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Press release

A birthday surprise for Hertha

Tierpark Berlin's young polar bear turns one

A day full of firsts! This year, the first of December was also the first Advent Sunday – and the first birthday of our “little” polar bear Hertha! To celebrate her big day, the birthday girl received a frozen number one as big as she is in festive beetroot red. Hertha's sponsor, Berlin soccer team Hertha BSC, also came up with a special birthday surprise: a frozen blue-and-white football coloured with natural cabbage dye and full of tasty treats. If she keeps practising her ball skills, maybe she'll make it onto the youth team!

“Hertha's birth one year ago was a very special occasion for the entire Tierpark team,” recalls Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. “At her first veterinary examination in February, she weighed just 8.5 kg – she is now ten times heavier than that. Tonja has been a wonderful mother to Hertha and should be very proud.” In just one year, Hertha has grown from the size of a guinea pig into a statuesque young bear. However, she is still very much a playful cub: while practical mum Tonja is intent on seeking out the frozen apples, pears and carrots hidden inside the big number one, inquisitive little Hertha inspects the fascinating object from all sides. Hertha may look pretty big these days, but when you see her next to her mother, who is twice her size, it's clear that Hertha is still a little girl.

Polar bear curator Dr Florian Sicks is delighted with the young bear's excellent development. He explains the important role that Tierpark Berlin's polar bears play: “From a very young age, our little Hertha has been a successful ambassador for her species, and she continues to raise awareness of the threat facing the bears' Arctic habitat.” The polar bear is classified as “Vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Zoo and Tierpark Berlin support the work of non-profit organisation Polar Bears International, which studies these threatened bears in their natural habitat. The organisation aims to use the findings of its research to establish protected areas where polar bears can find sufficient food and rear their young in peace. For more information, visit: <https://www.tierpark-berlin.de/en/nature-and-species-conservation/worldwide/polar-bears>.

A year after her birth, Hertha continues to delight Tierpark visitors of all ages with her daily antics on the rocks and in the water. Toys specially developed for polar bears are often placed around the habitat. These allow the mother-daughter team to mimic natural activity like stalking prey and diving beneath ice floes.