



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 28, 2016

WE'RE 'BLEATING' THE DRUMS WITH EXCITING NEWS: FEMALE NIGERIAN GOAT TWINS BORN IN KIDS' ZONE AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO & AQUARIUM

New arrivals bring the number of goats in the popular area for children to 17; visitors and others may vote on names for the two sisters beginning today

Tacoma, Wash. – There are two newborn kids on the block at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.



Nigerian Dwarf Goat Hazel gave birth to the female twins Friday afternoon in the Kids' Zone area of the zoo. Mother and kids are doing well and will be visible off and on throughout the day, said Jennifer Donovan, senior staff biologist.

This is the third birth for 4-year-old Hazel, who has been at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium for only a few months.

A 4-day-old

Nigerian dwarf goat nurses from her mother, Hazel, in the Kids' Zone area at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Twin sisters were born on Friday, June 24.

Her two 3-year-old offspring, Newman and Hanson, are among the herd of goats roaming the feeding, petting and grooming area at Kids' Zone.

"We're elated by the birth of these goats," Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium Land Animal Curator Natalie Davis said.



“Kids’ Zone is meant to instill children with a sense of wonderment about animals; help them gain an increased level of respect for all living things; and teach them about the need to protect and care for animals.”

And talk about an appropriate name!

The newborn goats, along with some recently acquired kids, bring a whole new meaning to the term “Kids’ Zone” at the zoo.

With the birth of the twin sisters, the Contact Junction portion of the child-friendly area is now home to 17 Nigerian dwarf goats.

Beginning today, zoo visitors and fans may go to www.pdza.org/babygoats to vote on names for the pair, each of which weighs only about 4 pounds.

Twin sister Nigerian dwarf goats – at just four days old – practice their climbing skills Tuesday on rocks in the Kids’ Zone area at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

The choices, submitted by Kids’ Zone staff members, are Opal and Agnes; Sugar and Spice; or Cora and Elsie. Voting will close on July 4 and the names will be announced a couple of days later. Today, the two little goats hopped and ran around the Kids’ Zone goat yard and practiced their climbing skills on a rock. Mom kept a close watch, and the babies periodically went over to her for a nuzzle or drink of milk.

The little animals are miniature dairy goats of West African origin. The species originally was imported to the United States in the 1930s.

They grow only to about 24 inches high and grow to weights upwards of 75 pounds.

Females can produce up to 1.5 quarts of milk daily with a butterfat content of 6 to 10 percent.

The Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium herd typifies the range of sizes among the species, with some goats on the smallish side and others a bit larger.

The gestation period for goats is 145 days, or just under five months. Twins are quite common among goat births, Donovan said. The goat herd fits in nicely with the Kids’ Zone mission of helping visitors – especially children – get closer to animals, learn more about them and participate in activities, she added.



What will their names be? The twin sister Nigerian dwarf goats born Friday have very different markings. Zoo visitors, Facebook fans and others can vote on names for the pair at www.pdza.org/babygoats beginning today. The choices are Opal and Agnes; Sugar and Spice; or Cora and Elsie. The top two vote-getters will be their names.

In the case of the goats, children learn to “care” for them in two ways. There’s the emotional connection of caring about another living thing, and there’s the hands-on participation of physically caring for the goats by giving them handfuls of feed or grooming them with brushes.

Kids’ Zone visitors may purchase small amounts of feed for the herd, and the animals will eat right out of their hands. Free goat grooming sessions are held from 11 a.m. to noon. daily.

In addition to goats, Kids’ Zone is home to mobs of meerkats, three species of lemurs, and a large assortment of other animals, including snakes, frogs, several species of tortoise, lizards, arachnids and small fish like piranha and African cichlids.

Stroll through Animal Avenue to see the meerkats, lemurs and many other animals. There’s also a large spider-web net play structure here, as well as a log to crawl through and other structures can climb and sit on.

The Kids’ Zone Magical Movement area features a playground with a dual slide and other equipment children can use to imitate the ways in which animals might sit, crawl, hop, jump, perch and twirl in the wild. There’s also a sprayground – just right for cooling off on warm summer days.

A visit to Kids’ Zone is free with admission to Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

The zoo is open from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

###

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).

Contacts:

Kris Sherman, 253-404-3800; 253-226-6718 or kris.sherman@pdza.org
Whitney DalBalcon, 253-404-3637 or whitney.dalbalcon@pdza.org