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IT'S A GIRL! DAY-OLD SUMATRAN TIGER CUB BEING HAND-REARED BY ZOO STAFF
*Mom Jaya showed disinterest in cub, so zoological staff
opted to bottle feed her to ensure she gets proper nutrition and other necessary care*

TACOMA, Wash: Zoological staff at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium opted to hand-rear a day old Sumatran tiger cub today after its mother showed little interest in the newborn.

The cub, a female, was born overnight Tuesday. She is in good health and zookeepers with years of expertise in the care of exotic cats are bottle feeding her every three hours, zoo general curator Karen Goodrowe Beck said.



“The cub needed nourishment its mother wasn’t providing,” Goodrowe Beck said.

She will get special formula in round-the-clock feedings.

Zookeepers also can give the cub the holistic care she needs and keep careful watch over her, Goodrowe Beck said.

Numerous Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff members have extensive experience with tiger and clouded leopard cub births and the subsequent hand-rearing of many of the animals.

The cub’s mother, 9-year-old Jaya, is healthy and doing well in the zoo’s Asian Forest Sanctuary area, Goodrowe Beck said. Her father, 4-year-old Malosi, also lives in the Asian Forest Sanctuary, along with 3-year-old Bima and 8-month-old Berani and Dumai. All are Sumatrans except Berani, who is a Malayan tiger.

It's not unusual for zoological staff to hand-raise a cub. Jaya's last cub, Dumai, born August 22, also was hand-reared because Jaya was disinterested and the cub wasn't getting enough milk.

It likely will be several weeks before the public can see the cub, who is being bottle-fed behind the scenes.

She does not yet have a name.

The Sumatran tiger is a critically endangered species, and births in zoos are extremely rare, said Goodrowe Beck, who chairs the North American Species Survival Plan® for Sumatran tigers.

There have been three births in the program 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 250 to 300 in the wild.

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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).

Photo credit: Jesse Michener/Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium