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CLOUDED LEOPARD QUADRUPLETS ARE HEALTHY AND GROWING AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM
Rare Southeast Asian Cubs receiving round-the-clock care and feedings from zookeepers

TACOMA, Wash. - Four Clouded leopard cubs squirm and squeal and insistently make it known they're hungry. They eagerly latch on to the nipples of tiny bottles, quickly sucking down the nutritious formula that helps them grow.



The quadruplets, born at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, last week got their first official portraits on Sunday. Their eyes are still closed, and the practiced hands of caring zookeepers guide their eager mouths to the bottles.



It doesn't take long for them to drink their fill. The smallest of the cubs weighs just 11.11 ounces; the largest, 12.41. That's about the same weight as a box of corn flakes. Two of them will fit in the palms of a zookeeper's hands.

The quadruplets were born May 12 to Chai Li (pronounced Chai-Lye). Their father is her mate, Nah Fun (pronounced Nah Foon).

They are not yet on exhibit. The zoo will announce later this month when the public will be able to see them and reveal details on how and when they'll be named.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium staff biologist Andy Goldfarb, who has worked with exotic cats for three decades, is pleased with their progress.

"They are eating and gaining weight," he said. "All four are active and moving around well."

Caring for four clouded leopard cubs keeps zookeepers hopping. The tiny cubs require feeding about every three hours. And one feeding session for all four cubs takes about two hours. There is a lot of care besides giving bottles of formula that must be done for each cub, Goldfarb pointed out.

Hand raising cubs is routine in the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' Species Survival Plan® program for clouded leopards and produces



the best results for their health and well-being, zoo General Curator Karen Goodrowe Beck said.

Zookeepers ensure the little cats urinate and defecate following their feedings and provide the human touch and connection that will be important as they grow and move into other zoo-based populations.

Clouded leopards, named for their thundercloud markings, are so shy and elusive it's impossible to know how many of these arboreal cats remain in the wild. Fewer than 100 live in accredited North American zoos.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is a recognized global leader in Clouded leopard conservation. Grants from the Dr. Holly Reed Conservation Fund support clouded leopard research, education and anti-poaching work in Southeast Asia. Goldfarb and Goodrowe Beck make periodic trips to Thailand to help keepers at the Khao Kheow Open Zoo with a collaborative breeding project there.

"These cats are precious," Goldfarb says. "Clouded leopards are endangered, and there is constant pressure on the species from poaching, habitat loss and other human-animal conflict."

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo & aquarium, practices and 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).

Photo captions:

Top: Four clouded leopard cubs were born at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium on May 12. They are 5 days old in this photo, their first official portrait, taken on Sunday.

Middle: A cub is bottle fed from a small bottle with a nipple about the size of an eye dropper.

Bottom: Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Associate Veterinarian Dr. Allison Case listens to one of the cubs' heart during a feeding and care session at the zoo.

Photo credit: Ingrid Barrentine/Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium

Video link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/28se0011sb57m2u/clouded%20leopard%20cubs.mpeg?dl=0>