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Contact: Whitney DalBalcon, 253-404-3637 or whitney.dalbalcon@pdza.org

Male Sumatran tiger to leave Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Feb. 17

Java will be paired with female tiger at Dallas Zoo



Tacoma, Wash. – Java, an endangered Sumatran tiger at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, is leaving Tacoma tomorrow morning (Feb. 17) for the Dallas Zoo to be paired with a female Sumatran tiger.

Keepers at Point Defiance Zoo attempted to mate Java with the zoo's female tiger, Jaya, but the pairing was unsuccessful. Jaya went on to successfully mate with Java's brother, Bali, and gave birth to cubs, Bima and Mali, last May.

Java, age 12, came to Point Defiance Zoo in 2006 for breeding through a recommendation from the Sumatran tiger Species Survival Plan (SSP®). The SSP, coordinated by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, manages the population of more than 70 Sumatran tigers in North America. Late last year, the SSP recommended moving Java to the Dallas Zoo to breed with the zoo's female tiger.

With fewer than 400 Sumatran tigers left worldwide, zoo staff stress the importance of conservation and breeding in the zoo world.

"Sumatran tigers are among the world's most critically endangered species," said zoo general curator Karen Goodrowe Beck. "New cubs add to the overall population and provide invaluable genetic diversity to the entire breeding program."

Tiger cubs Mali and Bima, along with their parents Bali and Jaya, will remain at Point Defiance Zoo and can be seen daily on exhibit in the Asian Forest Sanctuary.

"We're sad to see Java go," said general curator Karen Goodrowe Beck. "But we recognize that we need to do everything possible to save a species as endangered and beloved as this one, she said."

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined 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).