

BIRTH WEIGHTS AND GROWTH RATES OF GIRAFFE AND OKAPI AT DISNEY'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

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Abstract

There is a lack of information available regarding the average birth weights and growth rates of many exotic animal species. This information can prove useful when evaluating the health of new born animals in a zoological setting. Within 24 to 48 hours of birth, giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardis*) and okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*) at Disney's Animal Kingdom are weighed and health is assessed as part of the regular neonate exam. Body weights are gathered as available to monitor growth. The birth weights of 19 giraffe and 5 okapi are reported within as are the growth curves of 21 giraffe and 5 okapi. The average birth weight of giraffe at Disney's Animal Kingdom (DAK) from 1998 through 2015 is 64.64 kg +/- 7.41 kg (n=19). The average birth weight of male giraffe at DAK is 65.83 +/- 7.34 kg (n=11) and female giraffe is 63.0 +/- 7.68 kg (n=8). By one year of age, the average weight of giraffe at DAK is 382 kg +/- 28.83 kg (n=17). The average birth weight of okapi at DAK is 16.0 +/- 0.64 kg (n=5). This is lower than the average birth weight of 19.6 kg reported by the Brookfield Zoo (Reason, 1991). By one year of age, the average weight of okapi at DAK is 175.75 +/- 3.18 kg (n=5). Growth curves for male giraffe through the first year are displayed in Figure 1 and those for female giraffe are shown in Figure 2. Growth curves for okapi are shown in Figure 3. It is hoped that this information may prove useful when assessing the health and growth of other giraffe and okapi in zoological settings.

Acknowledgements

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Literature Cited

Reason, RC (1991) Preliminary observations on growth and development in the Okapi. *Int. Zoo Yb* 30: 216-219.

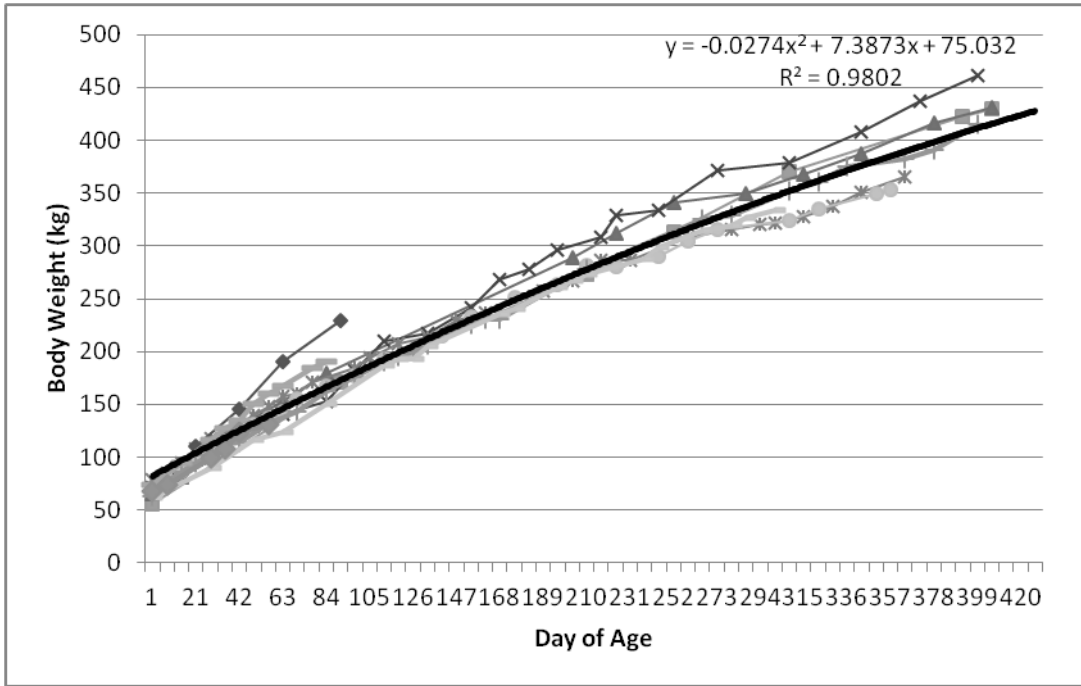


Figure 1. Growth of male giraffe through 1 year of age at Disney's Animal Kingdom

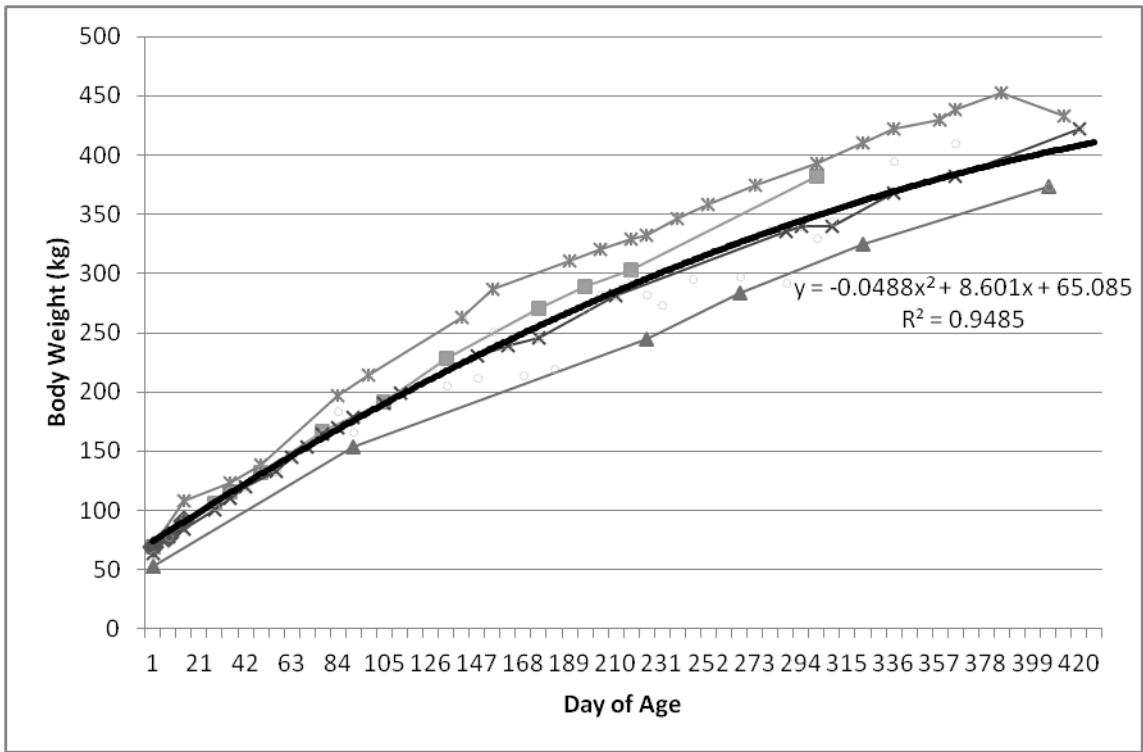


Figure 2. Growth of female giraffe through 1 year of age at Disney's Animal Kingdom

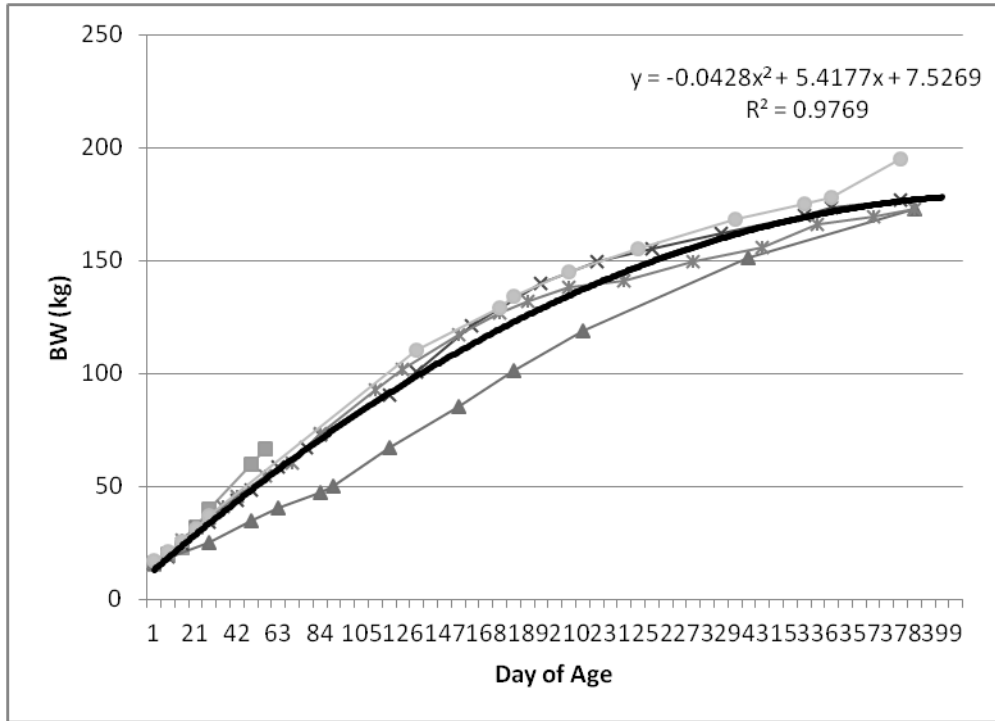


Figure 3. Growth curves of Okapi through year 1 at Disney's Animal Kingdom