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Endangered clouded leopard is pregnant, cubs expected in mid-June

Tacoma, Wash. – Chai Li, an endangered clouded leopard at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, is pregnant and expected to give birth in mid-June.

“It’s an unexpected but very delightful surprise,” said zoo general curator Karen Goodrowe Beck. Chai Li and her mate Nah Fun were paired for breeding when they were five days old but staff didn’t expect them to produce a litter of cubs until next year.

“Chai Li’s pregnancy is exciting news for Point Defiance Zoo visitors and for our efforts to to save these endangered animals,” said Goodrowe Beck. Only six clouded leopard cubs have been born this year in accredited North American zoos.

Zoo staff have performed ultrasounds on Chai Li to confirm that cubs are present but have not yet been able to determine the number of cubs. This is the first pregnancy for Chai Li and the first litter fathered by Nah Fun. Both are just under two years old and currently on exhibit in the Asia Day Room of the zoo’s Asian Forest Sanctuary.

Staff are carefully preparing for the arrival of the cubs. Those preparations include 24-hour watch beginning several days before the due date, continuous video monitoring and hand-rearing supplies at the ready.

A typical clouded leopard pregnancy lasts about 90 days. After they are born, the cubs will remain behind the scenes. If all goes well, the cubs will make their debut in the cub nursery of the zoo’s new Cats of the Canopy exhibit later this summer.

Chai Li (pronounced “chai-lye” and meaning “beautiful one”) and Nah Fun (pronounced “nah-foon” and meaning “rainy season”) arrived at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium from the Khao Kheow Zoo in Thailand last March.

About 70 clouded leopards live in accredited North American zoos. The number of clouded leopards living in the wild is unknown.

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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).