

NEWS RELEASE



Contact: Winfield Danielson
Marketing and PR Manager
Office: (757) 441-2374 ext. 223
Cell: (757) 777-7899
Email: winfield.danielson@norfolk.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 16, 2013

RED PANDA CUBS EXPLORING HABITAT

NORFOLK, Va. – Virginia Zoo visitors now have a good opportunity to see the red panda cubs exploring their habitat.

Initially, mother Bernadette would carry cubs Charlie and Thomas by the scruff of the neck, but by the first week of October, the pair began exploring their habitat independently at night. Since Columbus Day, the cubs have been frequently spotted outside during visiting hours.

“Everyone’s very excited to see them out and about,” said Greg Bockheim, the Zoo’s executive director. “We hope Charlie and Thomas will inspire visitors to learn more about these entertaining creatures and the challenges they face in the wild.” He noted that red pandas are part of the Species Survival Plan programs, a cooperative effort by members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums to preserve endangered and threatened animals through cooperative breeding, research, education and reintroduction efforts.

The red panda cubs, born June 20, are among several babies recently born at the Zoo. Kellen, a baby giraffe born June 6, is beginning training with keepers. The cassowary chick born June 11, whose sex still has not been determined, continues to develop under father Boris’ care. An owl monkey born July 24, whose sex has also yet to be determined, can usually be spotted on his dad’s back, but is becoming more independent. Lola, the baby siamang, turned 1 year old August 20 and has begun eating more solid foods and now nurses only a little.

Red pandas are small tree-dwelling animals native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China. Slightly larger than a domestic cat and with markings similar to a raccoon, red pandas have soft, dense reddish-brown and white fur that covers their entire body.

- more -

RED PANDA CUBS, 2 OF 2



Charlie and Thomas, the Virginia Zoo's red panda cubs, explore their habitat with their mother, Bernadette, Wednesday, Oct. 16, 2013. The pair have been exploring their habitat during the day frequently since Columbus Day. (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson.)

###

As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits more than 400 animals on 53 beautifully landscaped acres. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to education and conservation, and offered a fun-filled day for visitors of any age. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors (age 62 and over) and \$9 for children ages 2-11. Children under 2 admitted free! Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.