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## Malayan Tapir Gives Birth at Jackson Zoo

Symphony and Larue, the Malayan Tapirs at the Jackson Zoo, are parents to a new bundle of joy. Symphony gave birth to a male tapir around mid-day Saturday, August 16, 2008.

"We are very excited to welcome this new addition to the Jackson Zoo family," said Zoo Director Beth Poff. "We've observed the little tyke sticking very closely to his mother, and he seems to be doing very well."

Tapirs are mammals which are often confused with hippos, anteaters and capybaras. Their closest living relatives are odd-toed ungulates, horses and rhinos. There are four living species of tapir: Baird's, Lowland, Mountain and Malayan tapir. Tapirs are endangered.

Tapirs play a critical role in shaping and maintaining the biological diversity of tropical forests and function as biological indicators of area requirements for the ecosystem. Local extinction or population decrease may trigger adverse effects in the forest, causing disruptions of some key ecological processes, and eventually compromising the long-term integrity and biodiversity of the ecosystem.

Juvenile tapirs are spotted and striped, but after about 6-8 months, coloring will be black on the front half of the body and the hind legs and on the rear half of the body, above the legs, white. The approximate life span of tapirs is 30 years.

Symphony and Larue have produced several offspring. The infant tapir is now on exhibit.

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. For more information about the Jackson Zoo, call (601) 352-2581 or visit [www.jacksonzoo.org](http://www.jacksonzoo.org).

