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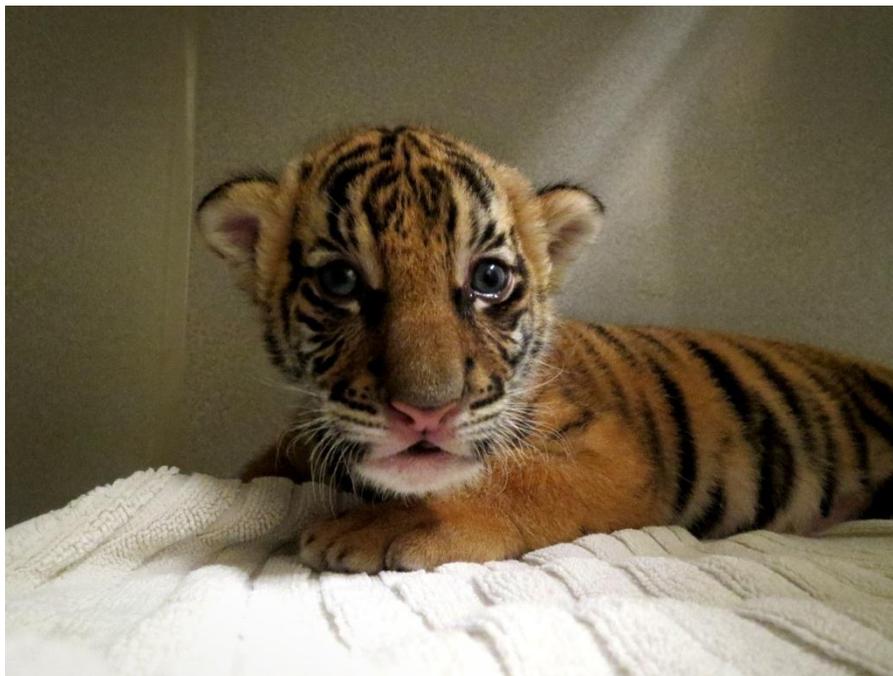
5-WEEK-OLD MALAYAN TIGER COMING TO POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM FROM TULSA

He'll join Sumatran tiger in the zoo's cub den so the hand-reared pair can be socialized together

TACOMA, Wash. – A now-5-week-old Malayan tiger is coming to Tacoma to be hand-reared with the Sumatran tiger cub born Aug. 22 at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Both are males.

The Malayan cub, named Berani (pronounced burr-rani), is scheduled to arrive Oct. 10 from Tulsa Zoo, where he was born Aug. 26.

Following a veterinary examination, he'll join Dumai, the just-named Tacoma tiger, in the zoo's cub den.



When they're settled in, zoological staff will feed and interact with both in the den, and they'll be on exhibit to the public during regular zoo hours

"We're thrilled that this cub is coming to Tacoma and that these two endangered tigers will be able to grow and socialize together," said Karen Goodrowe Beck, general curator of Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

“It is a privilege for us to take on the responsibility of rearing them and ensuring they will be able to contribute to their respective populations. The recommendation for Berani to come here is a testament to our skilled staff and our facilities.”

The cub den, opened in 2011, provides ample space for two growing tigers to tumble and play and to learn top-predator behaviors.



Each was the only cub in a litter, a rare occurrence. The average litter size for both sub-species is two or three.

Veterinarians and zoological staff separated each cub from its mother within days of its birth because the tiny tigers were not thriving.

Both bottle-fed cubs are now showing normal

weight gains and are growing rapidly.

Zoo officials always would prefer to leave cubs with their mothers. However, in each case, the cubs were not getting adequate milk and their mothers were inattentive, veterinary staff at both zoos said.

Species Survival Plan® officials for Sumatran and Malayan tigers made the joint decision to bring the two together for hand-rearing, Goodrowe Beck said. She is the coordinator for the North American Sumatran tiger SSP.

“They will each learn tiger behavior from the other,” she explained. That’s crucial in cases where a tiger’s first formative months would otherwise be spent with only human contact.

Dr. Kay Backues, senior staff veterinarian at Tulsa Zoo, agrees.

“It is important whenever possible for an animal like Berani to be raised with members of his own species,” she said.

“With another tiger playmate of similar age, he will grow up to be better socialized and behave in an appropriate way with humans and tigers,” she added. “His future playmate and he will both benefit from the exercise and mental stimulation they will give each other, and they will

both be more likely to become successful adults, exhibit normal behaviors, act appropriately with other tigers and also have an increased chance of being successful breeders. The sooner we get the two animals together, the better for their growth and development.”

Dumai weighed about 3 pounds when he was born to 9-year-old Jaya on Aug. 22. His father is 4-year-old Malosi, who came to Tacoma from Honolulu Zoo in February to mate with Jaya. The growing cub now weighs 12.8 pounds – a roughly 426 percent gain.

Berani weighed about 2.5 pounds at birth, and is now edging toward 11. His mother is 4-year-old Jin, and his father is 7-year-old Gahara.

The two cubs are expected to get along well together, Goodrowe Beck said. There are more similarities than differences among the two tiger subspecies, she explained.

Sumatran tigers, listed as critically endangered, are the smallest subspecies of tiger and their fur is a darker orange than that of Malaysians. Sumatran tigers also are the only remaining tiger subspecies that lives on an island. As few as 300 live in the wild on the Indonesian island.

Malayan tigers, a bit bigger, lighter in color and lankier in body conformation, are native to the tropical forests of peninsular Malaysia. The Tiger Conservation Campaign estimates that fewer than 500 remain in the wild.

Human encroachment on habitat and poaching to use tiger parts for medicinal purposes has created significant threats to the survival of both subspecies.

There are 74 Sumatran tigers in Association of Zoos & Aquariums accredited zoos in North American zoos and about 375 as part of the Global Species Management Plan. Fifty-five Malayan tigers live in AZA member zoos

Each of the tigers will reach 275-300 pounds when fully grown. They’ll eventually be placed into zoo-based breeding populations of their respective subspecies to maintain genetic diversity and increase their numbers.

Bringing the Malayan cub to Tacoma is a wonderful example of the cooperative Species Survival Plan work in action, Goodrowe Beck said. Tulsa Zoo does not currently have the facilities necessary for the public to see and watch Berani grow.

“Putting these two cubs together is not only good for them as tigers, it’s a rare opportunity for the public to see two subspecies of tiger cubs up close – through the cub den window, she added. “That brings home the message of the endangered species in a very real way and allows us to educate zoo visitors in what they can do to help.”

To learn more about the tigers, the Tiger Conservation Campaign and what you can do to help them, go to www.pdza.org.

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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 1 : Berani is a 5-week-old Malayan tiger coming to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium next week from Tulsa Zoo (Courtesy of Tulsa Zoo).

Photo 2:

Sumatran tiger cub Dumai, born at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, draws crowds every day to see him interact with zoological staff members in the cub den (Courtesy of Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium).