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Press release

Rare monkeys: Say hello to Madiba and Akua

Tierpark Berlin's new Roloway monkeys could help save their species

Last week, two small black-and white primates made their debut appearance at Tierpark Berlin. Roloway monkeys Madiba and Akua have quickly become accustomed to their new habitat, where they can be seen bounding from branch to branch and tucking into tasty snacks such as juicy chunks of pepper. Madiba (5) and his partner Akua (4) were brought to Berlin in the hope that they will produce new offspring and thus contribute to the survival of their species, one of the rarest primates in the world. Madiba came here from Zoo Duisburg while Akua journeyed from Ouwehands Dierenpark in Rhenen in the Netherlands. Thankfully, the first meeting between the pair went very well.

Roloway monkeys are striking-looking animals, with a long white pointed beard and fluffy white browband. They also have a very long tail that helps them balance as they move speedily through the trees. The diurnal tree dwellers live together in harems of as many as 30 individuals. Their diet consists mainly of fruit, blossoms, seeds and insects. At night they withdraw to the treetops and nestle down in forked branches.

In the wild, these monkeys are only found in two small areas of southern Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Numbers have declined rapidly in recent decades due to habitat destruction and poaching. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates that only around 300 Roloway monkeys are still living in their original range. "Given that situation, conservation breeding of this species is particularly important," says Tierpark curator and veterinarian Dr Andreas Pauly. "By keeping the monkeys here at Tierpark Berlin, we are ensuring their long-term survival." Of course, this is not the first species to benefit from cooperation among different partners. "In the fight against animal extinction, we need people and organisations working in species conservation and climate and nature protection to collaborate on many different levels. This is the only way we can protect fascinating creatures like these beautiful monkeys in the long term," explains Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. In the future, Berlin's zoos will be working even harder to protect the natural habitats of critically endangered animals like the Roloway monkey.