

## Baby pudu named for Korean pop star debuts at LA Zoo

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A baby pudu named Haechan, roams inside his enclosure at the Los Angeles Zoo on Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019. Fans of a Korean pop star have raised more than \$2,000 to name the baby deer at the Los Angeles Zoo after their favorite doe-eyed singer. The zoo's new baby pudu was named Haechan after a member of K-pop group NCT and its two subgroups, NCT 127 and NCT Dream. The pudu made its media debut at the zoo Thursday, though he has previously been on public display after he was born Dec. 19. (AP Photo/Richard Vogel)

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deer at the Los Angeles Zoo after their favorite doe-eyed singer.

The zoo's new baby pudu was named Haechan after a member of K-pop group NCT and its two subgroups, NCT 127 and NCT Dream.

The southern pudu made its media debut Thursday, though he has previously been on public display after he was born Dec. 19.

Donors typically name animals born at the zoo. But after tweeting about the newborn pudu, the zoo realized Haechan's fans had long thought the 18-year-old looked like the tiny deer that's native to South America.

"It was immediate," said Katherine Spada, the zoo's social media manager. "People started saying, 'You've got to name the pudu Haechan. He looks just like Haechan.'"

Spada said the zoo had no idea who Haechan or NCT was but started researching.

"We don't really know how the nickname started except that Haechan's cute and pudus are cute," she said.

Taking inspiration from a Tumblr dedicated to the similarities between the singer and the fawn, the zoo then posted images of the pudu next to photos of Haechan, including two in which both human and animal similarly have one of their limbs raised, the deer its hind leg and the teen star his arm in a dance move on stage.



A baby pudu named Haechan, sticks out his tongue as he roams inside his enclosure at the Los Angeles Zoo on Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019. Fans of a Korean pop star have raised more than \$2,000 to name the baby deer at the Los Angeles Zoo after their favorite doe-eyed singer. The zoo's new baby pudu was named Haechan after a member of K-pop group NCT and its two subgroups, NCT 127 and NCT Dream. The pudu made its media debut at the zoo Thursday, though he has previously been on public display after he was born Dec. 19. (AP Photo/Richard Vogel)

The zoo wrote that if fans raised \$2,000 to go toward [conservation work](#), the pudu would be named Haechan. The post was retweeted and liked more than 28,000 times and the money was raised within three hours.

The zoo invited Haechan to visit his namesake but the singer hasn't indicated whether he plans to do so. Haechan has been recovering from fracturing his shin bone during practice in December.

NCT, which stands for Neo Culture Technology, debuted in 2016 and is designed to have an unlimited number of members, with subgroups based in various cities. Its Seoul-based subgroup, NCT 127, released their first full-length album, Regular-Irregular, in October and performed its new single "Regular" on "Jimmy Kimmel Live" the same month.

Native to Chile and Argentina, southern pudus are some of the smallest deer in the world and are considered near-threatened.

Spada said zookeepers were enjoying all the unexpected attention on one of its lesser-known species. For his part, the hoofed Haechan didn't appear phased by the media attention Thursday, nibbling on greens and nuzzling his mother as photographers snapped his picture.



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"We hope the fame doesn't go to his head," Spada said.

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