



Press Release
For Immediate Release
Date: July 22, 2009

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TORONTO ZOO SUCCESSFULLY BREEDS CANADA'S MOST ENDANGERED SPECIES

July 22, 2009, Toronto, Ontario: The Toronto Zoo is pleased to announce the birth of nine Vancouver Island marmots, one of the most critically endangered mammals in the world. In total 65 pups, from 20 litters, were born at four partnering facilities across Canada including the Toronto Zoo, Calgary Zoo, Mountain View Conservation & Breeding Centre and the Tony Barrett Mt Washington Marmot Recovery Centre. The Vancouver Island marmot is found only on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, where its population remains too small and fragmented to recover on its own. The captive breeding program for this species was founded with an initial 55 wild marmots brought into captivity from 1997-2004, with the first six animals being sent to the Toronto Zoo.

The VIM (Vancouver Island Marmot) Recovery Strategy, implemented by the Marmot Recovery Foundation, supports the continued releases of captive-born marmots to natural habitat on Vancouver Island as the only chance of preventing the extinction of this species. The Marmot Recovery Program represents a new partnership approach for endangered species recovery supported by the breeding facilities, government, the forest industry and the public, working together to recover this uniquely Canadian marmot.

Thanks to the success of the captive breeding program, a total of 155 captive-born marmots have been released to the wild since releases began in 2003 and 59 more marmots will be released this summer leading to promising growth in the wild. Vancouver Island marmots can now be found on 24 mountains (up from only 3 mountains in 2003) and a record 33 pups were born in the wild last summer. The wild population is expected to reach well over 200 marmots by the end of the summer (from a low of less than 30 in the wild in 2003).

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Current Zoo Hours and Admission Prices – Please note our hours have changed

Zoo Hours – 9am to 7:30 pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$21, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13 and Seniors 65+ are \$15. Parking is \$8. **Events subject to change without notice.** The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25th).

torontozoo.com