



For Immediate Release

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Keisha N. Hines, Director of Public Relations and Communications

404.624.5980 –office

404.309.2238 –cell

khines@zooatlanta.org

Simone Griffin, Public Relations Coordinator

404.624.2809

sgriffin@zooatlanta.org

WILL THEY OR WON'T THEY? SCIENCE STEPS IN AGAIN FOR PANDAS LUN LUN AND YANG YANG

Giant panda breeding season comes again to Zoo Atlanta

ATLANTA – June 15, 2010 – Zoo Atlanta officials confirmed today that Lun Lun, a 12-year-old female giant panda, was artificially inseminated on June 13, 2010. The veterinary and animal management teams opted to employ artificial insemination (AI) after the world-famous panda, 12-year-old Yang Yang, failed to mate during Lun Lun's critically brief window of fertility.

Time is of the essence in captive breeding of giant pandas, which are fertile for just two to three days a year. Animal management teams monitored Lun Lun's behavior for signs that her estrous cycle was approaching. Hormone analyses to pinpoint ovulation were also conducted by Dr. Dave Kersey, an expert in giant panda endocrinology from Western University of Health Sciences with the assistance of Mary Karom from Georgia State University's Neuroscience Institute. When behavioral and hormonal indicators suggested that ovulation had occurred, Lun Lun and Yang Yang were given the opportunity to mate. When a mating did not occur, Dr. Liu, a reproductive physiologist from the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, Dr. Aitken Palmer, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida and the Zoo Atlanta Veterinary Team performed two AI procedures on Lun Lun using semen from Yang Yang. Over the next few months, staff will continue to monitor Lun Lun's hormones and behavior for signs of a possible pregnancy.

"While we were hopeful for breeding between Lun Lun and Yang Yang after all these years, we are optimistic that AI will once again prove successful in 2010," said Dr. Dwight Lawson, Senior Vice President of Collections, Education and Conservation. "The collaborative efforts of many dedicated specialists reflect a shared commitment to preserving this iconic and endangered species."

The use of AI has proven successful in the births of Lun Lun's and Yang Yang's two previous offspring, Mei Lan, born in September 2006 and now a resident of Chengdu, China, and Xi Lan, born in August 2008. Now almost 2 years old and weighing nearly 100 pounds, the precocious Xi Lan remains one of the Zoo's most

popular animals. Giant panda fans can look forward to birthday celebrations for Xi Lan and his parents later this summer.

About Zoo Atlanta

An accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), Zoo Atlanta inspires value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. The Zoo's newest attraction, Trader's Alley: Wildlife's Fading Footprints, featuring the debut of two new sun bears, opened in June 2010. Other highlights include the nation's largest collection of western lowland gorillas, the nation's largest zoological collection of orangutans and a global center of excellence. Zoo Atlanta is also proud to be one of only four zoos in the U.S. that giant pandas call home. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, call 404.624.WILD or visit zooatlanta.org.

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