



Berlin, 27 June 2018

**Press release**

## **Hans up in the air!**

### **Tierpark Berlin's young spectacled bear now has a name – and a favourite hobby**

A short walk from the Bärenschaufenster entrance at Tierpark Berlin, a small brown-and-black acrobat has been showing off his courageous climbing skills these last few days – while visitors far below watch with bated breath.

Having perfected the art of balance by crossing horizontal logs and branches, the sprightly spectacled bear cub recently decided to try climbing to the very top of one of the habitat's trees. His mother Julia sat enjoying a big breakfast nine metres down below, casting scrutinising glances up at her son. Once he had proven his bravery on the precarious upper branches, he slid quickly back down the trunk like an experienced firefighter. But barely had his paws touched the ground before he was off up the next thick trunk. Once at the top, he settled himself in a comfortable hollow where he tested his pointed teeth on the wood and pawed inquisitively between the cracks for something to eat. But the fluffy bundle of energy didn't linger there for long either; soon he was scampering up the next tree –stopping for short breaks to straddle a branch and let his little legs dangle on either side. One thing's for certain: this plucky cub was born to climb. "Spectacled bears learn to climb from a very young age, which is important in the wild as they need to be able to clamber up trees to escape from predators," explains bear curator Dr Florian Sicks. "We are very happy to see that the young bear is developing so well and is making good use of the playthings and climbing apparatus we have for him here at Tierpark Berlin."

Meanwhile, the six-month-old cub has also found a sponsor: spectacle frame designers and manufacturers Stepper Eyewear – which seems like a fitting choice for a spectacled bear. Tierpark keepers quickly set about discussing a name with the new sponsors, and finally settled on "Hans". "Despite his South American roots, this little bear was born in Berlin – so I think a traditional German name is a very good fit," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "I would like to thank Stepper Eyewear for supporting our spectacled bears and the Tierpark as a whole by taking on this sponsorship."



### **Background:**

Tierpark Berlin's new spectacled bear cub was born on 26 December 2017. Hans is the seventh cub born to experienced mother Julia (20) and was the second sired by Carlos (21). Spectacled bears have been living at Tierpark Berlin since 1956, just one year after it opened. During that time, a total of 17 spectacled bear cubs have grown up at the Tierpark. Bear curator Dr Florian Sicks has been the coordinator of the European Endangered Species Programme for the spectacled bear since October 2017. It is his job to keep the population of these bears in Europe as stable and healthy as possible.

The spectacled bear originates from the Andes in South America and is classified as "Vulnerable" on the IUCN Red List. The main threat to the bears' survival is loss and fragmentation of habitat, caused by deforestation and conversion of land for agricultural use. They may also be killed by their human rivals if they wander onto fields in search of food – either crops or domestic animals. Spectacled bears are primarily herbivorous, occasionally adding protein to their diet by eating insects, rodents, and sometimes larger animals – such as domestic sheep.