



News editors: Here's the link to a gallery of downloadable photos

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Password: primate party

GET IN THE SWING OF THINGS AT THE POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM'S PRIMATE PARTY AUGUST 12-13

Celebrate Cho Cho's 50th birthday and see animals receive special enrichments of toys and treats

TACOMA, Wash. –Four species of primates – white-cheeked gibbons, siamangs, black-and-white lemurs and ring-tailed lemurs – call Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium home.



White-cheeked gibbons Bobby and Sunisa at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

At age 50, he's believed to be the oldest member of his species in human care in the United States.

Cho Cho and his female companion, Dudlee, will be part of the Primate Party, along with the zoo's two white-cheeked gibbons, Bobby and Sunisa. The siamangs and the gibbons live in the zoo's Asian Forest Sanctuary.

And on Aug. 12 and 13, the zoo is throwing a party to celebrate these amazing animals and highlight the species' increasingly endangered status in their native lands.

The weekend's events include a celebration of Cho Cho, one of the zoo's two small apes known as siamangs (pronounced sigh-amangs).



Black-and-white ruffed lemur Tiffany in the Kids Zone' area at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

Black-and-white ruffed lemurs, and ring-tailed lemurs, will join in on the Primate Party fun.

The lemurs can be found in the zoo's Kids' Zone.

Lemurs belong to primate group called prosimians found in the wild only on the island of Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa.

Primates are mammals with several advanced characteristics, including hands and feet adapted for grasping, good vision and a high level of social interaction.

Visitors can watch as the naturally acrobatic apes swing arm-over-arm through their exhibits, groom each other and vocalize. The lemurs are also masters of interesting sounds, and are quite adept at leaping and climbing on

branches and ropes. Visitors may be fortunate to spot the black-and-white ruffed lemurs hanging upside down. Keeper talks will focus on the animals' personalities and unique adaptations.

The animals also will receive an assortment of enrichment treats and toys designed to create a stimulating environment and encourage species-typical behaviors.

Here's the list of activities for Saturday, Aug. 12, and Sunday, Aug. 13:

- **11 a.m.** Black-and-white ruffed lemurs are the stars during a special keeper talk at Kids' Zone. Keep your ears tuned in throughout the day to possibly hear their distinct roaring sound, an eerie vocalization that's a favorite among zoo visitors.
- **12:30 p.m.** Keeper talk and primate enrichment, Asian Forest Sanctuary.
- **2 p.m.** Ring-tailed lemurs receive skewered meals so visitors can check out whether they have the same taste in some foods as the animals.
- **4 p.m.** Keeper talk and primate enrichment, Asian Forest Sanctuary.

Throughout each day: Zookeepers and Conservation Engagement staff members talk about how these animals are threatened in the wild and suggest actions visitors can take to help these species.

Black-and-white ruffed lemurs are critically endangered; ring-tailed lemurs are endangered. The homes of both species are disappearing at an alarming rate due to deforestation in Madagascar. Human population growth and climate change are major culprits in the destruction of lemurs' native habitat.

Siamangs also are endangered in the wild, and are threatened by loss of their tropical forest habitat as well as by the illegal pet trade.

White-cheeked gibbons are critically endangered due to habitat destruction in their native range of Laos, Vietnam, southeastern China and eastern Cambodia.

All Primate Party activities are free with zoo admission or membership.

Learn more about Primate Party at www.pdza.org.

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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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