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password: bears

It's Earth Day and sloth bear cubs have names

SEATTLE—Just in time for Earth Day, the names for Woodland Park Zoo's brother and sister sloth bear cubs are in!

Drum roll, please...the name for the boy sloth bear cub is **Madhu** (muh-DOO), which means "sweet, honey," and **Lila** (LEE-lah), which means "play, amusement." Both names are Hindi to represent India, one of several countries where sloth bears live.

Madhu was named through a community poll and Lila by special friends of the zoo. "Our family has enjoyed and supported Woodland Park Zoo for many years. We visited the zoo as children and now we can share our love for animals and conservation with our eight grandchildren," said Diane Shrewsbury, a long-time supporter, volunteer and Board member of Woodland Park Zoo. "We are honored to have the opportunity to name a sloth bear cub. Our hope is to leave behind a better place for future generations and protect all living creatures."

The brother and sister duo were born on New Year's Day 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, Lila and Madhu had been living in an off-view maternity den, but recently have been enjoying short excursions in Banyan Wilds' public outdoor habitat. "Mom Kushali is steadily gaining confidence in being outdoors with her cubs, so initially they may only be out for short periods," said Kim Szawan, an animal care manager at Woodland Park Zoo. "As Kushali becomes more secure outdoors and the cubs gain more footing in navigating the outdoor habitat, visitors should be able to see the cubs increasingly more starting early next week. Meanwhile, the cubs are being cubs—adorable and mischievous!"

To improve the welfare for the sloth bears, upgrades were recently made to the exhibit such as artificial climbing structures for the rambunctious cubs to climb, jump and play. Among all bear species, sloth bears are the only moms that carry cubs on their back until the cubs are 6 to 9 months old.

Sloth bears live in forests and grasslands in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. A vulnerable species, the survival of sloth bears 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.

Earth Day is the perfect time to consider the numerous ways to help protect planet Earth. Here are several suggestions: participate in the annual [City Nature Challenge](#), [discover, recover and coexist with pollinators](#), become a [ZooParent](#) and [shop with animals in mind](#). Visit [here](#) to join Woodland Park Zoo for Earth Day.

Woodland Park Zoo offers a safe, outdoor experience for all. Visit www.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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