



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Note to the Media: Photo and video access is not available. The zoo can provide photos on request. Click here for video: [Newborn Colobus Monkey \(January 2014\)](#)*

## **Two Colobus Monkeys Born less than Forty-Eight Hours Apart**

**Zoo keepers arrived at work to find a big surprise (twice!)**

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo enjoyed a baby boom during the last week of January when two black-and-white colobus monkeys were born within two days of one another.

"The fact that they were born within two days of each other was a big surprise," stated African Journey Area Manager Amber Eagleson. "We were aware that both of the adult females were pregnant, but based on their size we anticipated that one mother would deliver a bit later than the other. We never expected two infants at the same time!"

The babies, which have not yet been named, were born on January 26 and January 28, 2014. They were born without complication and have displayed healthy postnatal behavior. Dr. Kami Fox, the zoo's veterinary intern, states that "Both babies and moms are doing very well. The newborns are clinging tightly to their respective mothers, just like they should. The keepers have witnessed them nursing frequently as well." Dr. Fox also noted that, "as long as everyone continues to do well vet staff and zoo keepers will minimize interaction as much as possible and allow the mothers to do their job."

Both babies were born with all-white fur as expected. As they grow they will develop a black-and-white fur pattern just like that of their parents and big sister Kaasidy. Their tails will develop a large white tufted tip, providing balance as they move through the trees in search of food. (Colobus monkeys spend almost all of their life in trees - their hands and feet rarely touch the ground.)

The colobus monkeys will live indoors until the weather permits outdoor access. During the zoo season, guests can observe the troop on exhibit in the African Journey. The following six monkeys make up the zoo's colobus troop:

- adult male Finnigan
- adult female Jibini
- Jibini and Finnigan's one-year-old daughter Kaasidy
- Jibini and Finnigan's male newborn
- adult female Wamblenica
- Wamblenica and Finnigan's newborn (gender unknown)

Eagleson explains why the sex of the second colobus baby remains unknown. "We have yet to determine the gender of Wamblenica's baby because mom is extremely protective. Her baby clings tightly to her at all times and we've allowed Wamblenica some distance to avoid unintended stress on mother and baby." Eagleson states that the clinging behavior, which both colobus babies display, is one of the traits necessary to their survival in the wild. "If they don't cling right after birth, they don't survive. Mom moves very fast from tree to tree and the newborn holds on tight. The baby's all-white color is also important to their survival. It acts as camouflage so they can blend in with the white sections of mom's fur."

Jibini is no novice when it comes to motherhood. This is her second time giving birth at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. (Jibini and Finnigan welcomed Kaasidy on September 25, 2012.) Zoo keepers have observed that Jibini's maternal instinct has matured. Eagleson states that, "Jibini nursed right away with this baby, but she was more apprehensive with Kassidy. She appeared awkward holding Kaasidy in the first few days after birth and zoo keepers took turns displaying a proper holding behavior using a plush monkey toy. Eventually Jibini got the hang of it. This time around, she's an old pro."

Colobus monkeys live in the rain forests of central and eastern Africa. They grow into adept climbers despite their unique hand structure. Although it is common practice to reference the "opposable thumbs" of primates, colobus monkeys lack this feature and instead use their four full-sized fingers to form a hook that helps them grasp branches. In addition to climbing, colobus monkeys can leap from tree to tree by launching themselves from a high limb on one tree to a lower limb on another. Guests of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo can observe this behavior when the zoo opens on April 26.

The survival of colobus monkeys is threatened by habitat destruction. The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and participates in the Species Survival Plan to ensure genetically healthy populations of endangered and threatened animals.

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**About the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo:** The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is northeast Indiana's largest tourist attraction, hosting more than 500,000 guests annually. The zoo was voted Indiana's #1 "Gotta-Do Summer Attraction" and is consistently named one of the nation's **Top Ten Zoos for Kids** by national media outlets.

The zoo is a conservation leader, contributing more than \$80,000 annually to local, regional, and international efforts to protect wild animals and habitats, and participating in cooperative management programs for 15 endangered species.

As a self-supporting facility, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo receives no tax dollars for operations. The zoo's operations are funded entirely by earned revenue and donations.

The zoo opens for the 2014 season on April 26, 2014. Admission is \$14.00 for adults; \$10.50 for seniors age 60+; and \$9.00 for children ages 2-18. Babies age 1 and under and Zoo Society Members are admitted free.

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