

Giraffe Technical Rescue Session

April 22, 2022

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This session shared ideas and started conversations on ways to prepare and plan for down giraffe emergency situations. Based on a review of six clinical cases, the prognosis for down giraffe is often guarded. Key factors may include underlying medical conditions and how long the animal has been recumbent. For two recumbent giraffe that survived, ropes and other on-site equipment were used to reposition the animal and they were back on their feet in <45 min.

For a rapid response to be possible, teams should prepare and plan BEFORE a giraffe emergency occurs. This includes identifying key supplies to have on site, reviewing human safety protocols, pre-planning emergency drug protocols (including anesthesia), and having practice sessions that include roping techniques. Establishing partnerships with crane companies and fire department teams may bring more expertise and resources to the case, and help identify possible anchor points or skylights to utilize for emergency lifting needs. New staff should be trained to call their manager if a giraffe is struggling to stand or is in a splay position.

Early diagnosis and management of health conditions could help prevent some giraffe emergencies. For at least one recumbent giraffe that did not survive, only subtle health issues were noted in the preceding weeks, including mild swelling of a joint and no-longer laying down at night to rest. Recent advancements in training giraffe to voluntarily participate in medical procedures can help with some medical workups, including blood collection and imaging, and could also provide frequent access for some therapies.

While giraffe anesthetic procedures can be challenging and have unpredictable moments even in ideal set-ups, both standing sedations in a chute and general anesthesia are sometimes required to adequately diagnose and manage health conditions. Any barn or chute modifications that may be needed should be done before emergency anesthesia is required. Zoos teams with limited giraffe anesthesia experience are strongly encouraged to consult with zoo veterinarians with this experience for help with planning, and potentially to assist with the procedure. Zoos should also consider inviting neighbor facilities to assist to help grow the knowledge base across our zoo community.

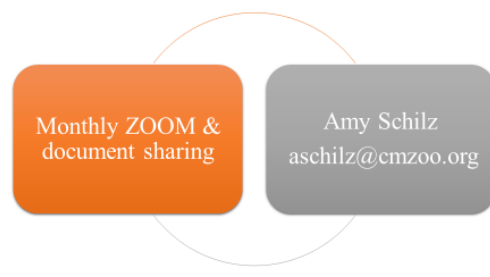
Proactive and emergency planning can help increase the chance of a successful technical rescue response for down giraffe emergencies. This matters not only for ensuring we provide appropriate welfare for the giraffe in our care, but also to help ensure our zoo community can maintain sufficient genetic diversity for future generations of giraffe.

What's next?

Giraffe Technical Rescue Workshop July 12, 2022



New: Giraffe Barn Design & Retrofits Working Group



What's New with ZAHP?



- E-Learning Platform: <https://zahp.org/facility-preparedness/zahp-e-learning-courses/>

EXOTIC ANIMAL STRIKE TEAM (EAST): INTRODUCTION TO FIELD DISASTER RESPONSE
Certificate Course
FREE

FITTING IN WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Certificate Course
FREE

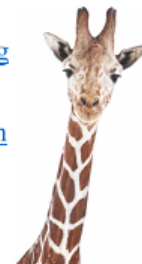
INTRODUCTION TO TECHNICAL RESCUE FOR EXOTIC APPLICATIONS
Certificate Course
FREE

Please reach out to hrandall@aza.org with any questions.

For questions or emergencies, please contact the co-authors and/or ASAR/ZAHP:

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Some discussions to consider having at your zoo:

At your Zoo



Update your emergency plans



Train your team w emergency supplies



Review & where needed, update your barn & yard

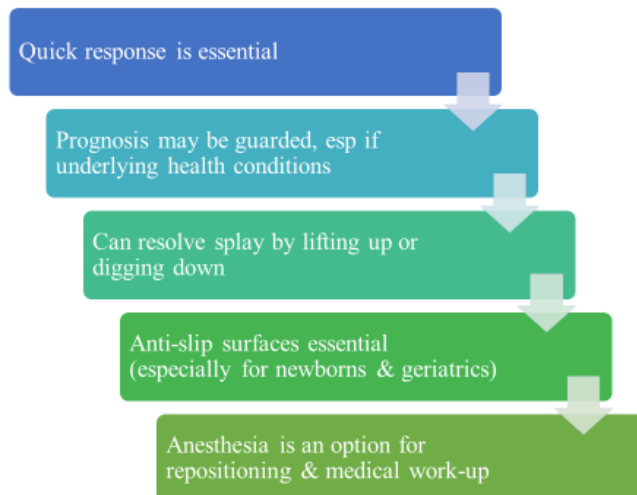


Be proactive w giraffe training & medical care

Mitigate Risks by Being Proactive



Giraffe Emergency Response Lessons





Barn Designs & Retrofits

- How can you lift a giraffe in your barn?
 - Crane access? Rope anchor points? I-beams? What are the human safety considerations? Brainstorm w local heavy rescue teams
- Can you dig down to reposition a giraffe?
- Can you add training ports & safety exits?
- Other potential supplies to have on hand:
 - Scales, scissor lifts, barn cameras, ropes, belly straps w quick release system (ie Becker XXL Quick-Release Bar), bolt cutters, hast needle guides, shovels, rescue glides, tarps, halter, neck board
- What are the biggest safety concerns currently in your barn or yard & can they be addressed?

Giraffe Emergency Medical Supplies Could Include

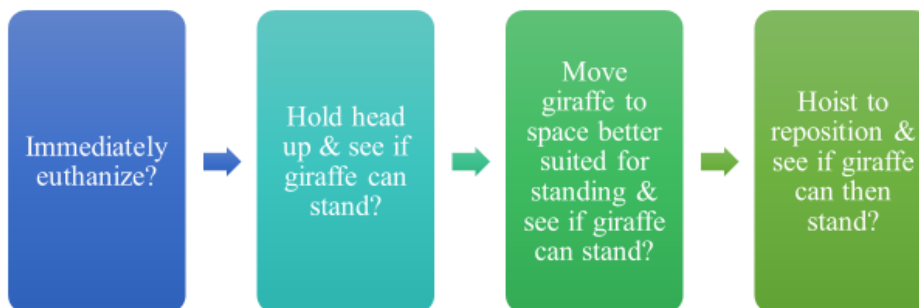
General Medications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSAIDs (ie Banamine) • Antibiotics (PenG, Excede) • Vit E • IV catheter & fluids • Dextrose • Steroids <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DexSP vs Triamcinalone (horse dosage would fit in syringe)

Anesthesia Drugs & Reversals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written emergency anesthesia plan • Intubation supplies • Towel or headcover • Euthanasia supplies • Human emergency drug exposure kit

Monitoring Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stethoscope • Pulse Oximeter • I-stat & blood collection supplies • Headlamp



Discuss w your team what your down giraffe emergency response may look like for your animals



How do you help ensure staff safety during these situations?
What resources can you provide your team if there is a traumatic animal loss?



Considerations for Euthanasia



Recommended reading: Madigan J, Costa L, Nieves S, Horgan M, Weberg K, & Aleman M. 2019. Description of placement procedures for common methods used in equine procedures for common methods used in equine emergency rescue using a simplified loops system. *Animals*. 9(8): 529. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6720554/>