



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** March 8, 2017

## **ANOTHER ENDANGERED SUMATRAN TIGER ARRIVES AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO**

*Mohan could produce cubs with Kali – but there’s a twist; the pairing would be done via advanced scientific reproductive techniques through the Species Survival Plan®*

TACOMA, Wash. – Male Sumatran tiger Mohan arrived at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium on Tuesday. But it will be some time before members of the public can see him. The 270-pound, 12-year-old tiger will need several weeks to get adjusted to his new home in the Asian Forest Sanctuary area of the zoo. Zoo officials will make an announcement when he is ready to make his public debut later this spring.

He will bring the number of critically endangered Sumatran tigers at the zoo to five. Siblings Dumai, 4, Kali, 3, and Dari and Kirana, 2, all live in the zoo’s Asian Forest Sanctuary.

Mohan, who came to Tacoma under a breeding recommendation by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums’ Species Survival Plan® (SSP) for Sumatran tigers, is expected to participate in a first at the zoo.

Plans approved by the SSP® call for Mohan to father cubs with Kali through artificial insemination.

Although advanced assisted reproduction has resulted in the birth of pups through the zoo’s acclaimed Red Wolf Species Survival Plan®, it has not been employed with tigers at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, General Curator Dr. Karen Goodrowe Beck said.

It is particularly indicated in this case, said Goodrowe Beck, who holds a Ph.D. in reproductive biology and is vice chair of the Sumatran tiger SSP®.

The two tigers’ combined genes would bring new vigor to the pool of Sumatran tigers in North America; Goodrowe Beck and other staff members have expertise in the field of artificial insemination among animals; and neither tiger is a good candidate for natural breeding.



Mohan has a history of aggression. Kali, a single cub, was ignored by her mother at birth – an occurrence that isn't unusual when there is just one cub in a litter. As a result, she was hand-raised and so did not learn how to behave with other tigers from her mother or any siblings.

There is no timetable for any artificial insemination procedure, but it likely is many months away.

It all depends on nature. Kali is just coming into sexual maturity.

Artificial insemination has been a critical tool in the conservation of a number of species, including clouded leopards, black-footed ferrets and other animals, Goodrowe Beck said.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is a recognized leader in the conservation of numerous species, including Sumatran tigers. The zoo's tigers serve as ambassadors for their wild counterparts, helping to teach visitors about human encroachment, deforestation and poaching that threaten to send the species to extinction.

Only an estimated 300 of the endangered big cats remain in the wild on their native Indonesian island of Sumatra. The proliferation of oil palm plantations in recent years decimated their habitat. In addition, poachers capture and kill wild tigers for their pelts, bones and other body parts.

There are just 78 Sumatran tigers in accredited North American zoos.

Donations from the zoo's Dr. Holly Reed Wildlife Conservation Fund annually support efforts to mitigate human-tiger conflict and catch and prosecute poachers. Those donations have totaled more than \$50,000 in the last five years.

"We are committed to doing everything we can to conserve this species for future generations," Goodrowe Beck said. "I cannot imagine a world in which tigers cease to exist."

To learn more about tiger conservation, go to [www.pdza.org/savetigers](http://www.pdza.org/savetigers).

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*Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and 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).*

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