



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos available to download at <http://kidszoo.org/the-baby-boom-continues/>

Zoo Hatches its First Crocodile Skink

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo welcomed a new addition on February 10 – a two-inch-long crocodile skink. It's the first time this lizard species has ever hatched at the zoo. The hatchling weighed two grams, approximately the weight of a pencil eraser.

This little crocodile skink came as a surprise to zoo keepers. Late last year, zoo keepers discovered that the zoo's two adult crocodile skinks had produced an egg in their exhibit at the Indonesian Rain Forest. Zoo keeper Dave Messmann accidentally disturbed the egg while cleaning the skinks' aquarium. "We were concerned about the disturbance. It's best practice to avoid moving a reptile egg," Messmann said. That's because if a reptile egg is disturbed, an air pocket inside the egg can shift, potentially causing the embryo to suffocate.

Hoping for the best, zoo keepers decided to incubate the egg by placing it in a deli tub filled with wet moss. The egg incubated at room temperature, undisturbed. After 60 days, the egg hatched.

Now thirty days old, the hatchling is developing normally. The gender is not yet known. Adult crocodile skinks are about eight inches long and weigh about one pound.

Crocodile skinks are native to New Guinea in Southeast Asia, where they inhabit moist areas along waterways. They are one of the few lizards that make sounds. Because they are secretive, little is known about them in the wild.

Zoo babies are sponsored by Lutheran Children's Hospital.

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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.