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Press release

Voulez-vous couchez avec moi?

Hopes for Sumatran tiger babies at Tierpark Berlin

Male Sumatran tiger Jae Jae (13) has certainly lived up to his reputation as a French charmer: shortly after arriving in Berlin from a zoo near Paris, the smooth operator successfully wooed his intended partner Mayang (11). Their act of love represents a glimmer of hope for the long-term survival of the Sumatran tiger, which is one of the most endangered big cats on Earth. As of today, the couple are on view to the public at Tierpark Berlin.

It is tiger females who determine if and when a relationship is consummated – and they do so by dropping fragrant hints: the male can tell whether the female is ready to mate from the scent of her urine. If he chooses the wrong moment, his amorous advances can be quite hazardous. “Playing matchmaker with tigers is no easy task – it takes a lot of careful preparation to make sure nothing goes wrong on the first date,” reports Tierpark curator Matthias Papies, who is responsible for the tigers. “That’s why we deliberately gave Mayang and Jae Jae lots of time to get to know one another. Luckily, the pair hit it off immediately, so we are now crossing our fingers that we will soon have some joyful news to announce.” Jae Jae and Mayang have spent the past few months out of the public eye in a peaceful area, where the keepers have observed them mating multiple times. They must now wait a few months to find out if these hot dates have borne fruit. Jae Jae moved to the Tierpark in January from Parc des Félin in France. Before that, he was a resident of London Zoo, where he had already sired several healthy offspring. To give the Sumatran tiger family more space, the Tierpark’s two Indochinese tigers Tarek and Sarai have been sent to French zoo Planète Sauvage. Quadruplets Willi, Oscar, Seri and Kiara (3), meanwhile, have moved into the complex on the opposite side of the Rainforest House.

Internationally coordinated conservation breeding programmes are the last hope for endangered species like the Sumatran tiger. “Tierpark Berlin has been committed to protecting these rare cats since the 1950s,” says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. To date, he says, more than 120 Sumatran tigers have been born here in Berlin – and have travelled all over the world to produce more offspring in other zoos. “We are delighted that Mayang is getting on so well with her new partner. It would be fantastic news for the preservation of her species if she were also to give birth this year.”

Background

Sumatran tigers are one of the most endangered big cats in the world. Only some 300 to 400 of the majestic animals inhabit the rainforests of Indonesia today, meaning they are in imminent danger of extinction. Tierpark Berlin has been home to Sumatran tigers since 1956,



and since 2020 they have been living in the new-and-improved Rainforest House. Zoos around the world work together to create stable reserve populations for endangered species in an effort to prevent their extinction. A Global Species Management Plan (GSMP) is in place for the Sumatran tiger, bringing together all regional conservation breeding programmes, such as the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP), and coordinating them on a global scale.