

Gorilla dies at Detroit Zoo

by UPI

ROYAL OAK, Mich. - Sunshine, a gorilla that has lived at the Detroit Zoo for more than a decade, died this week after being sick with a flu-like illness for some time. The exact cause of death may not be known for weeks, The Detroit News reported. A necropsy was to be done at Michigan State University. Sunshine was a 37-year-old male and weighed 550 pounds. Older males are known as silverbacks because they have a patch of silver-colored fur on their backs. In the wild, gorillas are believed to live about 30 to 35 years, while some in captivity are close to 50. Like many older captive gorillas, Sunshine suffered from heart disease. Sunshine and his companion, Toni, arrived in Detroit from the Columbus Zoo in Ohio in 1996. Toni is expected to return to Ohio soon. Keepers said that they showed Toni Sunshine's body. "We can't say that Toni is grieving, but she knows that Sunshine is gone," said Scott Carter, a zoo director.

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