

## The first-ever World Giraffe Day – 21 June 2014

Julian Fennessy & Steph Fennessy, Giraffe Conservation Foundation

In 2014 the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) initiated an exciting new initiative and celebrated the first-ever World Giraffe Day (WGD) on 21 June 2014 – the longest day or night of the year, depending on your hemisphere. Initially just an idea, WGD soon developed its own momentum and the initiative was adopted by numerous zoos, schools, conservation organisations, companies and individuals around the world who organised events on or around the day – all in support of raising awareness and support for giraffe in the wild.

WGD 2014 was certainly the most important day ever for giraffe conservation in Africa and has drawn unprecedented attention to these longest-necked animals. Media coverage exceeded our wildest expectations reaching more than 1 million people globally on social media alone and stories in newspapers and on radio worldwide might have this to tens of millions. The enthusiasm of animal care professionals and giraffe lovers around the globe was amazing as everyone truly embraced this day and made it such a special event – and one we hope to now repeat annually.

True to the day's motto, many 'stuck their necks out for giraffe conservation'. GCF asked organisations that celebrated the day to have their logo included on the WGD website ([www.worldgiraffeday.org](http://www.worldgiraffeday.org)) – check out the website or see page 4 for a list of all participating organisations that forwarded their logos (please contact us if your feel your logo is missing).

Zoos, schools and individual giraffe enthusiasts organised a wide range of events to raise awareness for the plight of giraffe in Africa, while at the same time raising critical funds to support the implementation of important conservation projects across the continent. Events ranged from colouring competitions to cake sales, quiz nights to silent auctions, garage sales to matching donation pledges, information stands to presentations, kids' entertainment to sticker and merchandise sales and many more. All zoos that organised events for the day reported great interest from all visitors. See the following page for a selection of images capturing WGD events from around the world.



While a host of organisations benefited from the day's event, GCF received donations amounting to approx. US\$85,000 from over 80 organisations and individuals from Africa, Australia, Europe and North America that collected donations on the day. A special mention should be made of the Leiden Conservation Foundation that set a matching gift challenge for all donations up to a total of US\$25,000 – a goal that was achieved thanks to all your help and support! GCF is excited to put all donations to good use. Some of the funding will be used to further develop GCF as an organisation and in doing so aid us support conservation activities where needed most – in the field by supporting specific project work across Africa, including Ethiopia, Namibia, Niger, Uganda, Zambia and many more (have a look at the 'Our Projects' section on the GCF website, to get a better idea of what this might entail), as well as key giraffe initiatives including community conservation and education programmes working with key conservation partners around the world.

Several zoos used this first WGD as an opportunity to update the giraffe conservation information in their giraffe exhibits and/or used the GCF conservation posters as temporary or even permanent displays. High-resolution versions of both conservation posters were requested from approx. 100 organisations around the world and the posters are now also available in English, French, German, Greek, Japanese and Spanish – thank you to all who assisted with translations. Furthermore, GCF's conservation guide booklet has been printed by several organisations for further distribution, including a number of tourism operators in Namibia, Kenya and Uganda, who now include the booklet into their tourism information packages, both in English and German.

All in all WGD 2014 was a major success for giraffe conservation and we do hope that you will all join us in preparing for 2015 and make it an even bigger and better event across the globe in aid of saving Africa's giraffe! If you have any exciting ideas for giraffe related events with conservation messages, e.g. 'Longnecks for Longnecks', 'Shots for Spots', 'Jugs for Giraffe' or 'Jog for Giraffe' (stay tuned on this last one for 2015!) please contact us. We hope to start sharing these and more ideas for WGD 2015 on the WGD website soon – as well as announce an amazing fundraising drive to sponsor a 'giraffe-walk' through the Namibian desert in aid of giraffe conservation and community education – stay tuned!

Contact:  
Steph Fennessy  
[steph@giraffeconservation.org](mailto:steph@giraffeconservation.org)



**World Giraffe Day – 21 June 2014:** Participating organisations that provided their logos for use on the WGD website ([www.worldgiraffeday.org](http://www.worldgiraffeday.org)):

