

Mating season over for Japan's pandas

March 15 2013



This photo, taken by Tokyo Zoological Park Society on March 11, 2013, shows a pair of giant pandas, Ri Ri (L) and Shin Shin (R) mating at Tokyo's Ueno Zoo. The zoo put its pandas back on display on Friday after keepers decided mating season was over, with wellwishers hoping their two attempts would bear fruit.

A Tokyo zoo put its pandas back on display on Friday after keepers decided mating season was over, with wellwishers hoping their two attempts would bear fruit.

Shin Shin and her companion Ri Ri were given privacy earlier this week

after they started showing signs of being in season, with managers at Ueno Zoo saying the notoriously shy animals would have more success away from prying eyes.

Two successful couplings—one on Monday evening and one the following morning—raised hopes that Shin Shin might have conceived.

Footage of one episode was put on the zoo's website and was also broadcast on mainstream news programmes

"We will continue monitoring her to see whether she is pregnant," said the zoo on its website.

Broadcasters showed excited children at the panda enclosures on Friday, with several of the youngsters expressing the enthusiasm for the idea of [baby panda](#).

Shin Shin gave birth to a cub on July 5 last year, the first [giant panda](#) born at the zoo in 24 years. The animal later died from pneumonia.

Pandas, whose natural habitat lies in mountainous southwestern China, have a low reproductive rate and are under pressure from factors such as [habitat loss](#). China has about 1,600 pandas living in the wild.

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