



## HELP NAME POINT DEFIANCE ZOO'S NEW MUSKOX CALF

*Voting is now open on a slate of keeper-chosen names through Sept. 25*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Sept. 14, 2023

TACOMA, Wash.— Voting is now open for our community to choose the name of Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium's newest baby animal- a female muskox calf. The calf, born to eight-year-old Charlotte, is now a week old and becoming more confident daily.

"The young calf is rambunctious, curious, adventurous, and brave," said assistant curator Shannon Smith, who helps care for the muskoxen. "She stays close to mom but is also inquisitive about the area around her and isn't afraid to explore."

On Wednesday morning, the calf was darting back and forth in her habitat with her endearingly clumsy legs, investigating branches and rocks before returning to Charlotte's side.

"Charlotte is very attentive to her calf and is a wonderful mother," said Smith.

The keepers have built a trusting relationship with Charlotte over the years, allowing her care teams to be nearby and closely monitor the calf.

"She appears quite healthy and continues to nurse well," said Dr. Kadie Anderson, one of the zoo's veterinarians. "The veterinary team has been observing her regularly."

The calf is getting most of her nutrition from nursing but imitates Charlotte and mouths on food that mom eats, like timothy hay, willow, bark, and grass. When she's one month old, she will start eating specially formulated muskox pellets. She will also continue to nurse for a few months. The calf is expected to double her birth weight (20 pounds) in her first month.

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

- Aurora (referring to the 'aurora borealis' natural light display in Earth's sky)
- Willow (a favorite food of the calf and her parents)
- Artemis (in ancient Greek mythology, the goddess of wild animals, nature, and the moon)
- Juneau (the capital city of Alaska)

[Vote here](#). Voting closes Sept. 25 at noon – stay tuned for the winning name!

For now, guests can see the calf with Charlotte in the smaller side yard in the Arctic Tundra habitat. Mother and calf also have access to a behind-the-scenes area of the muskoxen habitat. Guests may or may not see the pair, depending on where Charlotte decides to be. In about a month, the duo will move to the biggest Arctic Tundra area (babyproofed, of course!).

Muskoxen is an ancient species, having grazed the tundra and prairies of Greenland, Alaska, and northern Canada for thousands of years. Their numbers were significantly reduced from hunting by the early 20th century. The Northwest Game Act of 1917 allowed for conservation efforts that helped their recovery, and there are now around 80,000 muskoxen in the wild.

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

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