areas in South Africa.

The giraffes were fitted with state-of-the-art radio transmitting harnesses that collect data on the species location and migration patterns. During the fitting, researchers also collected hair, fecal, blood and the first semen sample to learn more about a wild giraffe's life to help create sustainability in wild populations.

South Africa's Dr. Ilse Luther-Binoir, the first reproductive physiologist to successfully collect semen from a wild giraffe, recorded an astonishing 3.5 billion sperm in a teaspoon of semen collected from one giraffe on the research expedition. "The prospects of this research are exhilarating. Sperm analysis and its impact on future reproduction may very well be the key to ensuring that giraffe populations thrive in our ever-changing world," said Dr. Luther-Binoir.

"I was with Dr. Luther-Binoir when she collected the sperm. It was one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my life—aside from the birth of the twins at NBWR," said Soechting. "This journey solidified the Ranch's commitment to the longevity of the giraffe species, both in captivity and the wild."

Hand-rearing the male giraffe twin, Buddy, created an inseparable bond for Soechting that is her driving force to change the tide of knowledge about the rapid decline of wild giraffe populations.

In operation since 1984, NBWR's successful breeding program spawned rare twin giraffes in 2013. The twin giraffes were the 9th known set of living twins born to the world.

NBWR is recognized as one of the top family attractions in Texas and has been ranked multiple times by USA Today as one of the top animal safaris in the US. The ranch is home to over 500 animals from 40 different species around the world, including 12 giraffes.

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About Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch

Opened in 1984, Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch has become one of Texas' most recognized entertainment attractions. The Ranch covers 450 acres of Texas hill country terrain and provides 6 miles of paved roads where guests drive through and witness the natural animal behaviors of over 500 animals from 40 exotic, native and endangered animal species from all over the world. The natural, free-roaming environment is home to not only Reticulated Giraffes, as well as many zebras, emus, ostriches, gazelle, oryx and wildebeests. For more information, visit www.WildlifeRanchTexas.com

About the Save The Giraffes

Formed in 2017 on World Giraffe Day, Save The Giraffes mission is to guarantee that giraffes are protected and preserved in their natural habitat. The organization strives to support conservation research and education programs that strive to ensure the survival of giraffes and their ecosystems for future generations. <http://www.SaveTheGiraffes.org>