

## Sloth bear cubs take their first steps outdoors

SEATTLE—Over the past few months, Woodland Park Zoo has shared maternity den cam footage of its 13-week-old male sloth bear cubs as they've grown bigger and bigger. Now, the zoo is excited to announce that the cubs and mom, Tasha, have taken their first steps out on exhibit! **See photos of the cubs on exhibit here: <https://bit.ly/2IUqt4x>.**



"We're very excited to see Tasha and her cubs out on exhibit," said Pat Owen, animal care manager at Woodland Park Zoo. "The fact that they've started to go outside the maternity den and explore is a good indicator the cubs are healthy and thriving. At this time, the cubs and mom are still exploring and adjusting to their new surroundings. They will still have access to the off-view maternity den as they make this transition." The viewing schedule is currently irregular until the cubs begin spending more time outdoors.

The two male cubs, born December 27, 2017, are the offspring of 13-year-old mother Tasha and 17-year-old father Bhutan (boo-tahn).

Sloth bears are found in the lower elevations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. There are currently less than 10,000 remaining in the wild. Their survival is challenged by fragmented populations, competition with other animals (particularly humans) for space and food, deforestation, and the bear parts trade for use in traditional Asian medicines. For over 400 years sloth bears were targeted for human exploitation to perform as "dancing bears;" in 2009, the last dancing bear in India was released. Woodland Park Zoo is a participant in the sloth bear Species Survival Plan (SSP), a cooperative breeding program under the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) that ensures genetic diversity and demographic stability among North American zoos. Prior to these cubs, Woodland Park Zoo had five sloth bear births; two sets of twins and one cub which did not survive.

Woodland Park Zoo supports Wildlife SOS in their sloth bear maternal and day denning research project focused on sloth bears in the wild and in zoos. The project aims to learn more about day dens (used by sloth bears as a place to rest in safety during daylight hours), and the maternal dens used to give birth to and raise cubs.

Woodland Park Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums and certified by the rigorous American Humane Conservation program. The Humane Certified™ seal of approval is another important validation of the zoo's long-standing tradition of meeting the highest standards in animal welfare. Woodland Park Zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats through more than 35 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. By inspiring people to care and act, Woodland Park Zoo is making a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Free Wi-Fi is available for zoo guests, made possible through products donated by Cisco. Visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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