

Double delight as two rare red panda cubs are born at Whipsnade Zoo

Wednesday 9 September, 2026

Zookeepers at [Whipsnade Zoo](#) are celebrating the arrival of two tiny red panda cubs - a double boost for the Endangered species.

Born overnight on Thursday 16 July 2026 to five-year-old mum Ruby and six-year-old dad Nilo, the six-week-old cubs are growing bigger and stronger every day under the care of their experienced mum - and the watchful eyes of vets and zookeepers.

Though the duo have grown since their birth weight of around 90 grams - around the weight of a banana - they're still a long way from looking like their red-coated parents.

With soft, ginger-coloured fur and their eyes still closed, they're spending their days tucked away in the nestbox they were born in with Ruby - relying on her for warmth and nourishment. As they grow stronger, their eyes will open and their distinctive russet coats will gradually emerge, before they take their first tentative steps out of the nest at around three months.

Amanda Robinson, Primate Section Manager at Whipsnade Zoo, said: "We knew Ruby was pregnant from her behaviour changes and weight gain, so we were absolutely delighted when these two healthy babies arrived back in July.

"We're keeping a close eye on the family while giving them space to bond and grow, and it's clear Ruby is an excellent mum and has been doing a brilliant job caring for her two little ones.

"The cubs are still very young and we won't know their sexes until their first health check with our veterinary team, at around ten weeks old. At that point, we'll also start thinking about naming the duo."

Red pandas may be small, but they are remarkable climbers, spending much of their time high in the forest canopy. Their long, bushy tails help them balance as they move through the trees, while their sharp claws and flexible ankles help them grip branches and climb head-first down tree trunks.

Despite their name, red pandas are not closely related to giant pandas and are an EDGE species, meaning they are Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered - losing them would mean losing an entire branch of the tree of life.

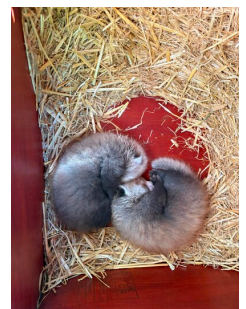
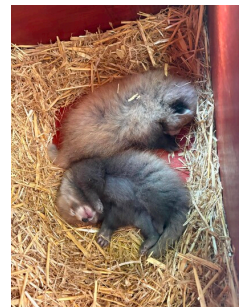
The arrival of the two cubs is particularly important for the conservation of their species, which is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Their numbers in the wild - in the forests of the Himalayas and south-western China - are declining, with habitat loss, a reduction in their bamboo food supply and poaching all putting pressure on populations.

The family at Whipsnade conservation zoo are part of an important European conservation breeding programme for red pandas, helping to maintain a healthy and genetically diverse safety population in zoos, while ZSL conservationists work to protect red pandas and their habitats in the wild.

The cubs' arrival also comes at a significant time for ZSL, as the charity celebrates its 200th anniversary year. Every visit to Whipsnade Zoo supports the global work of ZSL to protect and restore wildlife around the world. Visitors can enjoy a full day of fun and discovery at Whipsnade Zoo. Tickets include free parking, daily expert zookeeper talks, free entry for children under 3, and up to 30% off for children aged 3-15. To find out more and to buy tickets, visit: www.whipsnadezoo.org.

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