

Press Release  
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## **"MOLEK" THE ORANGUTAN 1978-2010**

**Wednesday, June 30, 2010, Toronto, Ontario:** Zoo officials announced today that 'Molek', the eldest male orangutan of the group's seven members, was euthanized due to progressive kidney disease (renal failure) at the age of 32 years. For two weeks, Keepers had been noticing that he was lethargic, had no interest in food and was having frequent nose bleeds. He was treated subsequently and did show some improvement in his demeanour and appetite. However, for the past few days, Molek again lost his appetite and refused all medication. A follow up examination showed that he was now in complete renal failure. In view of his continued deterioration and lack of any reasonable option for treatment, the difficult decision was made to have him humanely and peacefully put to rest.

"I would like to commend the orangutan Keepers for their dedication and professionalism in caring for him during this difficult time," commented Dr. Crawshaw, Senior Veterinarian at the Toronto Zoo.

Molek, who came to the Zoo in May of 1996, was born in 1978 at Zoo Atlanta. He was an integral contributor to the Zoo's Species Survival Plan (SSP) for the Sumatran orangutan and is the proud father of three offspring: Jahe (female) now at the Memphis Zoo, Jingga (female) and Kembali (male) still at the Toronto Zoo. The SSP is a North American breeding program with the objective of maintaining a healthy captive orangutan population for the future. "He was a gentle giant", says Keeper Matt Berridge, "very peaceful and very loving toward the younger orangutans. He liked to hunker down and keep an eye on things from one of the higher platforms in the exhibit."

The word orangutan means "Person of the Forest" in the Malay language. Sumatran Orangutans originate from the tropical rainforests on the Island of Sumatra, where they are critically endangered. Highly intelligent, they have learned to use tools, even fashioning umbrellas out of huge leaves when it rains. Male orangutans, which can weigh up to 120kg, often grow cheek pads and throat pouches as they get older.

Today, it is estimated that only 60,000 orangutans remain in the wild. Of these, less than 7,000 are on the Island of Sumatra. Orangutans are at risk mainly from humans who cut down the rainforests for palm oil, to make paper, for fuel and a variety of other reasons.

The Zoo's remaining orangutans include Puppe (female), Ramai (female), Sekali (female), Budi (male), Kembali (male) and Jingga (female). They can be found in the Zoo's Indo-Malaya Pavilion.

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Current Zoo Hours to Sept. 6: 9:00am to 7:30pm. Last admission one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$21.00 (\$23 as of July 1), Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13.00 and Seniors 65+ are \$15.00 (\$17 as of July 1). Parking is \$10. Prices include applicable taxes and are 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 25<sup>th</sup>).