

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

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Media download link for photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=4015&k=9b8b5339cf>

Photo credit: Jeremy Dwyer-Lindgren/Woodland Park Zoo

2-month-old otter pups show off swimming skills *Public debut: press invited before the zoo opens*



WHAT: Woodland Park Zoo's two river otter pups, a male and female, have aced their swimming lessons and have graduated to the outdoor pool and habitat. Before the zoo opens to the public the press will have an opportunity to watch the yet-to-be named pups twirling, rolling, somersaulting, dog paddling and just being otterly fun!

While otters are highly skilled swimmers, moms need to teach their pups how to swim, just like humans do! For the last couple of weeks, mama Valkyrie has been giving her 2-month-old pups swimming lessons in a kiddie pool located in the off-view den. What do lessons entail for otters? Valkyrie picks up each pup by the scruff of their neck and dunks them in and out, much like dunking donuts in milk, but here it's dunkin' otters!

In the outdoor pool, visitors may see Valkyrie still teaching the pups as she immerses them under water and brings them up for air. But please be patient. For the next several weeks, a regular viewing schedule will be unpredictable while the pups acclimate to the outdoor habitat. Mom is given the choice to bring her family indoors. Stay tuned for fun updates on the otter pups at www.zoo.org/zoobabies.

WHEN: **Friday, June 7, 8:30–9:30 a.m. before the zoo opens**

WHERE: Woodland Park Zoo's river otter habitat. Meet PR staff at the West Entrance at Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55th & N. 56th Sts. Park in the Penguin Lot at N. 55th St. & Phinney Ave. N. or Otter Lot off N. 59th St. & Phinney Ave. N.

INFO: North American river otters are semi-aquatic and members of the weasel family. 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. These energetic and incredibly social animals learn by playing. This helps them establish social bonds and practice their hunting techniques. 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.

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. 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 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. For questions or to request disability accommodations for zoo programs or events, contact zooinfo@zoo.org.

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