

Media download link for photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=3902&k=b253fc204f>

Credit: Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren/Woodland Park Zoo

Photo identification of sloth bear Madhu is indicated at the end of the press release

**Young, male sloth bear to become a Fresnan
as he heads to Fresno Chaffee Zoo**



SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo’s male sloth bear, Madhu (muh-DOO), will be starting a new chapter in his life as he soon heads to a new home: Fresno Chaffee Zoo in Fresno, Calif. Madhu means “sweet, honey,” which is Hindi to represent India, one of several countries where sloth bears live.

Madhu and his twin sister, Lila (LEE-lah), were born on New Year’s in 2022 to first-time mom Kushali (kuu-SHAW-lee) and dad Bhutan (boo-TAHN). Compared to most other bear species, sloth bear cubs develop quickly; they begin walking at 1 month old, become independent at 2 to 3 years old, and become reproductively mature at 3 years old. Lila will head to a new home next spring.

At Fresno Chaffee Zoo, Madhu will be introduced to Zaara, a 4-year-old female sloth bear, a future mate and breeding companion. According to Fresno Zoo, the plan is to socialize them before breeding season. In the North American population, sloth bear births generally occur in late December to early January. Madhu will also be introduced to Asian small-clawed otters, Eric, Sebastian and Scuttle, who currently share the space with Zaara.

Sloth bears in zoos are rare, with only 38 individuals currently living in zoos accredited by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#). Madhu’s move to Fresno is under a recommendation by the Sloth Bear Species Survival Plan. [Species Survival Plans](#) are cooperative breeding programs across accredited zoos to help ensure healthy, genetically diverse, self-sustaining populations of select species or subspecies.

It’s always bittersweet for the Woodland Park Zoo family to bid farewell to its animals when they head to a new home. “Like his father, Bhutan, Madhu is a sweetheart and is much more cautious than his sister, Lila. Brother and sister love to wrestle, chase each other and run around playing in a big bundle of fur,” said Matt Cline, an animal keeper at Woodland Park Zoo. “While a big fan of honey and peanut butter, Madhu’s favorite thing is his hammocks. When not being playfully chased by his sister, he is usually hanging out in a hammock catching some sunshine and a nap. We are very hopeful his goofy and sweet personality will make staff and visitors at his new home turn into very big Madhu fans like all of us here.”

Sloth bears live in forests and grasslands in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. A vulnerable species, the survival of sloth bears is challenged by conflicts with humans and animals for space and food caused by deforestation, the bear parts trade for use in traditional Asian medicines and fragmented populations.

Woodland Park Zoo supports Wildlife SOS, a conservation organization in India that runs wildlife rescue centers and helps communities coexist with sloth bears and other native species. Wildlife SOS is conducting a large-scale habitat study of the nocturnal sloth bears using GPS collars to better understand the movements, population, home range, habitat selection and distribution of the elusive bears within areas that hold good populations. Visit www.zoo.org/donate to support Wildlife SOS.

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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Photo gallery:

Photo 2022_03_31 sloth bear cubs-16-phi: Left to right: cub Lila, mom Kushali, cub Madhu

Photo 2022_03_31 sloth bear cubs-14-phi: Left to right: cub Lila, mom Kushali, cub Madhu

Photo 2022_7misc July-23-phi: Left to right: cub Madhu, cub Lila

Three photos of individual bear: Madhu