

Edmonton Valley Zoo announces arrival of new red panda

Kalden described as "a perfect gentleman"

The Edmonton Valley Zoo is excited to announce a new addition to its red panda family: Kalden, a one-year-old male who recently moved to Edmonton from the Northeastern Wisconsin Zoo. The Edmonton Valley Zoo is now home to three red pandas, Kalden and two females, Pip and her mother Lala.



Kalden, who has been described by zookeepers as "a perfect gentleman," arrived in Edmonton on July 11, 2013, but was only introduced to his new mate, Pip, last week. Red pandas are sometimes solitary animals, but Pip and Kalden quickly bonded and have been living harmoniously ever since. Zoo staff hope this is a sign there will be another addition to the growing red panda family in the near future.

"When Kalden first arrived he was very grumpy. We were concerned that he and Pip would not get along," said Wade Krasnow, Animal Care Team Lead, Edmonton Valley Zoo. "When we introduced them, Kalden behaved like a perfect gentleman. He gave Pip her space and approached her slowly. He liked Pip right away and the two have adjusted well to living together."

It is not uncommon for male red pandas to aggressively pursue females when paired, which is why Kalden's careful approach to courting Pip is so admired by his zookeepers. In turn, Pip has adjusted well to having the male panda in her habitat and seems to enjoy his company.

Red panda mating season occurs annually from January to March, and red panda pregnancies last four to five months. Zoo staff hope to see red panda cubs at the Edmonton Valley Zoo as early as next spring.

Due to habitat loss and poaching, red pandas are an endangered species. Only an estimated 2,500 adults remain in the wild. The Edmonton Valley Zoo is part of a worldwide conservation effort to preserve red pandas through a Species Survival Plan cooperatively managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).

"Species Survival Plans are not a substitute for preserving animals in nature but are a strategy for creating healthy, self-sustaining, captive populations that can be reintroduced into restored or secured habitats. The ultimate goal of these plans is to release healthy animals into the wild," said Denise Prefontaine, Director, Edmonton Valley Zoo. "We are very proud of the work we have done with the Red Panda SSP and our partnership with the Red Panda Network. Our zoo is now nationally recognized as an expert in the field of red panda husbandry."

Over the past ten years, the Edmonton Valley Zoo has successfully bred seven red panda cubs, including Pip, who was hand-raised by Edmonton Valley Zoo staff when her mother was unable to care for her.

Red pandas are arboreal mammals native to Asia. They typically grow to be slightly larger than a domestic cat and are recognized by their trademark red fur and bushy tails. Red Pandas live for seven to eight years in the wild, but for as long as 15 years in zoos.

Visitors to the Edmonton Valley Zoo can tell Kalden and Pip apart by their tails and the unique markings on their faces. Pip's tail has a slight kink near the tip, her face has more prominent white markings, and she is known for her "pensive" eyes. Kalden, on the other hand, has a full, bushy tail and more pronounced "eyebrows."

Kalden's arrival coincides with International Red Panda Day and the Edmonton Valley Zoo's Red Panda-monium celebration, taking place this Sunday, September 29, 2013.

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