

Oldest reproductive orangutan dies in France

September 27 2012



Major celebrates his 50th birthday at the La Boissiere-du-Doree zoo near Nantes, western France in July 2012. A Sumatran orangutan believed to be the oldest reproductive specimen in captivity has died at a zoo in western France.

A Sumatran orangutan believed to be the oldest reproductive specimen in captivity has died at a zoo in western France, a few weeks after celebrating his 50th birthday.

Major, a 125-kilogramme (275-pound) father of 16 who celebrated his birthday in July, died overnight Tuesday at the zoo in La Boissiere-du-Dore near Nantes, zoo director Sebastien Laurent said.

"I saw him playing on Monday, as he often did, with his children. On Tuesday he ate normally, made his bed and followed all his little habits," Laurent said.

"And on Wednesday the guys found him dead on his bed, his body still warm. He lived at the [zoo](#) for 23 years and this is our mascot that has left us, it's hard," he said.

He said Major's body would be preserved and stored at the Museum of Natural History in Paris and could be used in future displays.

Born in 1962 in Indonesia, Major was captured seven years later and held in zoos in Germany before being transferred to France in 1989.

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