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Four Lemurs Born at the Jackson Zoo

The Jackson Zoo is proud to announce the birth of four Red Ruffed Lemurs. Parents Pete and Moon welcomed Mort, Levi, Eli and Junior on April 19, 2009, and all four have been inside with mom since then. This past Sunday, Moon brought the new additions outside for the first time.

All four of the offspring will remain with the mother and are gaining weight steadily and should begin eating solid food in another two weeks.

“It’s always great to announce a birth at the Jackson Zoo – not to mention four at once!” said Zoo Director Beth Poff. “The animal care staff has worked so hard to make sure mom and the little ones are doing well and have everything they need. It’s so satisfying to see these little ones emerge with mom, healthy and active.”

The Red Ruffed Lemur is endangered. They are found only on the Masoala Peninsula on the northeast coast of Madagascar.

Red Ruffed Lemurs are part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Plan (SSP). The Species Survival Plan program began in 1981 as a cooperative population management and conservation program for selected species in zoos and aquariums in North America. Each SSP manages the breeding of a species in order to maintain a healthy and self-sustaining population that is both genetically diverse and demographically stable.



The SSP recommending breeding Moon and she is considered one of the most genetically valuable animals in the country at this time. The Jackson Zoo, SSP and the Duke Primate Center (who owns Moon) collaborated to breed the pair. Eventually, the offspring will participate in breeding programs as recommended by SSP at other institutions.

Red Ruffed Lemurs live in the dense tropical rainforest and spend most of their time in the upper canopy. They are characterized by a striking dark red, black and white fur pattern. They have a prominent muzzle, short facial hair and a long, bushy tail.

Red Ruffed Lemurs form pair bonds and gestation is between 99 and 103 days. A behavior unique to lemurs is “parking” where the lemur will place (park) the young in a nest or crotch of a tree while the mother forages.

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Red Ruffed Lemurs generally stay in small family groups, although some studies indicate they may form larger groups. The females, as in most lemur species, are dominant to the males. This dominance is exhibited primarily in approach-retreat interactions at feeding stations. Sexual maturity is reached at 20 months of age. Lemurs primarily eat fruits; however, leaves are also eaten.

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.

Join the Jackson Zoo as it celebrates 90 years (1919-2009) of Education, Recreation, Conservation and Community! Visit www.jacksonzoo.org to check out exciting special events planned, animal updates, one-of-a-kind education programs, membership and adoption packages, and so much more.

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.

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