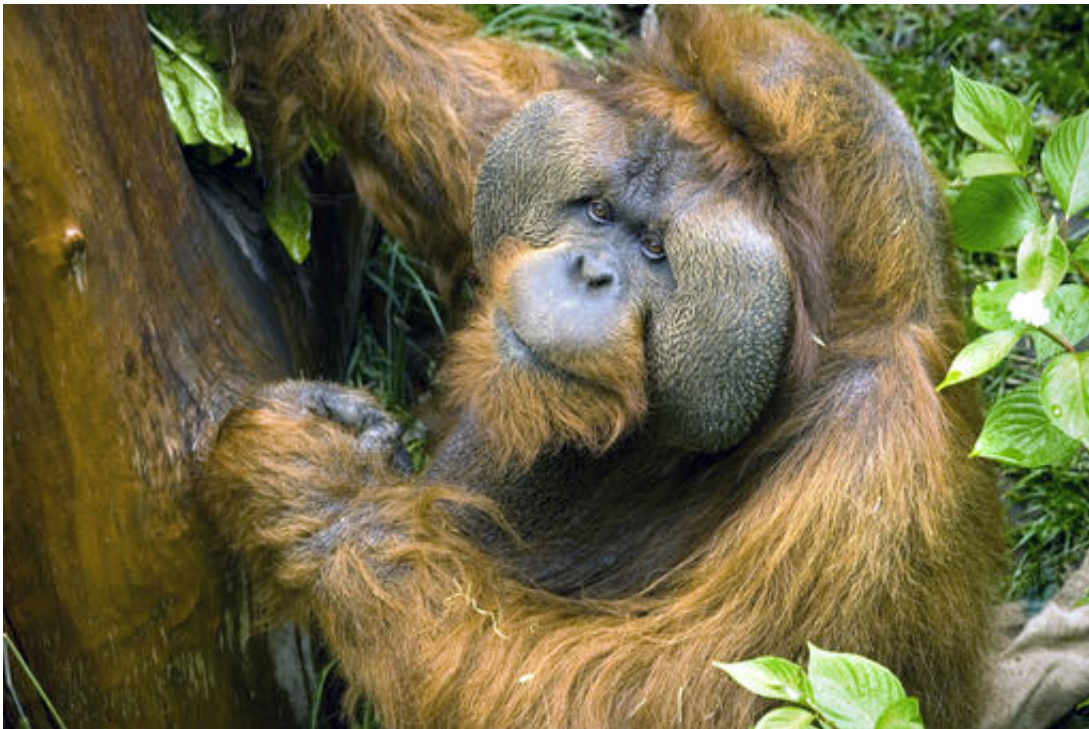


North America's oldest orangutan born in zoo dies in Seattle

March 25 2016



This 2006 photo provided by the Woodland Park Zoo shows a orangutan named Towan at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. Towan, 48 years, died Thursday, March 24, 2016, during a veterinary examination. He had been taking medication for respiratory issues, which zoo officials say hadn't improved his condition. (Ryan Hawk/Woodland Park Zoo via AP)

The Seattle zoo says North America's oldest orangutan born in a zoo has died after struggling with respiratory problems.

The 48-year-old primate named Towan died during a veterinary examination Thursday. Zoo officials say he had been taking medication that hadn't improved his condition.

The birth of Towan and his twin sister, Chinta, at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo in 1968 received widespread attention because they were the first twin orangutans born in captivity.



This 2013 photo provided by the Woodland Park Zoo shows a orangutan named Towan at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. Towan, 48 years, died Thursday, March

24, 2016 ,during a veterinary examination. He had been taking medication for respiratory issues, which zoo officials say hadn't improved his condition. (Dennis Dow/Woodland Park Zoo via AP)

Zoo officials described the 257-pound primate as an accomplished artist. He used paint pens and colored chalks to make art, which sold for up to \$1,000.

A statement by the zoo's mammal curator, Martin Ramirez, says Towan's death is a "deep loss for our zoo family and those who came to love and admire him as we have."



This 2008 photo provided by the Woodland Park Zoo shows a orangutan named Towan at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo. Towan, 48 years, died Thursday, March 24, 2016, during a veterinary examination. He had been taking medication for respiratory issues, which zoo officials say hadn't improved his condition. (Dennis Dow/Woodland Park Zoo via AP)

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