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SUMATRAN TIGER CRITICALLY ILL AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

Team of veterinarians and zookeepers providing round-the-clock care for Jaya

TACOMA, Wash. – Jaya, a 13-year-old female Sumatran tiger who has given birth to four litters of cubs at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, is critically ill.



“We are very concerned about Jaya,” said zoo head veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf. “Her liver and gastrointestinal tract aren’t functioning correctly and we are treating her for an aggressive bacterial infection.”

Jaya’s liver and gastrointestinal tract are inflamed and she stopped eating on Monday. In order to ensure Jaya receives

the necessary oral medication, fluids and nutrients, Wolf said, she needed to be anesthetized on Tuesday and remains in a medically-induced state of immobilization.

Jaya showed signs of illness last week and underwent anesthesia, when the zoo veterinary team learned of the disease in her liver. After she stopped eating, a further examination revealed a bacterial infection.

“When cats stop eating and aren’t very responsive, we know something is very wrong,” said Karen Goodrowe Beck, the zoo’s general curator. “Our veterinary and zoological staff are providing round-the-clock care for Jaya and consulting with veterinary experts during this critical time.”

To care for Jaya, zoo staff moved its hospital operation to her home quarters in the Asian Forest Sanctuary. There, a team of veterinarians and zookeepers will continue to monitor Jaya's vital signs, take blood samples, and administer medication around the clock over the next few days.

Sumatran tigers are critically endangered. In 2004, Jaya and her sister Suriya were the first of the species to arrive at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Today, the zoo is home to six Sumatran tigers, including Jaya's most recent litter of triplets – Kirana, Indah, and Dari – born in 2014. These cubs, along with cubs from three other litters, were part of the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' Sumatran Tiger Species Survival Plan®, a conservation breeding program to ensure a genetically diverse population of Sumatran tigers.

Jaya has been a “wonderful mother” who has made significant contributions to the population, said Goodrowe Beck, who is vice chair of the Sumatran Tiger Species Survival Plan® in North America.

Only about 300 tigers remain in the wild on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. There are about 70 in North American zoos.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).