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FOUR ENDANGERED CLOUDED LEOPARD CUBS BORN AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM
Rare Southeast Asian cats receiving round-the-clock care from zoological staff

TACOMA, Wash. – An endangered clouded leopard gave birth to four healthy cubs at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium this week.

Zoo staff members are providing round-the-clock care for the litter of quadruplets.



Their birth to mother Chai Li is a doubly rare event. Clouded leopards are endangered and only about two dozen accredited zoos in North America breed the highly reclusive cats, which are indigenous to Southeast Asia. Litters of four are uncommon, Zoo General Curator Karen Goodrowe Beck said.

Chai Li (pronounced Chai-lye) previously gave birth to two litters of two cubs and one single cub litter at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Her mate Nah Fun (pronounced Nah-foon) is the cubs' father.

They are part of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' Species Survival Plan,[®] which manages and maintains a population of these endangered cats.

The cubs, born Tuesday, are being bottle-fed and will be hand-reared by zoo staff with extensive experience in the care of clouded leopards and other exotic cats. This is routine for the species and has produced the best results in terms of health and well-being of clouded leopard cubs, Goodrowe Beck said.

The cubs are not yet named. The zoo will announce later this month how and when they will be named and when visitors will be able to see them.

“These cats are very rare,” Goodrowe Beck said. “We are thrilled by the birth of this litter. We hope visitors to the zoo will connect with them and be inspired to take action to help save their species in the wild.”

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff members are vital partners in the global effort to study clouded leopards and educate the public about the habitat destruction that threatens the species.

Tacoma zookeepers founded the nonprofit Clouded Leopard Project 15 years ago (www.cloudedleopard.org). The group works closely with the zoo and The Zoo Society in fundraising efforts for conservation projects. Zoo staff members also conduct and support clouded leopard conservation work in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia.

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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).