

## PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

For immediate release | November 13, 2018

Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Meghan Sawyer

206.548.2550 | [woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org](mailto:woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org)

### **Press preview of red panda cubs *Twin sisters to make public debut on November 23***

**WHAT:** The press is invited for a sneak peek of Woodland Park Zoo's twin red panda cubs. Since their birth in June, the sisters Zeya (ZAY-uh) and Ila (EE-la) have been living off public view with mom Hazel in an indoor, climate-controlled space.



The zoo plans to introduce Hazel and her cubs to zoo guests in the public outdoor exhibit on Friday, November 23. Over the past few weeks, the cubs have had daily access to their outdoor yard as they continue to develop their motor skills and agility, including climbing trees and lying in an elevated hammock.

Carson, a 4-year-old male red panda who currently lives in the Wildlife Survival Zone, will change places and be moved to the off-view enclosure until next summer.

The cubs 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. The dad lives in a separate off-view enclosure.

**WHEN:** **Press preview: Wednesday, November 14, 10:00–11:30 a.m.**  
**Public debut: Friday, November 23**

**WHERE:** Behind the scenes at red panda enclosure. 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.

**INFO:** 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](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](#).

###