

## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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Media contact: Gigi Allanic, Alissa Wolken  
206.548.2550 | [woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org](mailto:woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org)

### **New otter pups ready to make their big splash *Pups getting bolder and venturing outdoors***

**WHAT:** *Oh my gosh, OTTER TIME!* Woodland Park Zoo's 3-month-old otter pups are spending more time in the outdoor exhibit and charming visitors with their irresistible splashing, tumbling and playing.

The press is invited to an outdoor session to meet the four Asian small-clawed otter pups and their family on **Monday, March 6, 1:00 p.m.**

The pups go outdoors every day. While they aren't on a regular schedule yet, they're getting bigger and bolder and spending more time outdoors with mom, pop and three older sisters that were born in 2014.

The otter pups, three boys and a girl, were born December 9 to 7-year-old mother Teratai (pronounced *tear-a-tie*) and 11-year-old father Guntur (pronounced *goon-toor*). They currently range in weight between 2.4 and 3 pounds.

As very social and gregarious animals, the entire family takes part in taking care of the pups—feeding them fish, teaching them how to swim, and leading them throughout the varied terrain of the exhibit. The parents and zoo staff are keeping a very sharp eye on the pups until they are fully capable of swimming independently.

The pups are nearly weaned and eating a solid diet of chopped smelt and capelin. They enjoy wrestling, are mimicking adult behaviors such as rolling in wood shavings and mulch to dry their coats, and are trying to help collect nesting materials.

**WHEN:** **Monday, March 6, 1:00-1:30 p.m.**

**WHERE:** Otter exhibit at Banyan Wilds. Meet PR staff at the West Entrance at Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55<sup>th</sup> & N. 56<sup>th</sup> Sts.

**INFO:** Asian small-clawed otters are the smallest otters among the 13 otter species. They are markedly more vocal than most otter species with at least 12 different vocalizations, including whistles, buzzes, twitters, chirps or staccato chuckles. The species ranges throughout southern and southeastern Asia, including areas of India, Indonesian islands, Malaysia, Southeast Asia, Taiwan, southern China and Palawan in the Philippines.

With rapidly declining habitat, range and population, the species moved from near threatened status in 2004 to the more serious vulnerable category in 2008. The population in the wild is unknown, with some estimates at 5,000 and others at far fewer.

Woodland Park Zoo is also home to North American river otters, the focal species of a field study launched last year, [River Otters of Western Washington: Sentinels of Ecological Health](#). The study focuses on otter population biology and their contaminant loads along the length of the Green-Duwamish River. The community can contribute to the study as *otter spotters*



to help collect information on North American river otters, which are virtually unstudied in Washington waters.

Zoo winter hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily. For information or to become a zoo member, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) or call 206.548.2500.

Free Wi-Fi is available throughout the zoo for zoo guests, made possible through products donated by Cisco.

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