

Press invited for a sneak peek of sloth bear cubs

WHAT: Twin sloth bears, a boy and girl, entered the world on New Year's Day at Woodland Park Zoo. The press is invited Tuesday, April 19, for an exclusive peek at the new family before they make their debut to the public.

The 3-month-old cubs, which currently weigh about 11 pounds, were born to first-time mom Kushali (kuu-SHAW-lee) and dad Bhutan (boo-TAHN). Because sloth bears are solitary animals (except for mating and mom and cubs), dad lives separately from them.

Since their birth, the cubs have been living in a maternity den. Here and in an outdoor enclosure, they are thriving and learning bear skills from mom; the den and outdoor enclosure are both off view to the public.

The cubs, which are not named yet, will nurse until they're about a year old; they're sampling solid foods including omnivore chow, honey, browse plants, eggs, a variety of fruits and vegetables and bug treats.

WHEN: **Tuesday, April 19, 10:00–10:30 a.m.** (Note: This is a very restricted timeframe, so late arrivals can't be accommodated.)

WHERE: Behind the scenes: sloth bear exhibit. Meet PR staff at the West Entrance on Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55th & N. 56th Sts. The closest access to the West Entrance is through the Otter parking lot which can be accessed through the Penguin lot on Phinney Ave N. or the Bear parking lot off N. 59th St. & Phinney Ave. N.

INFO: Once the cubs are officially on public view at Banyan Wilds, zoo-goers will be able to see the cubs climbing, playing and piggy backing on mom. Among all bear species, sloth bears are the only moms that carry their cubs on their back; the cubs will ride her until they're 6 to 9 months old.

To improve the welfare for the bears, upgrades were recently made to the exhibit such as artificial climbing structures for the rambunctious cubs to climb, jump and rest. The elevated structures will also offer guests a better view of the bears, even while they're sleeping.

About Sloth Bears

- Sloth bears live in forests and grasslands in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- Adult sloth bears are missing their top two front teeth (incisors), which lets them suck ants and termites right out of their underground tunnels, like a vacuum cleaner! Their shaggy, dusty, black coats deflect sunlight, protecting them from the extremes of tropical heat. No wonder they're fondly described as shaggy slurpers!
- Sloth bears forage for termites, grubs and other insects; they also eat grass, flowers, fruit, and honey plus occasional eggs and cultivated crops. At the zoo, they eat insects, honey, fruits and vegetables, eggs and omnivore chow.

Bear Necessities

- Sloth bears are a vulnerable species. Their survival is challenged by conflicts with humans and animals for space and food caused by



deforestation, the bear parts trade for use in traditional Asian medicines and fragmented populations.

- In honor of the new cubs, become a ZooParent! The [ZooParent](#) program supports the zoo's animal care, education, and wildlife conservation in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.
- Woodland Park Zoo supports Wildlife SOS, a conservation organization in India that runs wildlife rescue centers and helps communities coexist with sloth bears and other native species. Visit www.zoo.org/donate to support Wildlife SOS.
- Buy wisely. Choose [Forest Stewardship Council](#) (FSC) certified paper and wood products to protect forest habitat and wildlife.

Woodland Park Zoo offers a safe, outdoor experience for all. Visit zoo.org for information. Zoo hours: 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. daily through April 30; 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily starting May 1.

For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500. Follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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