

PRESS RELEASE

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Media download link for photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=3538&k=81ebdbfbfb>
password: batu

Zoo's new female orangutan, Batu, meets her future mate

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo has a new, red beauty: an adult female Sumatran orangutan named Batu (bah-too)!



The Orangutan Species Survival Plan identified Batu as a future breeding mate for Godek, a 12-year-old, male Sumatran orangutan who has lived at the zoo since 2017. Batu, also 12, arrived in May from Philadelphia Zoo. Species Survival Plans are conservation breeding programs across accredited zoos to help ensure healthy, self-sustaining populations of threatened and endangered species.

After completing a standard quarantine earlier this summer at the zoo's veterinary hospital, Batu was moved to the orangutan exhibit in off-view dens while she acclimated to her new home. According to Martin Ramirez, a mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo, the introduction process has been slow, but thoughtful. "Every animal is different and moves at its own pace during introductions. As we do with all our animals, we follow their cues on their timeline, not ours."

For the past few months, Batu had been meeting with Godek through "howdy" sessions, which allow restricted physical contact while a safety barrier separates the pair, such as mesh screening. While Godek showed interest in Batu, she was tentative at first. "Godek exhibited the usual behaviors of orangutans during introductions, such as spitting and pushing against the mesh at Batu, but she was aloof and shy," explained Ramirez. "Now, they're bonding, which is great news."

Carolyn Sellar, an orangutan keeper at Woodland Park Zoo, said Batu is confident, inquisitive and playful. "Batu is eager to see and explore everything and is so smart! She and Godek will have so much fun playing and being young orangutans together. We're lucky to have such an incredible orangutan join our Seattle family," said Sellar. "Batu means 'rock' in Malay, and she is going to be that to us here at Woodland Park Zoo as we begin our new foundation of a Sumatran breeding program for future generations."

The community can connect with these fascinating great apes by visiting Batu, Godek and the other orangutans in the zoo's Trail of Vines habitat: 49-year-old Melati and 40-year-old Belawan, both females, and 32-year-old Heran, a male. As introductions continue, viewing will be limited and determined on a day-by-day basis.

There are three species of orangutans that are found only in Southeast Asia: the Bornean orangutan native to the island of Borneo, and Sumatran and Tapanuli orangutans native to the island of Sumatra. A critically endangered species, orangutans belong to the family Hominidae, which includes all four great apes: gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos and orangutans.

Human overpopulation, logging, agriculture, conversion of forests to unsustainable monocultures, such as palm oil plantations, and other human activities are rapidly destroying forest environments required by orangutans for survival.

How to help save orangutans

- For Halloween and other sweet occasions, use this treat shopping guide that will delight trick-or-treaters and save forests and wildlife, such as orangutans, a world away:

www.zoo.org/palmoil. The list features companies that are committed to sourcing certified sustainable palm oil that is deforestation free.

- Show your love for orangutans by adopting the species through the zoo's [ZooParent](#) program, which supports the zoo's animal care, education and wildlife conservation efforts.
- Woodland Park Zoo supports the [HUTAN-Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Program](#) and [Gunung Palung Orangutan Conservation Program](#), both on the island of Borneo. Visiting the zoo and zoo memberships help support the zoo's more than 35 wildlife conservation projects in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Woodland Park Zoo offers a safe, outdoor experience for all. Visit zoo.org/visit for the latest information on the zoo's face covering policy. Zoo hours: 9:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m. daily.

For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500. Follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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