

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

For immediate release | May 20, 2015
Media contact: Gigi Allanic, Alissa Wolken
206.548.2550 | woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org

Prickly porcupine born last week at Woodland Park Zoo *Press invited to a weigh-in session*

WHAT: Woodland Park Zoo welcomed a prickly arrival on May 15 with the birth of a North American porcupine. The press is invited behind the scenes to a weigh-in session for the newborn. At birth, the baby porcupine weighed just over a pound.



The baby porcupine, known as a *porcupette*, marks the third birth for parents Molly and Oliver, both 4 years old. The gender is still unknown because of difficulty determining the gender of newborn porcupines.

Mom and her porcupette currently spend most of their time in an off-view den in the award-winning Northern Trail exhibit with access to the public exhibit. Zookeepers anticipate the porcupette will begin venturing into the public exhibit on its own by about 2 weeks old; guests can see the mom going back and forth between the den and public exhibit. In the wild, female porcupines leave their babies during the day and usually nurse them once in the evening.

Porcupettes become active quickly and, as natural tree dwellers, their climbing instincts take hold within weeks of birth. Climbing makes foraging easier on the young, a skill set they exercise early in their development as they wean themselves from mom and transition to an herbivorous diet of leaves, twigs and bark. Zoo guests will begin seeing the porcupette more frequently on exhibit as it becomes more active and curious.

WHEN: **Thursday, May 21, 11:00-11:15 a.m.**

WHERE: Behind the scenes at the Northern Trail exhibit. Meet PR staff at the West Entrance at Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55th & N. 56th Sts. Park in the Penguin Lot at N. 55th St. & Phinney Ave. N. or Otter Lot off N. 59th St. & Phinney Ave. N. Escort to the maternity den is required.

INFO: Porcupettes are born with full coats and opened eyes, unlike many of their rodent counterparts. Within hours of birth their soft coat of quills begins to harden, immediately preparing them for protection from predators. They become active quickly and, as natural tree dwellers, their climbing instincts take hold within weeks of delivery.

A female porcupine born last year at Woodland Park Zoo, did a star turn in the zoo's most viewed video of 2014. See "Tubby Baby Porcupette Chews on Sticks at Woodland Park Zoo": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMzCiOn8Drs>. She is currently among the zoo's presentation animals and will be seen in the near future during up-close animal encounters for zoo guests.

Summer zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. For information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

###