

## PRESS RELEASE

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Editor note: See new video of the cubs at <https://bit.ly/2xdICzl>

### Cuteness for the week: red panda cubs begin stepping outside of den

SEATTLE—Twin red panda cubs have reached another milestone: stepping outside of their den and exploring their bedroom! The sisters, named Zeya (ZAY-uh) and Ila (EE-la), were born June 19 to mom Hazel and dad Yukiko at Woodland Park Zoo. They represent the first successful birth of red pandas at the zoo in 29 years.



The 2½-month-old cubs, which currently weigh 4 pounds each, and Hazel have been living off public view in an indoor, climate-controlled space where the first-time mom can nurse and bond in a quiet environment. A camera in the den has allowed animal care staff to monitor the family to ensure the cubs are thriving and mom is providing appropriate care; human contact has been minimal except for neonatal exams as part of the zoo's exemplary animal welfare program.

During quick wellness checks on the new family, the animal keepers caught the first sightings of the cubs venturing outside of the den and exploring the bedroom. "This is very exciting to see our cubs beginning to explore outside of their den. We can't confirm how much time they're spending in the bedroom, but we suspect they're most active outside the den during nighttime," said Mark Myers, a curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "This indicates they're meeting important milestones in their development by increasing their mobility skills, curiosity and navigation within their surroundings. These skills will serve them well when they are introduced to the outdoor exhibit."

The zoo anticipates putting Hazel, Zeya and Ila in the outdoor public exhibit by mid-October/November. Guests to the zoo can see the zoo's other red panda, a 4-year-old male named Carson, in the Wildlife Survival Zone.

Red pandas share the name of giant pandas, but more closely resemble raccoons. Recent studies suggest they are closely related to skunks, weasels and raccoons. An endangered species, fewer than 10,000 red pandas remain in their native habitat of bamboo forests in China, the Himalayas and Myanmar, and share part of their range with giant pandas. Their numbers are declining due to deforestation, increased agriculture and cattle grazing, and continuing pressure from growing local populations.

Woodland Park Zoo supports the [Red Panda Network](#), whose multi-prong approach aims to conserve this flagship species in Nepal. Help support the project by adopting a red panda through the zoo's [ZooParent Adoption Program](#).

Zoo hours through September 30 are 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) or call 206.548.2500.

Founded in 1899, 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 30 field projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Each year, the zoo engages more than a million visitors of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and walks of life in extraordinary experiences with animals, inspiring them to make conservation a priority in their lives and a difference in our planet's future ecological health and sustainability. Visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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