Colombian zoo celebrates birth of endangered spider monkey

September 14 2018

A zoo in Colombia is celebrating the birth of a baby spider monkey, a rare species in danger of extinction.

The monkey was born on Sunday at the San Fe zoological park in Colombia's second city, Medellin, but so far staff know little about it, Carolina Diaz, the flora and fauna coordinator, told AFP.

"We still don't know if it's female or male because we try to leave the baby with its mother in the most natural way possible," said Diaz.

"Right now, the baby is completely dependent on its mother."

The black-haired monkey weighs around one kilogram (2.2 pounds) and is about 20-centimeters (eight inches) tall. It is the third such birth in the zoo since 2012.

The San Fe zoo now has 20 spider monkeys, although Diaz expects that number to rise as one male and several females amongst them are fertile.

"The coming year we'll probably have more births," she added.

Spider monkeys, whose natural habitat is tropical rainforests, are among the 25 most endangered primates in the world.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature says the species is in critical danger of extinction.

Diaz blames that on the destruction of their habitat for livestock and agriculture as well as hunting and [illegal trafficking](link).

In Colombia, the monkeys live on the banks of the Magdalena river, the largest in the country.

It's been a time of many celebrations in the San Fe zoo over the last few days, with the births of a [squirrel monkey](link), three grey crowned cranes and two pygmy marmosets.

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