



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | Monday, October 6, 2025**

Media contact: Kirstin Pendleton, Marketing & Digital Specialist

[kirstin.pendleton@norfolk.gov](mailto:kirstin.pendleton@norfolk.gov) | 757.650.6611 | <http://www.virginiazoo.org>

### **Virginia Zoo has three otterly adorable new residents**

NORFOLK, VA – The Virginia Zoo is excited to announce the birth of our first Asian small-clawed otter pups! The 3 male pups were born on August 25<sup>th</sup> to parents Elbe (F) and Jilin (M) who joined the Zoo in 2024 based on a breeding recommendation from the Asian Small-clawed Otter Species Survival Plan (SSP).

The first 30 days of otter pup development are crucial, therefore with the exception of an initial vet exam to get weights, listen to their hearts, and sex the pups, animal care staff have stayed hands-off to provide the otter family uninterrupted time to bond. However, keepers have been monitoring the pups with visual checks 3 times a week to ensure their health and safety. At one month old, the pups have started to open their eyes and wiggle about their nest box, but the trio will not receive another vet exam or their vaccines until they are older.

Jilin and Elbe have been excellent and attentive parents to their first litter as a pair. The two are keeping busy tending to the pups and each other during this joyous transition. Male Asian small-clawed otters are involved in the rearing process, and Jilin has been taking great care of Elbe and the pups. Their keepers report that everyone is keeping busy and enjoying bonding behind-the-scenes.

*“To say the team is excited about our three new additions is an understatement,” says Jake, Asia: Trail of the Tiger keeper. “Watching our otter family grow has been an incredible experience! Parents and pups are all doing great and the pups are growing like weeds, a little more every day hitting all the important milestones we should expect! Elbe and Jilin have been doing a great job caring for the pups, so our team has been very hands-off just letting them do their thing and going about daily care as normal as possible.”*

Due to the delicate nature of the otter pups, the introduction process back onto the outdoor habitat will be slow. When baby otters are born, they do not have their waterproof coat yet, so the introduction process to water will be gradual, starting no sooner than when they are 9 weeks old. During this time, Elbe and Jilin will teach the pups how to swim while still behind-the-scenes and in shallow pools to ensure the safety of each little one. Depending on the weather and the pups’ progression through their milestones, we hope to see the otters transition back outdoors and be visible to the public in roughly 14-16 weeks.

We are thrilled for this new chapter for our otters and will provide updates from our animal care team on our social media channels!



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### **About Asian small-clawed otters**

Asian small-clawed otters are native to Indonesia, southern China, southern India, and the Philippines. They inhabit areas with freshwater streams, rivers, and creeks, as well as coastal mangrove swamps. Asian small-clawed otters are the smallest otter species and are part of the mustelid family, which also includes weasels, skunks, badgers, and wolverines. Currently, they are listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red List with their most prevalent threats being habitat destruction, pollution, poaching, and the pet trade.

### **About the Virginia Zoo**

The Virginia Zoo, located in Norfolk, Virginia, is home to more than 700 exceptional animals representing over 150 fascinating species. Founded in 1901 and residing on 53 beautifully landscaped acres, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to saving and protecting the world's wildlife by inspiring a passion for nature and taking conservation action at home and around the world. The Virginia Zoo is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is recognized as a global leader in education, recreation, science, wildlife conservation, and animal care and welfare. For more than a century, the Zoo has connected adults, families, and school children with the natural world and its wildlife. The Virginia Zoo is open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. with last admission at 3 p.m. For admission prices and to learn more, visit [virginiazoo.org](http://www.virginiazoo.org).

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