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Press release

The bears are back in town

Sun bears Frodo and Josy return to their birthplace

Welcome home! After spending more than 15 years in western Germany, Malayan sun bears Josephine (22) and Frodo (18) have finally returned to their hometown of Berlin. The two bears moved into Tierpark Berlin's Rainforest House today, where they now share a home with the civets.

Sun bears are the smallest of the eight bear species. They got their name from the striking golden crescent on their chest. Thanks to their light weight and long claws, sun bears are excellent climbers. They like to spend the day high up in the trees – snoozing, soaking up the sun or searching for delicious fruit. "Sun bears are categorised as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species," explains Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "The main threat to their survival is the loss of their rainforest habitat. Bear organs are also used as a remedy in traditional Asian medicine, and bear paw soup is considered a delicacy."

Back to their roots: Frodo was born at Tierpark Berlin in 2004. His mum Tina showed her new cub a little too much motherly love, leaving Frodo's fur quite badly damaged with her excessive petting. Eventually, animal keeper Michael Horn had to step in and become Frodo's adoptive dad. "A colleague and I hand-reared Frodo with a bottle. He was an extremely lovable little guy," remembers Michael Horn, who is now a senior animal keeper. Naturally, Horn leapt at the chance to pick up "his" Frodo personally from Münster today. Female sun bear Josephine, also known as Josy, was born at Zoo Berlin in 2000. She moved to Allwetterzoo Münster on 1 June 2006 as part of the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) for sun bears. It was here, in 2018, that she met Frodo – another native Berliner who had been living at the Royal Burgers' Zoo in Arnhem in the Netherlands.

At 34 years of age, Frodo's mum Tina is now a little too old for communal living. A few days ago, the senior citizen moved into a cosy new home of her own in a tranquil area in the back of the Alfred Brehm building.