



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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Rosamond Gifford Zoo Announces Birth of Red Panda Cubs, Celebrates International Red Panda Day This Saturday

Syracuse, N.Y. (September 16, 2016) – In celebration of International Red Panda Day on September 17, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is pleased to announce the birth of two red panda cubs. The cubs, one male and one female, are named Ravi (“king”) and Amiya (“delight”). Second-time mother, Tabei, has been caring for them since their birth on June 27. The cubs are not on exhibit to zoo guests, as they are inside nest boxes under their mother’s careful watch. Their father, Ketu, is a second-time dad.

“It is only fitting to celebrate the successful birth of red panda cubs at our zoo on the eve of International Red Panda Day, which supports global awareness of red pandas and conservation of this endangered species. The zoo and its animal staff are to be commended for their continued hard work and dedication,” said Onondaga County Executive Joanie Mahoney.

Zookeepers have been conducting regular weight and wellness checks to monitor the cubs’ growth and health. Daily observations will continue as they are weaned. They have opened their eyes and are mobile, but still have more growing to do.

“As an accredited zoo, we are part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP) for red pandas. The successful birth of these cubs is important to the North American population and comes after careful planning and preparation by our animal staff on the recommendation of the SSP. We are thrilled to share this good news and remain optimistic that the cubs will continue to thrive under their mother’s care,” says Zoo Director Ted Fox.

The zoo’s red panda program has been successful. Male cubs Rohan and Pumori born last season were transferred to Central Park and Erie zoos respectively, both AZA-accredited facilities, as part of the SSP.

Red pandas are endangered, with less than 10,000 individuals in the wild. They are found in the Eastern Himalayas and Southwestern China. The loss of nesting trees and bamboo due to deforestation has caused a decline in their numbers. Contrary to its shared name said to come from the Nepali word “ponya” meaning bamboo or plant-eating animal, the red panda is not closely related to the giant panda.

The zoo will celebrate **International Red Panda Day** tomorrow – Saturday, September 17. Presented by Friends of the Zoo and the zoo’s chapter of the American Association of Zoo Keepers (AAZK), the day will include keeper chats at the red panda exhibit at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Adult pandas Kadesh (female) and Biru (male) will rotate on exhibit. Guests can learn about red pandas at a special biofact (animal artifact) station and see photos and video of the new cubs. The first 250 children in attendance can pick up a special Red Panda Network activity booklet to become a “Red Panda Ranger,” a child who has learned about red pandas and is ready to spread the word about the importance of conservation.

For a small donation, visitors may enter to take home a one-of-a kind painting by Kadesh or have their faces painted just like a red panda. Funds raised will be donated to Red Panda Network, an organization committed to saving wild red pandas and preserving their natural habitat through empowerment and education of local communities. The zoo's Curious Cub Gift Shop offers a selection of red panda items – the most popular animal plush sold at the zoo – and will donate the day's round-up on all purchases to Red Panda Network.

Visitors can help support the zoo by purchasing a special \$25 red panda Adopt package at the membership desk. Red pandas are the most popular animal adopted through the zoo's Adopt an Animal program. Package is just \$25 and includes a mini red panda plush, color photo, personalized adopt certificate, fact sheet and two people admitted to the zoo's annual Member Appreciation Event in June 2017. Limited quantities are available. The Adopt program helps support habitat improvement, animal enrichment, training and more.

For more information on International Red Panda Day at the zoo, visit rosamondgiffordzoo.org/special-event.



L-R: Red panda cubs Ravi and Amiya, born June 27 at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo (photo by Maria Simmons)

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Founded in 1914, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park is among the top 10 percent of zoos in the country as an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is dedicated to connecting people to the natural world by providing engaging guest experiences, exceptional animal care, and unparalleled conservation education.

The zoo actively collaborates with Friends of the Zoo to provide its guests "the best day ever," ensuring experiences that excite, memories that endure, and knowledge that inspires worldwide conservation.

The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults (19-61), \$4 for youth (3-18) and \$5 for seniors (62+). Children two and under are free. For more information, call the zoo at (315) 435-8511 or visit rosamondgiffordzoo.org.

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County Executive, Joanne M. Mahoney • Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, Bill Lansley
Rosamond Gifford Zoo Director, Ted Fox • Friends of the Zoo President, Janet Agostini

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