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## Rare Amur Leopard Birth at Jackson Zoo

The Jackson Zoo is pleased to announce the birth of a female Amur Leopard, Judda, who turned six weeks old Wednesday. The Jackson Zoo has been home to two Amur Leopards, Nikolai (male) and Katya (female), since 2004. This was Katya's first pregnancy, and of the two offspring born, only one survived. The surviving cub has had to be hand-fed by Zoo staffers since birth and is not currently on display.

"Sometimes new mommies can be a little rough with newborns, and we felt that Judda needed to be observed very closely," said Vet. Tech Donna Todd.

Amur leopards are very distinct from other leopards. Their long legs and long hair allow them to survive in cold, snowy climates. Their spots are widely spaced rosettes with thick borders. The color of their fur changes from lighter in the winter to a more reddish-yellow in the summer. The average adult male weighs between 82-198 pounds and the average female weighs between 62-132 pounds.

Amur Leopards are critically endangered with field survey data estimates indicating that there are fewer than 50 leopards left in the wild, making the Amur leopard one of the world's most endangered cats. The latest results estimated there were 25-40 Amur leopards in the Russian Far East and 4-7 in northeast China (Jilin Province).

The major threats to their survival are depletion of prey species, loss of habitat and conflict with humans. Additionally, the Amur leopard is threatened by the extremely small wild population size, which makes them vulnerable to "catastrophes" such as fire or disease.

This year the Jackson Zoo has begun to renovate much of its Asia area, which will include new and renovated exhibit space for the Amur leopards, tiger, gibbons, sun bears giraffes, tapirs and hornbills. The Zoo will also break ground for its \$1.5 million education facility this fall.

Judda is not on exhibit, however, Friends of the Zoo members will be able to view her Friday, August 31, 2007 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. through the hospital viewing room. Since leopards are primarily solitary animals, fundraising for a separate enclosure for Judda is ongoing. If you'd like to donate, please visit [www.jacksonzoo.org](http://www.jacksonzoo.org) and click on the "How you can help" tab.

The Jackson Zoo was recently named **Travel Attraction of the Year** by the Mississippi Tourism Association and is dedicated to its mission, to provide visitors with a quality recreational and educational environment dedicated to wildlife care and conservation.

The Jackson Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The AZA is America's leading accrediting organization that sets rigorous, professional standards for zoos and aquariums. The AZA is building North America's largest wildlife conservation movement by engaging and inspiring the 143 million annual visitors to its member institutions and their communities to care about and take action to help protect wildlife.

The Jackson Zoo is located at 2918 West Capitol Street and is open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. For more information about the Jackson Zoo, call (601) 352-2581 or visit [www.jacksonzoo.org](http://www.jacksonzoo.org).



**Photo: Judda practices her ferocious snarl.**