

PRESS RELEASE

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Editor note: For photos, visit <http://bit.ly/symbolofhope>

Two white-naped cranes hatch at Woodland Park Zoo ***Chicks mark the first hatching of the vulnerable species for the zoo***

SEATTLE—For the first time in Woodland Park Zoo's 119-year history, a pair of white-naped cranes have successfully hatched. The chicks hatched July 9 and 10, and are the first offspring for 8-year-old mom Laura and 9-year-old dad Cal. The sex of the unnamed chicks has not yet been determined.



See and celebrate the white-naped crane chicks at Woodland Park Zoo's **Wild Asia: Asian Wildlife Conservation Day, Saturday, August 10, 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** Learn how to make choices and take action to help save cranes, Malayan tigers, greater one-horned rhinos, orangutans, tree kangaroos and other endangered species native to Asia.

The zoo has had white-naped cranes for around 30 years, but none successfully produced offspring until now. The new parents have been at the zoo for five years.

"This is such a significant hatching and a symbol of hope for the vulnerable species," said Mark Myers, bird curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "The successful breeding and hatching are attributed to the bond between the parents, the quality of their habitat, and the expert day-to-day care and dedication provided by our animal keepers. We're very proud of our team and our new parents."

According to Myers, cranes are monogamous and can be very picky when choosing a mate. "Even the slightest incompatibility between two birds can prevent successful breeding; they will only breed once a strong pair bond is formed between them. Even then, it can take several years to solidify that bond," explained Myers.

Parents Cal and Laura were paired on a recommendation from the White-Naped Crane Species Survival Plan, a cooperative conservation breeding program to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of white-naped cranes in zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. There are currently fewer than 75 white-naped cranes in the program. This successful hatching has augmented the numbers of this long-lived species.

Cranes are renowned for their spectacular and elaborate courtship dances. They gracefully circle each other while leaping and calling, head-bobbing toward one another and bowing with spread wings. These dances continue throughout the year as the birds continually reinforce their pair bonds.

Given the delicate nature of requisites to form a productive bond between birds, coupled with the continued loss of suitable habitat throughout the world, cranes are one of the most endangered families of birds.

White-naped cranes—which can grow to more than 4 feet tall—are native to northern Mongolia, southern Siberia, Korea, Japan and central China. It is the only crane species with pinkish legs and a dark gray and white striped neck. The back of its neck, including the top of the head and the nape, are white and its eyes are surrounded by a distinctive red face patch.

Woodland Park Zoo proudly works with [Muraviovka Park](#) in Russia's Amur River Basin and the International Crane Foundation as Conservation Partners. These groups protect critical habitats for several species of threatened or endangered cranes including the white-naped crane.

Woodland Park Zoo participates in 111 Species Survival Plans, overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. Led by experts in husbandry, nutrition, veterinary care, behavior, and genetics, these plans also involve a variety of other collaborative conservation activities such as research, public education, reintroduction and field projects.

Support these projects and the zoo's other conservation programs by going to www.zoo.org/conservation or visiting the zoo's white-naped crane chicks. Every visit supports Woodland Park Zoo's exemplary animal care program, wildlife conservation projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world, and extraordinary experiences that inspire and empower guests to stand up for wildlife.

For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500.

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.

Admission through September 30: Adult (13-64) \$22.95; Child (3-12) \$13.95; Toddler (0-2) Free. Active, retired, and veteran U.S. military and their families, seniors and people with disabilities receive a discount. Zoo members receive free zoo admission year round. Parking: \$6 plus applicable state and local taxes.

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](#).

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