

First Taiwan-born panda cub to meet public in January

November 24 2013



A Taipei City Zoo handout photo released on October 14, 2013 shows panda cub Yuan Zai

The first Taiwan-born giant panda cub is healthy and set to make her public debut in January, a zoo official said Sunday after panda mania swept the island in recent months.

"Yuan Zai is growing up healthily and she is practising climbing. We

expect that she will be fit to be moved to an exhibition enclosure to be seen by the public in early January around six months old," the official said on condition of anonymity.

The cub was delivered on July 6 in Taipei city zoo following a series of artificial insemination sessions after her parents—Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan—failed to conceive naturally.

Zookeepers had to separate tiny Yuan Zai from her mother Yuan Yuan a few days after birth. They raised her in an incubator with round-the-clock monitoring after she was slightly injured while being reared.

The mother and daughter were reunited for the first time on August 13, an encounter that saw the giant panda licking and cuddling her baby before they fell asleep together inside a cage. Footage was broadcast around the world and made waves on the Internet.

The [cub](#), which weighed 180 grams (6.35 ounces) at birth, weighs 9,908 grams after 141 days, the [zoo](#) said.

Tuan Tuan and Yuan Yuan were given to Taiwan by China in December 2008 and have become star attractions at Taipei Zoo, as well as a symbol of warming ties between the former bitter rivals.



A Taipei City Zoo handout photo released on October 14, 2013 shows a staff member measuring panda cub Yuan Zai

Fewer than 1,600 pandas remain in the wild, mainly in China's Sichuan province, with a further 300 in captivity around the world.

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