



Berlin, 20 September 2017

Press release

United in motherhood

New Przewalski's horse foals born many miles apart

Przewalski's mares Kokosa and Barca lived together in the Tierpark Berlin herd for four years. Then, in 2013, Barca was selected to take part in species reintroduction efforts and was moved to Gobi B nature reserve in Mongolia with three other mares bred in Europe. Though they are now 1,335 hours' walk apart, Kokosa and Barca experienced the same joyous event this summer: they both became mothers.

While one of the mares now enjoys round-the-clock care and maternity services in Berlin, the other must defend herself and her foal against wolves and face temperatures that can fall as low as minus 25°C. But although their environments couldn't be more different, the two mares show the same loving care for their foals, who are both developing very well. This is the first foal from young mare Barca, who was born at Tierpark Berlin on 21 May 2009. The foal's father is presumed to be stallion Mogoi, who was born in the wild. Almost 7,000 km west at Tierpark Berlin, experienced mother Kokosa gave birth to her seventh foal on 18 September. Once again, she chose stallion Walc to sire her offspring. "The little filly is still looking for a loving sponsor who cares about species protection just as much as we do," says Tierpark Berlin Zoological Director Nadja Niemann, who goes on to tell us more about the conservation efforts: "In June 2017, Prague Zoo sent another four Przewalski's mares bred in European zoos to Gobi B. Thanks to our visitors and sponsors, Tierpark Berlin was able to help finance the transportation of those horses. We're very proud of our involvement!"

"Without scientifically coordinated breeding programmes in zoos, there would be no more of these wild horses in China and Mongolia," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "The Przewalski's horse was declared extinct in the wild in 1969. It is only thanks to expertise, determination, and plenty of patience that these horses can now be seen roaming wild in their native habitats once more. The reintroduction of the Przewalski's horse into the wild is one of the most successful species conservation efforts ever coordinated by zoos." Today, 25 years after the first zoo-bred Przewalski's horses were released into the wild, there are several hundred of them living in five separate populations in Mongolia and China. The Gobi B wild horse population reached 200 this year. The impressive conservation efforts have seen the horse's IUCN Red List status downgrade from "Extinct in the wild" to "Critically endangered" in 1996, then simply to "Endangered" in 2008. Since 1985, Tierpark Berlin has provided 17 of its own Przewalski's wild horses for reintroduction and breeding projects in China and Mongolia.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.tierpark-berlin.de/de/aktuelles/blog/forschung/die-rueckkehr-der-wildpferde>.