

## **You otter know! Zoo's otter pups now have names 3-month-old pups healthy, thriving and diving!**

Woodland Park Zoo's otterly adorable North American river otter pups officially have names! The two boys are named Tucker and Nooksack, and the two girls are named Piper and Tahu.



Nooksack, Piper, and Tahu were thoughtfully named by three families who are great friends of the zoo, and Tucker's name was voted on by zoo-goers that attended the zoo's Bear Affair: Living Northwest Conservation Day over the weekend.

Swimming doesn't come naturally to otters, so first-time mom Valkyrie has been a phenomenal teacher, masterfully showing her babies the ins and outs of navigating the water in their exhibit's pool. The precious pups are now mastering the art of diving! With four pups to teach at once, that's no easy feat. The babies quickly took to the water, and their initial splashing and paddling has now blossomed into graceful diving and gliding through the pool.

All four otter pups and mom Valkyrie are in their outdoor habitat located at Northern Trail daily between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If they're not visible, they're most likely napping — all that swimming can really wear a pup out!

The four pups were born in March and are just shy of 3 months old, and are all still nursing with their mom. Their current weights are between 4 and 6 pounds each. The pups are the first offspring for mom Valkyrie and dad Ziggy, both 5 years old, and it's also the first-ever documented river otter birth in Woodland Park Zoo's 119-year history.

North American river otters are semi-aquatic members of the weasel family. Their habitat ranges over most of North America in coastal areas, estuaries, freshwater lakes, streams and rivers; they can be found in water systems all over Washington state. River otters consume a wide variety of prey such as fish, crayfish, amphibians and birds. At the top of the food chain, river otters are an excellent reflection of the health of local ecosystems.

All otter species are considered threatened while five of the 13 species are endangered due to water pollution, overfishing of commercial stock and habitat destruction. To help Woodland Park Zoo contribute information to

sustainable breeding, husbandry and public awareness of the river otter, adopt the species through the zoo's [ZooParent](#) program.

In addition to river otters, the award-winning Northern Trail habitat is home to grizzlies, elk, gray wolves, mountain goats and Steller's sea eagles. The Northern Trail will be reimagined through the lens of the Pacific Northwest's exceptional ecosystem and will open in 2020 as Living Northwest. Funds raised through the Living Northwest Initiative will create a new exhibit experience that will be a revitalization of the Northern Trail and will become a hub for engaging zoo guests and community members around discovery, species recovery, human-wildlife coexistence, and saving the wildlife and ecosystems right here at home for the benefit of every species. To donate to the Living Northwest Initiative, visit [zoo.org/donate](http://zoo.org/donate).

Spring/summer hours through September 2: 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily.  
September 3 through September 30: 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. 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 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](http://www.zoo.org) and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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