

PRESS RELEASE

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<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=3196&k=5050729f17>

Password: tapir

Joyful news: tapir Ulan gives birth for the first time *#SeattleWatermelon: It's a girl!*

SEATTLE—*Pull out the picnic basket—it's watermelon time!* On June 10 at approximately 9:30 p.m., Woodland Park Zoo's Malayan tapir, Ulan (OO-lawn, like Mulan), gave birth to her first baby, a girl. The last tapir born at the zoo was in 2007.



Why watermelon? Because a newborn tapir looks like a watermelon on legs due to its reddish-brown coat dappled with white and cream-colored spots and stripes! This color pattern works wonders as camouflage in bamboo or reed jungles. The striped pattern begins to fade after a few months and the calf begins to look like a miniature adult at about 5 to 8 months old.

Follow the journey of Ulan and her new baby at <https://www.zoo.org/tapir>

The gestation period for tapirs is approximately 13 months; the average weight for calves at birth is 22 pounds. Calves are born with their eyes open and can stand within one or two hours after birth.

The tapir calf is the first offspring between 8-year-old Ulan and 20-year-old Bintang. The father was born at Woodland Park Zoo and has sired two offspring when he lived at other zoos; Bintang returned to Woodland Park Zoo in 2014.

"These 'watermelons on four legs' are irresistible," said Kevin Murphy, an animal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "It will be curiously fun to watch her explore the public habitat, which we did our best to tapir baby-proof to minimize any risks. We can't wait to share our baby tapir with our community when we reopen."

The zoo's veterinary team performed a neonatal exam on the newborn tapir. "The baby's vital signs, including heart, lungs and eyes, all look good. She appears to be strong and weighed in at a healthy 18 pounds," said Dr. Sally Nofs, associate veterinarian at Woodland Park Zoo. "So far Ulan is showing attentive maternal care. Mom and baby are bonding and the baby is nursing appropriately."

Animal care staff will continue to closely monitor Ulan and her baby to make sure developmental milestones are reached. They will maintain the calf indoors for the first week of her life. Following that, she will be introduced gradually to the outdoor habitats as soon as it is warm enough and dry.

Ulan and Bintang were paired for breeding under the Malayan Tapir Species Survival Plan, which is a cooperative, conservation breeding program across accredited zoos to help ensure a healthy, self-sustaining population of tapirs.

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.

Fascinating facts about tapirs

- Tapirs are among the most primitive large mammals in the world, changing little in appearance for millions of years. This prehistoric-looking animal looks like a massive pig with a long snout. Because they have an odd number of toes (four toes on each front foot, three on each back foot), their closest relatives are horses and rhinos.
- Tapirs are great, fast swimmers. They often use their trunk-like snout like a snorkel!
- Malayan tapirs are the largest of the four species of tapirs and are fairly rare in zoos in North America. Only 39 Malayan tapirs currently live in North American zoos.
- Tapirs are highly endangered in the wild. The Malayan tapir ranges in Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra and Myanmar. The other three species are found in Central and South America. Fewer than 2,500 Malayan tapirs remain in the wild.
- Woodland Park Zoo partners with conservation projects in [Peninsular Malaysia](#) and Sumatra, where tapirs are found. One of the greatest threats to tapirs is loss of habitat. By protecting land for tigers, orangutans and hornbills, the zoo is also protecting land for tapirs. Protect tapirs and the forests they live in by making informed purchasing decisions and buying products with certified [sustainable palm oil](#).

Where to see the tapirs

When the zoo reopens, the tapirs can be found during regular zoo hours at the Trail of Vines.

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

While the zoo is temporarily closed to the public, the exceptional animal care and veterinary teams, and other staff continue to work to provide dedicated care to more than 900 animals. 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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