



Press Release  
For Immediate Release  
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For More Information  
Katie Gray  
Supervisor, Public  
Relations  
(416) 392-5941

## **TWO CRITICALLY ENDANGERED BABY SNOW LEOPARD CUBS BORN AT TORONTO ZOO**

**July 2, 2009, Toronto:** The Toronto Zoo today announced that two rare snow leopard cubs have been born to parents Kota (male) and Tiga (female) on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. This is the couple's second litter. The first litter of two cubs were born on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Kota arrived from the Winnipeg Zoo in 2004, and Tiga from the Houston Zoo in 2006.

"These births are just thrilling," says Zoo Curator of Mammals, Maria Franke. "They are listed as "Endangered" so these cubs demonstrate the incredible impact on the survival of a species that captive breeding can have – maintaining a genetically healthy population as well as spreading the word on their plight in the wild. The Toronto Zoo also works with the Snow Leopard Trust, a conservation organization dedicated to the protection of wild snow leopards and we now have fair trade products – ornaments, rugs, yak wool and slippers - made by people in snow leopard habitat available in our Gift Shop. Snow Leopard Enterprises helps people in these areas to increase their household income while helping to protect the cats and their habitats."

While the exact wild population of these felines is not known, it is considered to be very low with the surviving animals at risk due to habitat and prey loss, poaching, persecution, and the recent political unrest. A total of 30 snow leopards have been born at the Toronto Zoo. There are over 600 in zoos worldwide with 250 being managed under the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) Species Survival Plan.

Restricted to the high mountains of Central Asia, these beautiful felines are adapted to freezing temperatures with long thick tails and fur. Their coat is a grayish-yellow colour with black rings and rosettes. One to four cubs are born after a gestation of about three months. They will nurse for up to four months but begin to eat meat at one to two months. Considered fully grown at one and one half years, snow leopards are sexually mature at two to three years of age.

While male and female snow leopards may bond, it is not known if the male participates in raising the young.

Our two rare new Zoo Babies are on display in the Zoo's Eurasia Section with Mom Tiga.

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### **Current Zoo Hours and Admission Prices**

**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 25<sup>th</sup>).**

**[torontozoo.com](http://torontozoo.com)**