

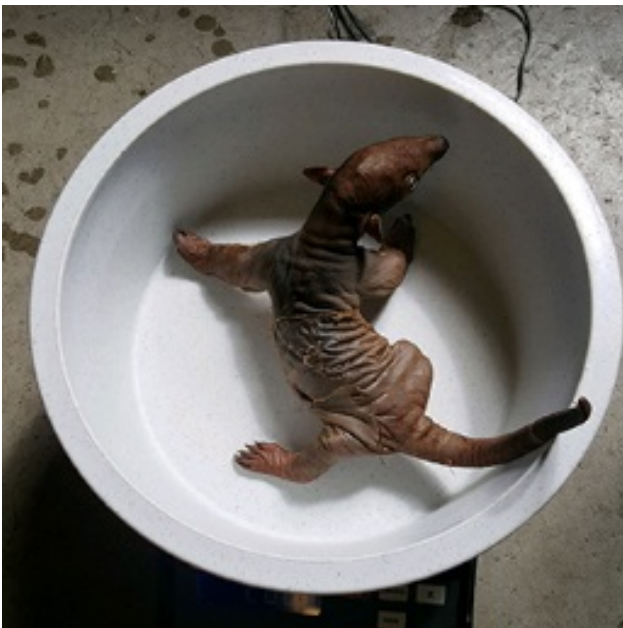


## **BABY TAMANDUA BORN AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM**

*The tiny pup is the first of its species born at the zoo in its 114-year-history*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Aug. 20, 2019

TACOMA, Wash. – A boy? A girl? We won't know for a while, but the Southern tamandua pup born Sunday night at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium – the first in the zoo's history – is a very welcome addition to the family.



The baby tamandua – a small, arboreal species of anteater native to South America – was born at 5:25 p.m. on Sunday August 18, behind the scenes at the zoo's Wild Wonders Outdoor Theater area. It's healthy, weighing in at just over half a pound, and fits onto a human palm – about the size of an avocado.

Terra, the pup's mother, is resting and nursing the pup every few hours.

"Mom and baby are both doing well," said Maureen O'Keefe, Wild Wonders senior staff biologist.

Immediately after the birth, keepers monitored the pup for several hours, making sure the little one was nursing and bonding with mom Terra. (Gonzo, the father, will stay separate from the pair.)

Head veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf gave the pup a first exam on Monday, listening to its heart and treating the umbilical area for possible infection. Determining the sex, though, will have to wait until the little tamandua is bigger.

"It's so exciting to see a tamandua pup here at the zoo," said Natalie Davis, curator of land animals. "Our keepers and veterinary team have done a wonderful job of caring for and monitoring Terra during her pregnancy."

The pup, like all of its species, was born with very little fur, and with its eyes closed for the first day. But it was already extremely strong, clinging to Terra's back just like a tamandua pup would in the wild as its mother climbs and hunts for food.

"Its job right now is just to hold on," commented Davis.

Wild Wonders staff are keeping the nesting box at a tropical warmth with a heating pad and light, and have made the indoor den pup-friendly with extra straw padding and lowered branches. Terra is getting her favorite food: avocado.

A type of anteater from South America, Southern tamanduas have a long, slender nose and a super-long tongue (18 inches!) that lets them scoop out termites and other insects. They are excellent climbers, using their long prehensile tail for balance and support. Terra and Gonzo both make appearances in the Wild Wonders live animal show and Close Encounters, demonstrating their long tongue and climbing abilities.

Tamandua pups nurse for the first two months, beginning to explore adult foods like insects and fruit at around two to three months. The zoo pup will stay close by mom for the first six months, eventually making its public debut when it is strong and confident enough. In the wild, they are independent at around one year old.

The pup was born as a recommendation for the tamandua Species Survival Program® by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums – a new program in which Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is a leader.

Tamanduas are not endangered in the wild, but as ambassador animals Terra and Gonzo help public learning and appreciation of all wildlife and habitats.

For more information, go to [www.pdza.org](http://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. A member of the [Metro Parks Tacoma](#) family, the zoo creates a legacy of sustainability for future generations through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities; it also embodies Metro Parks' mission of creating healthy opportunities to play, learn and grow. The zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA). [The Zoo Society](#), a 501(c)(3) organization, is an instrumental partner in the conservation, animal-welfare and education initiatives.*

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