

PRESS RELEASE

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Editor note: Download photos of red panda cubs here: <https://bit.ly/2q3EwG1>
Credit: Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren/Woodland Park Zoo

Pumpkins and pandas! *Twin red panda cubs turn 4 months old today!*

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's twin red pandas are 4 months old today and are exploring their outdoor backyard. With Halloween around the corner, the cubs were treated to their first playtime with pumpkins!

The sisters, named Zeya (ZAY-uh) and Ila (EE-la), were born June 19 to mom Hazel and dad Yukiko. They represent the first successful birth of red pandas at the zoo in 29 years.

Zeya and Ila, who currently weigh 7 pounds each, have been living with mom 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 and quick wellness checks as part of the zoo's exemplary animal welfare program.

Over the last week, Hazel and her cubs have been given daily access to their outdoor yard each morning so the cubs can begin to climb trees, lie in their elevated hammock and enjoy the beautiful Seattle fall weather.

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

"This is very exciting to see our cubs graduate to the next stage of their development in their outdoor yard," said Mark Myers, a curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "While they sometimes decide to sleep in, they are usually exploring their yard by mid-morning. They have demonstrated great motor skills and agility so far, always under the watchful eyes of Hazel."

Hazel and Yukiko were paired under the Red Panda Species Survival Plan, a conservation breeding program across accredited zoos to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of red pandas. The Species Survival Plan recommends another breeding between the adult pair; in January, Hazel will return to the off-view enclosure to join Yukiko. In zoos and in their natural range, red pandas breed once yearly.

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](#).

Fall/winter zoo hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily through April 30. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit 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 and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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