

For Immediate Release

For more information:
Jaime Alvarez, Director of Public Relations
Rosamond Gifford Zoo at Burnet Park
Phone: (315) 435-8511 x110

Snow Leopard Cub Born at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo

Syracuse, N.Y. (August 27, 2014) – The Rosamond Gifford Zoo is pleased to announce the birth of a male snow leopard, Asa, on July 9 to parents Zena (mother) and Senge (father). Asa is the sixth snow leopard born at the zoo. The name Asa is Nepali for “hope,” a fitting moniker given his birth story.



Asa, a male snow leopard cub. Photo credit: Maria Simmons

Asa was born via emergency surgery after Zena was observed by her keepers to be in labor but not progressing. Because she appeared to be in distress, veterinarians performed a complete physical exam. Ultrasound detected no heartbeat for the cub and the decision was made to deliver via surgery. Asa was initially unresponsive; veterinarians from Cornell University worked quickly to stimulate and revive him. Because of the uncertainty of Zena’s medical condition following the procedure, the decision was made to hand-rear the cub.

“The animal staff and veterinarians are to be commended for their quick thinking and excellent work in delivering and caring for Asa,” said County Executive Joanne M. Mahoney. “Our zoo has had remarkable success in hand-rearing animals, including endangered species like this snow leopard cub.”

“Snow leopards are part of a Species Survival Plan, a collaborative effort between zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and zoos around the world to help ensure their survival. With approximately 4,000-6,500 snow leopards left in the wild, Asa’s birth is critical to the population. Given that there are currently only 144 snow leopards in 60 zoos across the country, we could not be more pleased with this outcome. We successfully hand-reared a male snow leopard in 1997 and are optimistic based on that success,” said Ted Fox, zoo director.

Asa weighed 530 grams at birth and currently weighs six pounds. The zoo intends for the cub to be on exhibit daily in the clinic window where guests may observe feedings.

Snow leopards are found in the mountains of Central Asia and are perfectly adapted to the cold, barren landscape of the high-altitude. Human threats have created an uncertain future for the species, with numbers gradually declining. Snow leopards prefer steep, rugged terrain. Their habitat is

among the least productive of the world's rangelands due to low temperatures, high aridity and harsh climatic conditions. Very little is known about their social behavior in the wild.

FUN FACTS:

Snow leopards are unable to roar. They can leap farther than any other cat, reaching distances of well over 40 feet in a single bound. Their long, thick tails assist with balance and are used like a scarf in cold weather.

Snow Leopards at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo:

4 Males: Senge (6), Bajen (2), Ramil (2), Asa (7 weeks)

1 Female: Zena (8)

History of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo's Snow Leopard Program:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Cubs Born</i>	<i>Name/Gender</i>
1997	1	Ruka (male)
1998	2	Tian (female), Nema (female)
2012	2	Bajen (male), Ramil (male)
2014	1	Asa (male)

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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.

One Conservation Place, Syracuse, NY 13204 • (315) 435-8511 • (315) 435-8517 fax

www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org

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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