

Two final weeks to say goodbye to Woodland Park Zoo's adorable twin red pandas!

9-month-old Zeya and Ila moving to new homes at different zoos

Woodland Park Zoo's beloved twin red pandas Zeya (ZAY-uh) and Ila (EE-la) are getting ready to move to their new homes, so now is the time to visit the playful pair before they go! The last day to see the twins is **Sunday, April 14.**



Zeya and Ila were born to mom Hazel and dad Yukiko in June 2018. They made their public debut last fall and have stolen the hearts of countless zoo guests and the community. It's now time for them to embark on the next steps in their journey.

"The twins are reaching the age of natural separation and are beginning to show signs of wanting to be separated from each other. To ensure their well-being, we follow their behavioral cues," said Mark Myers, an animal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "Separating them in a couple of weeks will allow us to adequately prepare them for the move to their new homes."

Zeya is heading to Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Zoo & Adventure Park in Green Bay, Wis., and Ila is moving to Toronto Zoo in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

The move is under the breeding recommendation of the Red Panda Species Survival Plan. Parents Hazel and Yukiko were also paired under the plan. Accredited zoos across the world take part in this conservation breeding program to ensure a healthy and self-sustaining population of red pandas. "We're now trying to breed Hazel and Yukiko again, so the goal is to have more red panda cubs this year," said Myers.

Red pandas reach sexual maturity at about 18 months of age. In zoos and in nature, red pandas breed once a year. Cubs naturally separate from their mother at around 10 months of age, and 9-month-old Zeya and Ila are preparing to move where they will be introduced to males for future breeding.

As Zeya and Ila get ready for their upcoming moves, they will be taken off public view and Carson, the zoo's 4-year-old male red panda, will be placed in the public exhibit. "

Zeya and Ila's birth was the first successful red panda birth at Woodland Park Zoo in 29 years. They spent the first few months of their lives away from the public eye while bonding with mom Hazel and learning to explore their outdoor area. When the sisters became adept at climbing, they moved to their current public outdoor exhibit where guests have enjoyed seeing them either playfully pouncing from branch to branch or snoozing high up in the trees.

"It's been so special having the twins here at the zoo and watching them mature," said Woodland Park Zoo animal keeper Jamie Delk, who helps take care of Zeya and Ila. "It feels like just last week they were opening their eyes for the first time—they've grown so fast!"

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 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. The zoo is helping to save animals and their habitats in the wild through more than 35 wildlife conservation projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world. 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. Visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

###