



3930 West Land Park Drive
Sacramento, CA 95822-1123
sac zoo.org

Media Release

Laurel Vincent | Marketing & PR Manager

Ph: 916-808-7443 | Call: 530-513-0495

Snow leopard cub to receive rare eyelid surgery

On Wednesday, October 24th Coconut, the snow leopard cub born at the Sacramento Zoo earlier this year, will be the recipient of a rare eyelid surgery performed by Sacramento Zoo veterinarians as well as veterinary specialists from UC Davis.

Shortly after his birth, it was discovered that Coconut had visible birth defects. This eyelid surgery has been a possibility since UC Davis and Sacramento Zoo veterinarians first examined the young cub. In addition to his mobility issues, Coconut was also born with eyelid defects, known as colombas. This ocular deformity is sometimes documented in snow leopards under human care.

After months of regular monitoring by Sacramento Zoo care staff, as well as daily eye drops and periodic examinations by UC Davis specialists, the decision to proceed with the eyelid surgery was made late September.



On Wednesday, animal care staff will anesthetize Coconut at the Sacramento Zoo for an ophthalmic evaluation and surgery to address his congenital eyelid deformity. An orthopedic specialist from UC Davis will also perform an evaluation to assess the cub's muscles and bones related to a



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developmental abnormality commonly referred to as “swimmer’s syndrome”. The surgery will be performed on zoo grounds at the Dr. Murray E. Fowler Veterinary Hospital. The surgery, which will begin at approximately 9:30 a.m., will be open to the public via our viewing window at the hospital. Specific treatment will be determined by specialists while the cub is under anesthesia. Options vary from eyelid hair follicle freezing (cryotherapy) to partial eyelid removal (bilateral simple wedge resection). Coconut’s recovery time post-surgery will depend on the specific treatment, but the young cat will be off exhibit for at least two weeks to allow him proper time to recover and heal.

The Sacramento Zoo is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and participates in the Snow Leopard Species Survival Plan® by following breeding recommendations and increasing awareness of the problems facing this species. Snow leopards are vulnerable due to poaching, loss of prey, and the fragmentation of habitat. The Sacramento Zoo also supports snow leopard conservation, partnering with organizations such as the International Snow Leopard Trust and Snow Leopard Conservancy by donating funds for educational materials and conservation programs in the range where snow leopards are found in the wild.

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Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to more than 500 native, rare and endangered animals and is one of more than 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Located near the corner of Land Park Drive and Sutterville Road in William Land Park, the zoo is wholly managed by the non-profit Sacramento Zoological Society. This Sacramento treasure inspires conservation awareness through education and recreation. Daily admission is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., zoo grounds are open until 5 p.m. General admission is \$14.95; children ages 2-11 are \$9.95 and one and under are admitted free. Parking is free throughout the park or ride Regional Transit bus #6. For information, call 916-808-5888 or visit sac zoo.org.