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RARE SUMATRAN TIGER CUB MAKES DEBUT AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

He'll be on exhibit in the Cub Den during zoo hours; public can help give him a name

TACOMA, Wash. – A 3-week-old Sumatran tiger cub makes his first public appearance today at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. He'll meet the media this morning, but the little guy – all 8 pounds of him – is already a star.

Zoo visitors have been clamoring to see him since his birth on Aug. 22. One Facebook posting on the zoo's website drew some 4,400 likes and 440 shares. Other postings also have garnered likes in the thousands.



Now, the public can view him in the zoo's Cub Den in the Asian Forest Sanctuary. He'll live in the den, where zookeepers will care for him as he grows.

Members of the public can see keeper interactions with him twice a day:

- 11 a.m.
- 3 p.m.

The rest of the day, visitors may watch through the den glass as he explores his space, plays with toys and sleeps. He may not always be visible, though. He might spend time in his little "house" if he wants to. It's his choice.

Zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through Sept. 30.

Beginning today, members of the public also can help name the cub. Members of the zoological staff have proposed six names for him, and members of the public may vote for their choice by going to www.pdza.org and clicking on the link.

Here they are:

- Dumai (pronounced doo-my); a city in the Sumatra province of Riau
- Moro (pronounced more-oh); a city in the Sumatra province of Riau
- Toba (pronounced toe-baa); a city in the Sumatra province of North Sumatra
- Rokan (pronounced row-kaan); a city in the Sumatra province of Riau
- Tunggal (pronounced toon-gaal); Indonesian for “single”
- Satu (pronounced saa-two); Indonesian for “one”

The cub weighed only around 3 pounds at birth. Head zoo veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf and zoological staff separated him from his mother a few days later because he wasn't getting enough milk, was dehydrated and his temperature was low. He's now thriving, Dr. Wolf said.

The cub's parents are Jaya and Malosi. Jaya, who is 9, came to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in 2004. She also had a litter two years ago. The 4-year-old Malosi came to Tacoma in February from Honolulu Zoo to breed with Jaya. He is a first-time tiger dad.

They are part of the North American Species Survival Plan® for Sumatran tigers.

Births in zoos are extremely rare. There are only about 75 Sumatran tigers in North American zoos. The cub is the sixth born in the Species Survival Plan this year.

The tiger subspecies is native to the Indonesian island of Sumatra. Only an estimated 300 remain in the wild.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium has five Sumatran tigers, including the cub. In addition to Jaya and Malosi, adult male tigers Bima and Bali also live in the Asian Forest Sanctuary. They are all rotated on and off public exhibit.

The zoo has long been active in the North American Species Survival Plan®. General Curator Karen Goodrowe Beck is vice chair of the Plan for Sumatran tigers.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium also has given \$5,000 to the tiger SSP campaign for conservation programs in Sumatra.

For more information on the zoo's commitment to conservation, go to www.pdza.org and click on the Conservation tab at the top of the page.

People can learn more about the plight of the tigers and ways to help through donations, fundraising and education by going to the Tiger Conservation Campaign website. There is a link to the campaign at www.pdza.org.

Also, here are direct links to the campaign; a PDF overview; a page specifically on Sumatran tigers; and the campaign's Facebook page.

- <http://www.mnzoo.org/tigerssp/conserResearch.html>
- <http://www.mnzoo.org/tigerssp/sumatranConservation.html>
- http://www.mnzoo.org/tigerssp/Tiger%20Conservation%20Campaign%20Overview_general%20audience.pdf
- <http://www.facebook.com/tigercampaign>

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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).