



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Red Panda Cub Born at Zoo

*To our friends in the media: We are giving mother and cub complete privacy at this time. No access is available for media to take photos or videos. A photo of Xiao carrying her cub, taken this morning, is attached.*

A red panda cub was born at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo on June 3 to female Xiao (pronounced JOW), age 3, and her 4-year-old mate, Junjie.

This is the second litter of cubs to be born at the zoo since 1997. Two cubs were born to Xiao in 2012, but neither cub survived.

An endangered species, red pandas are difficult to breed and rear in captivity. About half of all cubs die within 30 days of birth. Only a few dozen red panda cubs are born in United States zoos each year.



"The next few weeks are critical to the cub's survival," said Central Zoo Area Manager Shelley Scherer. "Xiao is behaving just as we would expect, so we are cautiously optimistic."

Keepers conducted a brief health check on the cub this morning. The cub, whose gender is not known, weighed 117 grams and was vocalizing. Xiao frequently carries her cub among nest boxes in the exhibit, which is normal behavior.

Contact with Xiao and her cub is extremely limited to minimize stress on the mother and improve the cub's odds of survival. For now, the pathway in front of the red panda

exhibit is closed to zoo guests.

Red panda cubs are born blind and deaf. The mother spends nearly all her time nursing and grooming her cubs during the first week. The cubs remain in the nest until they are about three months old.

"If the cub survives, zoo guests are unlikely to see it outside of the nest box until sometime in August or September," said Scherer.

The breeding of red pandas is overseen by the Species Survival Plan (SSP), a program of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). The goal of the SSP is to maximize genetic diversity in captive populations of endangered animals.

Red pandas are native to the forested foothills of the Himalaya Mountains in China and Nepal, where they feed primarily on bamboo. Though they share a name with the famed black-and-white giant pandas, the two are not closely related. The name "panda" comes from the Nepalese word *ponya*, which means "bamboo-eater."

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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 \$50,000 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 is open April 20-October 13, 2013. Admission is \$13.50 for adults; \$10.50 for seniors age 60+; and \$8.50 for children ages 2-14. Babies age 1 and under and Zoo Society Members are admitted free.