



For Immediate Release

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WILL TIGER CUBS BE ZOO ATLANTA'S NEXT BIG BIRTH?

Pregnancy would mean hope for critically endangered cats

ATLANTA – February 25, 2009 - Just nine months after welcoming the arrival of three African lion cubs – the first of their kind born at 800 Cherokee Avenue in more than 10 years – Zoo Atlanta is hopeful that another popular feline species may soon end a second decade-long wait. Chelsea, a 5-year-old female Sumatran tiger, may be expecting cubs.

While the Animal Management and Veterinary Teams have not yet been able to confirm a pregnancy, staff is hopeful that Chelsea, who arrived at the Zoo in 2006, could be on her way to first-time motherhood. The tigress was seen breeding with her mate, 8-year-old Kavi for the first time in early January (tiger gestation is around 103 days, with litter sizes ranging from one to five cubs).

The birth of Sumatran tiger cubs would be a triumph for a vanishing species. The most endangered of the world's remaining tigers, Sumatrans are believed to number fewer than 400 in the wild. Poaching, habitat loss and habitat fragmentation caused by deforestation are the primary threats to the charismatic cats, which are found only on the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

As is the case with their wild counterparts, Chelsea and Kavi interact only at specific times. The species is solitary, with males and females associating briefly during short breeding intervals. The Zoo's pair met in 2007, but Chelsea did not demonstrate any signs of receptivity to Kavi until January 2009.

Zoo Atlanta is home to two other Sumatran tigers, Jalal, 15, and Sekayu. At 21, Sekayu is the nation's oldest living Sumatran tiger. The last tiger cub born at the Zoo was their offspring, Bahagia, a female born in November 2000.

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. Zoo Atlanta is the proud home of Xi Lan, the only giant panda cub born in the U.S. in 2008, and the future home of the Southeast's largest parakeet aviary, an immersive experience opening in April 2009. Other highlights include one of the nation's most recognized collections of great apes and a global center of excellence for the care and reproduction of vanishing amphibians and reptiles. Zoo Atlanta 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 go to zooatlanta.org.

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