



## **NEWS RELEASE**

- For immediate release -

October 6, 2010

### ***Double the cuteness; double the fun! Two red panda cubs come out to play***

Calgary, AB – The two red panda cubs born on May 30 are ready to come out to play. The cubs – one male and one female – have been in the den area since their birth and have been completely raised by their mother Malikha.

“We’ve been monitoring the cubs’ growth and development at arms length,” said Tim Sinclair-Smith, Curator. “Malikha is an experienced mother and so we let her do her job, but its great that the cubs are now ready to venture out into the larger panda habitat.”

The cubs are quite helpless at birth and typically remain in the den until they are able to get around almost as well as an adult animal.

“They are very entertaining to watch as they play together and seem to have quite different personalities,” added Sinclair-Smith. “The boy is quite a character and the little girl is more laid back which makes them pretty easy to tell apart.”

#### **Cub Naming:**

The public will be able to help the zoo name the red panda cubs by going to the Calgary Zoo website. **Starting Thursday, October 7**, go to [www.calgaryzoo.org](http://www.calgaryzoo.org) and click on “**Name the Red Panda Cubs**” on the main page to go to the name options page and cast a vote for your favourite name for both cubs. The voting will continue for two weeks at which time the names will be announced on the zoo’s website and Facebook page.

**Background:**

Red pandas are part of a Species Survival Plan managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The mother, Malikha, came to the Calgary Zoo from the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden in Ohio on September 28, 2005 and the cubs' father, Zeyar, came from Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg, Manitoba on October 1, 2008 – both transfers as part of breeding recommendations from the AZA Species Survival Plan. Red pandas reach maturity at about 18 months of age.

These two cubs increase the number of successful red panda births at the Calgary Zoo to eleven since 1994 and the current red panda population at the zoo to six. The other four pandas are: a senior male Kachin who at 15 years old receives extra attention daily from the veterinary team and keepers to monitor his special geriatric needs; Ketu a one-year-old female; the cub's father Zeyar age 3; and their mother Malikha age 6.

In the wild, red panda survival is threatened by habitat loss, fragmentation of populations due to deforestation, poaching, and genetic problems due to inbreeding. While it is difficult to obtain an accurate census, the red panda population is currently estimated at fewer than 10,000 mature individuals.

**Media Information:**

**WHAT: Debut of red panda cubs born May 30**  
**WHEN: Thursday, October 7, 2010 at 11:00 a.m.**  
**WHERE: Red Panda exhibit**  
**WHO: Tim Sinclair-Smith, Curator**

**Note: Please check in at Zoo Security and proceed to the Red Panda exhibit – it will take about 5 minutes to walk there.**

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*The Calgary Zoo is part of a professional, accredited association and member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums (CAZA) comprised of caring, trusted experts committed to ensuring that many endangered and threatened species are part of the world's future. AZA and CAZA advocate on behalf of animals with a unified and consistent voice, and collaborate with others committed to their long-term survival. The Calgary Zoo participates in many Species Survival Plans (SSP), a network among accredited institutions designed to breed endangered species in captivity to ensure the best possible genetic diversity and maintain healthy populations in human care. Through our conservation, education and research programs, many animals in our care play an essential role in the survival of their species in the wild.*

*The Calgary Zoological Society is a charitable organization. Charitable Registration #118824192 RR0001*

