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SUMATRAN TIGER CUB BORN AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

Species is critically endangered; mother, Jaya, and cub appear to be doing well

TACOMA, Wash. – A rare Sumatran tiger cub was born Wednesday night at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Mother, Jaya, and her cub appear to be doing well, and Jaya is a very attentive parent.

The Sumatran tiger is a critically endangered species, and births in zoos are extremely rare, said zoo General Curator Karen Goodrowe Beck, who also is vice chair of the North American Species Survival Plan® for Sumatran tigers.



“We’re ecstatic about this birth,” Goodrowe Beck said. “It represents another milestone in the work to preserve this critically endangered species.”

The cub, born at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday, looks to be strong and nursing, Goodrowe Beck said. “Mom and cub appear to be doing well.”

Jaya and nursing cub from video feed

The cub makes 74 Sumatran tigers in North American zoos. It is the sixth cub born in the Species Survival Plan this year.

About 200 Sumatran tigers live in zoos around the world. They are native only to the island of Sumatra. There are an estimated 300 in the wild.

Jaya gave birth in a specially constructed den behind the scenes at the zoo. Goodrowe Beck, zoo veterinarians and staff biologists are monitoring mama and cub by video camera only.



Jaya

“We will give them a few days to settle in,” she said.

Zoo staff hope to introduce Jaya and her cub to zoo visitors in about two months.

The cub, whose sex is not known, was sired by Malosi, who came to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in February from Honolulu Zoo, specifically to breed with Jaya.

Sumatran tiger cubs typically weigh around two pounds at birth. The gestation period is around 100 days.

Jaya gave birth on her due date, Goodrowe Beck said.

It's the first for Malosi, a magnificent 260-pound, 3-year-old Sumatran tiger. Jaya, who came to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in 2004, gave birth to two cubs in 2010. She was born at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo in 2002.

The Species Survival Plan transfers Sumatran tigers among participating zoos to maintain genetic diversity in the population. It is part of a global effort to ensure the long-term sustainability and health of zoo-based tigers by creating the best possible breeding pairs.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium has two other Sumatran tigers. Bima is Jaya's now 2-year-old offspring. Bali is his father.

Poaching and habitat loss have caused the wild tiger population to dwindle. Breeding tigers in zoos not only helps sustain the world population, it raises awareness about the plight of the species and engages the public on the need to conserve tigers in the wild.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium has contributed \$5,000 to wild tiger conservation in Sumatra.

“We're working hard to preserve and protect this extraordinary species and increase its population,” Goodrowe Beck said.

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

