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Point Defiance Zoo staff mourn loss of female Sumatran tiger cub

TACOMA – Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff are mourning the loss of Mali, a 1-year-old female Sumatran tiger cub, who died this evening after undergoing emergency surgery and going into cardiac arrest.

"Mali was well-loved by our staff, our community and people around the world," said zoo general curator Karen Goodrowe Beck.

Mali was showing signs of distress late this morning, trembling and breathing heavily, and her stomach was taut and distended. The zoo's veterinary team and a board-certified veterinary surgeon performed emergency surgery and found her regular diet of chunk meat still in her stomach, even though there appeared to be no blockage in her gastrointestinal tract. Upon completion of surgery, Mali went into cardiac arrest and died, despite extensive resuscitation efforts.

Goodrowe Beck said Mali nearly died in November 2010 after undergoing a similar emergency surgery and going into cardiac arrest. At that time zoo veterinarians were able to resuscitate her.

Zoo veterinarians will perform the necropsy examination on Mali tomorrow. Results may not be known for weeks.

Mali and her brother Bima were born at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in May 2010.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium promotes responsible stewardship of the world s resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The Zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).