

PRESS RELEASE

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Zoo says goodbye to its only male tapir

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo had to make the difficult decision yesterday to euthanize its only male Malayan tapir, Bintang, due to age-related decline. Male tapirs have a life expectancy of 19 years in zoos. At 23 years old, Bintang was geriatric.

According to Dr. Misty Garcia, associate veterinarian at Woodland Park Zoo, Bintang had been under treatment for decreased mobility due to age-related arthritis since 2016. “Bintang was on a prescribed program of treatments which included laser therapy, massage therapy, pain medications and joint supplements. Over the last three months, the geriatric tapir experienced an overall decline in condition including decreased mobility and significant weight loss,” said Garcia. “The zoo’s animal care team had been monitoring him closely with daily observations of his health and quality of life. We had to make the difficult decision to humanely euthanize him.”

Bintang, fondly known as Binnie, was born at Woodland Park Zoo in 2000. From 2002 to 2014, under the recommendation of the Malayan Tapir [Species Survival Plan](#), Binnie lived at Sedgwick County Zoo (Wichita, Kan.) and Gladys Porter Zoo (Brownsville, Texas) and sired two offspring.

In 2014, Bintang returned to Woodland Park Zoo under a recommendation to breed with the zoo’s only female, Ulan (OO-lawn, like Mulan). Ulan gave birth to their first offspring, a daughter named Sempurna (sem-PURN-uh) in 2020. Ulan and Sempurna are the two remaining tapirs at the zoo and live in Trail of Vines.

“Bintang was such an incredible ambassador for his cousins in their natural range. Many visitors to Woodland Park Zoo have never seen a tapir before or heard of tapirs, so our tapirs inspire such awe and curiosity,” said Wendy Gardner, an animal keeper at Woodland Park Zoo.

Tapirs are among the most primitive large mammals in the world, changing little in appearance for millions of years. This prehistoric-looking animal looks like a massive pig with a long snout. Because they have an odd number of toes (four toes on each front foot, three on each back foot), their closest relatives are horses and rhinos. The Malayan tapir is the only Asian species among the four tapir species. Endangered, it is native to Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Myanmar, southern Thailand and possibly Laos. The average weight for adult Malayan tapirs is 750 pounds, although they can weigh up to 900 pounds.

“Tapirs in accredited zoos are rare; we will be working with the tapir management group to determine when we might be able to plan for another male tapir,” said Erin Sullivan, an animal curator at Woodland Park Zoo.

As a standard procedure, the zoo’s animal health team will perform a postmortem exam to further diagnose factors that may have contributed to Bintang’s death.

To celebrate the life of Bintang, become a Digital ZooParent by adopting a Malayan tapir. The [ZooParent](#) program supports the zoo’s animal care, education and wildlife conservation efforts in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Woodland Park Zoo partners with conservation projects in [Peninsular Malaysia](#) and Sumatra, where tapirs are found. One of the greatest threats to tapirs is loss of habitat. By protecting land for tigers, orangutans and hornbills, the zoo is also protecting land for tapirs. Protect



tapirs and the forests they live in by making informed purchasing decisions and buying products with certified [sustainable palm oil](#).

For more information about Woodland Park Zoo, visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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