



## HE'S A BOY! HELP NAME OUR NEW MUSKOX CALF

*Voting now open on slate of keeper-chosen names through July 8.*

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TACOMA, Wash. – He head-butted some rocks. He tasted some clover. Then he galloped back down the hillside to mom.



Yes, it's official – our baby muskox calf is a boy, and now his fans get to vote on his name.

The care team confirmed the sex last Friday when the calf's mom Charlotte was finally confident enough to let them get close enough for a check-up. Working quickly to keep mom happy, veterinary technician Sara Dunleavy weighed the calf (a whopping 52 pounds, double his birth-weight), checked his umbilical site (healthy), listened to his heart and lungs and determined that yes, he was definitely a boy.

"We'd been suspecting that for a few days, after he began some head-butting behaviors," explained keeper Russell Pharr. "That's a typical instinct for

male muskoxen, as later they'll have to show their dominance for breeding."

The little guy is also starting mock sparring with his mom, who "humors him and goes along with it," Pharr says. He's starting to graze on grass but will still get most of his nutrition from nursing for the next few months.

Zoo fans get to vote on the calf's name from a slate of keeper choices:

- Trebek (muskoxen are the favorite animal of game show host Alex Trebek)
- Ollie (named after the children's game "Olly olly oxen free")
- Capra (a variation of the scientific name for the muskoxen family)
- Mak (short for 'oomingmak,' the Inupiaq name for muskoxen)

[Vote here](#) through July 8 – stay tuned for the winning name!

But the most exciting thing for the calf happened Monday, when keepers opened up the biggest Arctic Tundra area – newly babyproofed – for him and Charlotte to explore.

Charlotte was keen to get back to munching her favorite clover. But for the calf, it was a whole new world of exciting, lichen-covered rocks, long grass, sloping hillsides and new views out over the Zoo. On chubby, endearingly clumsy legs he darted from rock to rock, investigating branches and running laps before coming back to Charlotte's side to touch noses.

"He appears quite healthy," said Dr. Karen Wolf, head veterinarian. "The veterinary team has been observing him regularly and he is very active and inquisitive, investigating his environment and starting to run around and demonstrate his spunky personality."

The pair will be out in the big space every day for visitors to spot, unless they choose to spend time inside. Dad Hudson will roam the other space, while the herd matriarch Mya is spending some time behind the scenes after dental surgery.

For more information about muskox, see [pdza.org/muskox](https://pdza.org/muskox).

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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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