

## PRESS RELEASE

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Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Craig Newberry  
[woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org](mailto:woodlandparkzoopr@zoo.org)

### Media download link for video and photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=3670&k=bf935aa890>

Blog: <https://bit.ly/bearcubwelcome>

### **Zoo takes in orphaned brown bear cub from Alaska “Sassy” cub temporarily living in non-public area**

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo is *beary* excited to welcome an orphaned brown bear cub to its home and family. The female cub, who currently weighs 89 pounds, was found roaming alone on an air force base near Anchorage, Alaska. She traveled via Alaska Air Cargo and arrived at the zoo July 13.

The new cub, who has yet to be named, was born this past winter and is assumed to be a singleton. Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) had received multiple reports of sightings of the lone cub; once they confirmed the mom was nowhere to be found and the cub was too young to survive on her own, they moved forward to lure the bear to safety.

A culvert trap on a trailer bed was used. “Usually bears have a sweet tooth, so we tried drawing her in with glazed donuts. However, this cub showed no interest in the donuts—she only looked but wouldn’t enter. Fortunately, one of our agents had Vienna sausages in his lunch, so we used those as an attractant instead and she liked the sausages!” said Cory Stantorf, an assistant biologist in the Anchorage area for Alaska Department of Fish and Game. “From her outward appearance and reaction, she appeared to be in good health and had the attitude to back it up. She’s going to be a good bear for Woodland Park Zoo.”

ADFG brought the orphaned cub to Alaska Zoo, who provided her with care and a temporary home. Woodland Park Zoo had already been in communication with Alaska officials to offer a permanent home for a cub should such a situation arise. Unfortunately, the mom could have been hit by a vehicle, killed by another brown bear or killed illegally.

Stay tuned for updates on the cub at: [www.zoo.org/brownbear](http://www.zoo.org/brownbear).

Brown bears and grizzly bears belong to the same species, *Ursus arctos*, although the common name, “brown bear,” typically refers to a coastal bear, while “grizzly bear” usually refers to a (smaller) inland bear. Scientifically speaking, all grizzlies are brown bears, but not all brown bears are grizzlies. Meanwhile, American black bears are an entirely separate species (*Ursus americanus*), although some black bears do have brown fur!

The last time the zoo received brown bears was in 1994 when brothers Keema and Denali arrived as 10-month-old cubs from Washington State University Bear Center. Denali passed away in December 2020 just weeks shy of his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday due to geriatric age-related issues—leaving Keema as the zoo’s sole grizzly bear. Male grizzly bears have a median life expectancy of 21 years in human care and often less in the wild.

“It’s unfortunate when a wild cub loses its mother and becomes an orphan, especially because the cub learns so much about how to be a bear directly from its mother. We are grateful that we are in a position to take in another brown bear at this time and have the expertise and facility to do so,” said Kevin Murphy, interim senior director of Animal Management at Woodland Park Zoo. “I am told this cub is sassy and a spitfire. Her spirit will help make her a great addition to our zoo family. Brown bears are an iconic species, and this new cub is a symbol of hope to restore grizzlies in the North Cascades. We look forward to sharing our new cub with our community.”



At her new home, the cub will continue to receive excellent care in a naturalistic setting complete with a wealth of enrichment including a braided, flowing stream; a bear-sized swimming pool with live fish; exhibit “furniture” such as rocks for basking in the sun; tree stumps that make great scratching posts; browse and novel scents; and a quiet cave for winter naps.

Brown bears are generally solitary in nature but come together during mating season and in concentrated feeding areas such as at salmon spawning sites. The zoo’s new cub will live separately from Keema and will be on a rotational schedule once she’s ready to be introduced to the outdoor exhibit.

Over the next few weeks, the zoo’s animal keepers will focus on helping her settle into her new home, conducting behavioral training such as recall and shifting to various enclosures and outdoor yards, introducing her to a nutritious diet and getting her acquainted with her new caretakers.

Meanwhile, the zoo’s exhibits team will make modifications to the bear exhibit including baby proofing, refreshing safety barriers, and adding bear furniture, enrichment features and vegetation. “This is a very young, curious cub who’s going to explore every nook and cranny of the exhibit—areas that Keema hasn’t ventured into in recent years due to his age and reduced mobility and activity. We need to be prepared for this determined, rambunctious bear!” added Murphy.

Visitors can discover brown bears at the zoo’s Living Northwest Trail where they can be inspired to discover, recover and co-exist with local wildlife: #IAmLivingNorthwest.

Here in this region, Woodland Park Zoo is a proud member of the [Friends of the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Coalition](#). “Decades of effort and research make it clear that grizzlies—once a critical component of the North Cascades Ecosystem where they roamed for thousands of years—are now unable to recover without human assistance,” said Robert Long, PhD, director of Woodland Park Zoo’s Living Northwest Conservation Program and a carnivore research ecologist. “Grizzly recovery is not only logistically feasible and ecologically important but supported by most Washingtonians. It’s time to bring the grizzly back to the North Cascades.”

Woodland Park Zoo advocates for saving species and spaces around the Pacific Northwest through its [Living Northwest Program](#), including wolves, wolverines and many others. The recently reimagined Living Northwest Trail exhibit is home to the zoo’s brown bears, wolves and other native wildlife. The exhibit and its companion website, [“We Are Living Northwest,”](#) provide visitors with numerous conservation actions to take to help the species that share the region’s iconic landscapes. Anyone can share how they are living Northwest using #IAmLivingNorthwest on social media—they may even be featured on the website!

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