

## PRESS RELEASE

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

### Media link for video and photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=4180&k=0f28516a5a>

## **Bear cub Bowie ventures outdoors for the first time** ***Sloth bear makes public debut this weekend***

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's sloth bear cub, a 3-month-old girl named Bowie, will meet the public this weekend. Bowie, who shares the same birthday, January 8, as icon David Bowie, will be introduced to the outdoor habitat with her mom, Kushali (kuu-SHAW-lee). Outdoor time will be weather-dependent.

Bowie's public debut will be in time for the zoo's [Spring Spectacular](#), a day of family-friendly fun for all ages happening this Saturday, April 12.

Since she was born, Bowie has been living with mom in a maternity den away from visitors. Here in a private setting, she has been thriving and learning critical bear skills from mom.

Kushali and Bowie will be given the choice to go outdoors, so being visible to zoo guests will be unpredictable initially, explained Martin Ramirez, a mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "It will be up to mom when she wants to go in the outdoor habitat with Bowie. If Bowie doesn't go, Kushali will not go," said Ramirez.

"We know everyone's excited to meet our new cub in person—bear cubs are irresistible and playful. However, we'll all need to be patient as Bowie learns to navigate her way through new surroundings including a varied landscape. You may even see Bowie piggy backing on mom," added Ramirez. Transporting cubs on their back is a unique behavior among sloth bear mothers until the cubs are 6 to 9 months old.

Bowie will nurse until she's about a year old. "Bowie is having quite the culinary adventure sampling solid foods including omnivore chow, honey, browse plants, eggs, a variety of fruits and vegetables and bug treats. A couple weeks ago, Bowie let us know she's quite fond of watermelon!" said Ramirez.

Two other sloth bears currently live at the zoo: the dad of the cub, Bhutan (boo-TAHN); and Tasha, the mom of Kushali. Zoo guests can encounter sloth bears in Banyan Wilds which is also home to Malayan tigers, Asian small-clawed otters and a tropical aviary.

For updates on Bowie and other babies at the zoo, visit [www.zoo.org/zoobabies](http://www.zoo.org/zoobabies).

### **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.

### **Hope for Sloth Bears**

- A vulnerable species, sloth bears' 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.
- 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](http://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. By purchasing FSC-certified forest products, consumers help to protect sloth bear habitat by encouraging sustainable forestry and limiting overharvest of forest products (timber, fuelwood, fruits and honey). Without the FSC label, timber may come from illegal logging and forests that are not responsibly managed.

Zoo hours through April 30: 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. daily. Starting May 1: 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily. For admission prices and tickets, visit [www.zoo.org/visit](http://www.zoo.org/visit). To learn more about Woodland Park Zoo or to become a zoo member, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Bluesky](#) and [TikTok](#).

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