

Rare white lion triplets born in Poland (Update)

February 4 2014



White lioness Azira lies in their cage with two of her three white cubs that were born last week in a private zoo in Borysew, in central Poland, on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2014. Zoo owner Andrzej Pabich says white lions often have defects the prevent giving birth, or the mother rejects her cubs, but two and a half-year-old Azira has been patiently feeding and caring for her little ones, as three and a half-

year-old Sahim, who fathered them, watches from a neighboring cage. (AP Photo/Czarek Sokolowski)

The owner of a private zoo in central Poland said Tuesday he feels three times lucky with the birth of white lion triplets who are getting loving care from their mother.

Andrzej Pabich, head of the zoo in Borysew, said white lions often have defects that prevent giving birth, or mothers may reject the cubs. Triplets are rare.

The white lion is a rare color mutation of the Kruger subspecies of African lion found in some wildlife reserves in South Africa and in zoos around the world. Pabich says about 90 of them are now in existence.

He told The Associated Press that his 2 ½ -year-old white lioness Azira has been patiently feeding and caring for the cubs, which were born Jan. 28. Their father, 3 ½-year old Sahim, who is also white, is kept in a neighboring cage and roars at anyone who comes too close to his family.

"Luckily the birth went all smoothly," Pabich said. "We had doubts whether it would be all OK: won't (she) reject them, will she have milk? But all went luckily well in the end. The mother accepted (the cubs), is feeding them and is very caring."

The zoo will name the cubs after they grow a little more and can be weighed and identified as either male or female, Pabich said. They will be allowed on an outdoor run in April.

Opened in 2008, the zoo has animals of 80 species, including white tigers and white camels, and drew 160,000 visitors last year.



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Pabich is a machinery mechanic who loves animals and his son, Dariusz, and a team of veterinarians work at the zoo.



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Citation: Rare white lion triplets born in Poland (Update) (2014, February 4) retrieved 18 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-02-rare-white-lion-triplets-born.html>

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