

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Media download link for photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=4026&k=416ec87e34>

Photo credit: Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren/Woodland Park Zoo

## In time for Mother's Day: otter pups open their eyes!

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's new otter mom, Valkyrie, has an early Mother's Day present: her twin pups have opened their eyes!

The North American river otters, a female and male, were born March 29 to mom Valkyrie and dad Ziggy. The new pups currently weigh between 3 and 3½ pounds each.

Otters are born blind and completely helpless, relying solely on mom for care during the first year. "We're so happy the pups are growing and developing as they should. They're healthy, wiggly and active pups," said Pat Owen, an animal care manager at Woodland Park Zoo. "The pups are also beginning to take their first steps, another developmental milestone. It won't be long before they start venturing out of the nest box."

Stay tuned for fun updates on the otter pups at [www.zoo.org/zoobabies](http://www.zoo.org/zoobabies).

Valkyrie and her pups remain in an off-view, climate-controlled den to ensure continued nursing and bonding in a quiet environment. Animal care staff are closely monitoring the new family via a den cam. Dad Ziggy is currently separated from the family and can be seen in the Living Northwest Trail habitat.

### Otter Facts

- North American river otters are semi-aquatic and members of the weasel family.
- These energetic and incredibly social animals learn by playing. This helps them establish social bonds and practice their hunting techniques. Otters need to eat a lot so they can play a lot!
- Their habitat ranges over most of North America in coastal areas, estuaries, freshwater lakes, streams and rivers; they can be found in water systems all over Washington state.
- River otters consume a wide variety of prey such as fish, crayfish, amphibians and birds. At the top of the food chain, river otters are an excellent reflection of the health of local ecosystems.
- While five of the 13 existing otter species are endangered due to water pollution, overfishing of commercial stock and habitat destruction, the North American river otter population is not endangered.

### How to Help Otters

- Become a Carnivore Spotter and report and share sightings, interactions, and vocalizations of carnivores—including river otters, black bears, bobcats, cougars and coyotes—throughout the greater Seattle area:  
[www.zoo.org/carnivorespotter](http://www.zoo.org/carnivorespotter).



- Become a [ZooParent](#) and help provide exceptional care for the new river otter family and all of Woodland Park Zoo's amazing animals and support wildlife conservation efforts in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Current zoo hours: 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit [www.zoo.org](http://www.zoo.org) or call 206.548.2500. Follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

Accessibility: Information about accessibility and resources, one-to-one aides, sighted guides, mobility equipment rentals, and a sensory map and tools can be found at [www.zoo.org/access](http://www.zoo.org/access). For questions or to request disability accommodations for zoo programs or events, contact [zooinfo@zoo.org](mailto:zooinfo@zoo.org).

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