

First tiger cub born at London Zoo in 17 years

October 2 2013



Screengrab released by ZSL London from a video taken by a hidden camera at London Zoo on September 22, 2013 shows five-year-old Sumatran tiger Merati giving birth to a single cub

A tiger cub has been born at London Zoo for the first time in 17 years, with the moment captured by hidden cameras, the zoo announced Wednesday.

Five-year-old Sumatran [tiger](#) Melati gave birth to the cub on September 22 after a six-minute labour. The pregnancy had lasted approximately 105 days.

It was kept a secret by zookeepers who were nervous about the pregnancy and kept a close eye on the first-time mother via special cameras in a bid not to disturb her.

The Sumatran tiger, a subspecies whose natural habitat is the jungles of Sumatra, Indonesia, is now classified as critically endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

The current wild population is estimated at just 300, down from around 1,000 in the 1970s, and the remaining animals are threatened by poachers, habitat loss and human conflict.

"We are simply over the moon about the birth of the tiger cub," zookeeper Paul Kybett said. "It's a momentous occasion for everyone at ZSL London Zoo and a real cause for celebration.

"We were nervous about the pregnancy, as it was Melati's first cub and we didn't know how she'd react. When it came to her due date, we were all watching our monitors with bated breath.

"The actual birth happened very quickly and Melati's maternal instincts kicked in immediately as she started licking the cub all over and it soon began wriggling around—we couldn't have asked for a smoother birth!"

The newborn tiger is a direct descendant of the [zoo](#)'s last cub, Hari, who is the father of the mother Melati.

The [cub](#), whose sex has yet to be determined, will stay out of the public

eye "for a few more weeks" in a special cubbing den before visitors are allowed to see it.

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