

PRESS RELEASE

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Baby boom! Zoo celebrates birth of red panda twins

SEATTLE — Oh baby! Add two more precious newborns to the list of recent Woodland Park Zoo offspring — a healthy set of red panda twins was just born! The twins were born May 25 to mom Hazel and dad Yukiko.



The zoo has seen a number of adorable animals born and hatched recently, including gorilla Kitoko born in March, penguin chicks and scaly-sided mergansers hatched, agouti pups born in April, a pudu fawn and mountain goat both born in May, and wallaroo and wallaby joeys that are just now venturing outside of their moms' pouches!

The red panda twins are the first born at the zoo since 2018, when Hazel and Yukiko gave birth to a set of female twins which were the first red pandas born at the zoo in nearly three decades.

Within 48 hours of the red pandas' birth, zoo veterinary staff conducted a neonatal exam to ensure the health of the newborns. The sex of the twins has not been confirmed yet, but will be in later exams. The hours-old babies weighed just under 6 ounces, about the weight of a cube of butter!

"The first month after birth is a time where we need to monitor the cubs closely," explained Woodland Park Zoo animal curator Mark Myers. "Red pandas are extremely small, helpless and blind when they are born, relying entirely on their mother for care. At first, they don't do much aside from nursing and sleeping, but at about 3 weeks old they will start to open their eyes."

After their initial exam, the twins were placed back with their mother inside their den. The parents have been living in off-view indoor and outdoor exhibits. Hazel gave birth in an indoor, climate-controlled den where she is caring for her cubs.

Hazel arrived at Woodland Park Zoo in 2017 to be paired with Yukiko under the Red Panda Species Survival Plan (SSP), a conservation breeding program across accredited zoos to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of red pandas.

While red pandas share the name of giant pandas, and closely resemble raccoons, they are currently classified in their own family, Ailuridae.

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. Population numbers continue to decline due to deforestation, increased agriculture and cattle grazing, and continuing pressure from growing local populations. Additionally, red pandas are often poached for their unique pelts.

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](#).

To learn more about Woodland Park Zoo or to become a member, visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

SUPPORT YOUR ZOO

Please visit zoo.org/relief to help support the animals at Woodland Park Zoo.

Open or closed, the zoo's dedicated animal care and veterinary teams work around the clock to provide exemplary care to the zoo's nearly 1,000 animals. Right now there is an urgent need for resources to continue providing this extraordinary care. As a non-profit organization, the zoo is relying on the community now more than ever to help these wonderful animals continue to thrive. Contributions both big and small will help creatures of all sizes.

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