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**RARE SUMATRAN TIGER CUB BORN OVERNIGHT AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM;
CLOUDED LEOPARD AND SEAL PUP BIRTHS EXPECTED IN MAY AND JUNE**

Tiger mom Jaya is resting; 2.5-pound cub appears healthy

TACOMA, Wash. – An endangered Sumatran tiger gave birth overnight to a cub at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

Zoological staff are closely watching over tiger mom Jaya and the 2.5-pound cub, whose gender is not yet determined. Mother and cub appear healthy, zoo general curator Karen Goodrowe Beck said. They are resting behind the scenes in the zoo's Asian Forest Sanctuary.



It's the third litter for 9-year-old Jaya. The father is Malosi, who came to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium from Honolulu Zoo last year as part of an approved breeding program through the Species Survival Plan® for Sumatran tigers.

"We are elated with this birth," Goodrowe Beck said. "Sumatran tigers are highly endangered. There are only 74 in North American zoos and approximately 200 in zoos

around the world. Only about 250 to 300 remain in their native habitat on the Indonesian island of Sumatra.”

Goodrowe Beck chairs the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Plan for Sumatran tigers.

Zoo deputy director John Houck celebrated the zoo’s leadership in the breeding program.

“Today there is one more precious Sumatran tiger in the world,” Houck said. “This is a confirmation of worldwide efforts to conserve this magnificent species.”

Jaya’s two sons, 3-year-old Bima and 8-month-old Dumai, are among the five Sumatran tigers now at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. The zoo also is home to Berani, an 8-month-old Malayan tiger.

It’s going to be a busy spring at the zoo. More births are expected in the next few weeks.

Clouded leopard Chai Li (pronounced Chai-lye) is pregnant with her third litter, Goodrowe Beck said. She gave birth to two cubs last March and two cubs in June of 2011. Chai Li and her mate, Nah Fun



(pronounced Nah-foon), both 3 years old, are part of the Species Survival Plan for clouded leopards.

She is expected to give birth next month.

In the zoo’s Rocky Shores area, there is a confirmed pregnancy in one harbor seal and a possible pregnancy in a second.

Qilak’s (pronounced Kee-lak) impending pup delivery is confirmed

by ultrasound.

Shila (pronounced Shi-lah) is thought to be pregnant, but she is reluctant to have a probe placed on her abdomen, and veterinarians have been unable to verify a pregnancy with ultrasound.

A seal pup birth would be expected in June, Goodrowe Beck said. It can be difficult to pin down harbor seals’ “due dates” because their gestation period is 9 to 11 months and involves delayed implantation of a fertilized egg, Goodrowe Beck said.



Harbor seals generally have one pup a year in the wild.

The father is Q, a 14-year-old who came to Tacoma from Seattle Aquarium a year ago as part of a cooperative Species Survival Plan breeding program. Qilak, 9, and Shila, 8, were both born in the wild. They came to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium in 2009 from Alaska Sea Life Center.

The birth today of Jaya's cub came as an exciting surprise, Goodrowe Beck said.

Zoo staff performed several ultrasounds on Jaya in the last several weeks in an effort to confirm a possible pregnancy. But it's difficult to get clear images on a standing, moving tiger, Goodrowe Beck said.

Behavioral and hormonal indicators also suggested she was not carrying a litter.

Believing she was not pregnant, veterinarians were preparing Jaya for a routine tip-of-nose-to-end-of-tail physical and ultrasound when they discovered the cub in a nest box early this morning.

The tiger cub born today and the clouded leopard and harbor seal pregnancies all result from cooperative breeding programs designed to ensure survival of these species and increase their global numbers, Goodrowe Beck said.

"This is a big part of our conservation mission at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium," deputy director Houck said. "Our staff works both at home and abroad to maintain a number of animal species. Every one is a world treasure."

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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).

Photos: Jaya, top

Chai Li, center

Qilak in water

Shila

Photo credits: Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium