



## POINT DEFIANCE ZOO NOW HOME TO PURR-FECT CLOUDED LEOPARD CUB

*Four-month-old cub joins the zoo through a Species Survival Plan® breeding recommendation*

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TACOMA, Wash.— A four-month-old clouded leopard cub named Rakhan (pronounced Rah-kaan) recently arrived at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. The cub joins the zoo on a breeding recommendation through the Species Survival Plan®.

“Clouded leopards are highly endangered, and cubs like Rakhan help keep zoo populations healthy and genetically diverse,” said Telena Welsh, the zoo’s curator of Asian animals. “Breeding clouded leopards in zoos is a crucial way to keep this species from being completely wiped out.”

Point Defiance Zoo is a global leader in clouded leopard conservation. Zoo leaders [collaborate with other zoos](#) with other zoos and organizations in the United States and Southeast Asia to research the elusive, treetop-loving cat, and share their expertise.

The Species Survival Plan recommends the cub eventually mate with 8-year-old Sang Dao (pronounced Sing Dow), a female resident at the Tacoma zoo. Rakhan won’t be sexually mature until he’s 1.5 to 2-years-old. So, for now, zoo staff will focus on creating a strong bond between the pair.

“They can see, hear and smell each other and so far have reacted well to one another,” said Welsh. “In a few months, once the cub has grown a bit more, we will physically introduce them to further strengthen their bond.”

Rakhan currently weighs about 14 pounds and Sang Dao is 30 pounds and keepers would like the two cats to be closer in size before they share the same space.

Welsh said Rakhan is adjusting well to his new home, and zoo guests may see him in the cub den in the zoo’s Asian Forest Sanctuary. If he’s not visible, he is either napping in his den box or exploring his behind-the-scenes exercise areas.

“After a tough two years of COVID, the cub is bringing keepers a lot of joy,” said Welsh. “We hope he brings that same level of joy to our guests.”

Welsh has quickly grown fond of the cub.

“He is very playful and loves to explore his new home,” said Welsh. “He enjoys jumping, climbing and doing zoomies until he’s tired and needs a nap.”

## **Sang Dao**

The cub's future partner, Sang Dao, is also high energy.

"She loves attention, too," said Welsh. "We hope that Rakhan and Sang Dao will enjoy spending time together and will get along well."

## **About clouded leopards**

Seven clouded leopards, including Rakhan, live at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

The cats have excellent camouflage, so here's a hint: look up high when searching for them.

In the wild, clouded leopards live in tropical forests, grasslands, scrub and mangrove swamps in Nepal, northeastern India and in small populations across many countries in Southeast Asia. Their tropical forests are being cut down at the world's fastest deforestation rate for logging, human habitat and to grow palm oil, a common food product. All of those reasons have led clouded leopards to be endangered. People can help wild clouded leopards by checking products for sustainable palm oil and encouraging companies to make the switch.

To learn more about clouded leopards and how to help them, click [here](#) or [here](#).

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

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