

Berlin-born polar bear cub named after football club Hertha

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Hertha was born on December 1 in the city's Tierpark zoo and is the heir to late lamented superstar Knut

Berlin's latest zoo celebrity, a fluffy polar bear cub, has been named "Hertha" after the capital's football club, it was announced Tuesday.

"Berlin has a new darling and we have adopted her," the Bundesliga club Hertha Berlin said on its Twitter account.

Hertha was born on December 1 in the city's Tierpark zoo and is the heir to late lamented superstar Knut, who drew huge crowds to a rival zoo, Berlin's Zoological Garden, until he died suddenly in 2011.

After the eagerly anticipated announcement the [football club](#) quickly unveiled posters showing off Hertha under the slogan: "In Berlin you can be everything. Even a [polar bear](#) called Hertha".

The [club](#) also posted a video of its grizzly bear mascot "Herthinho" travelling from its Olympic Stadium ground in west Berlin to Tierpark in the east to meet the latest arrival.

According to the zoo's website, it costs at least 1,000 euros (\$1,120) to individually sponsor a "large" animal for a year with an average adult polar bear weighing between 385 and 410 kilogrammes (848 and 904 pounds).

Hertha was greeted by a phalanx of cameras last month when she stepped out in public, frolicking with her mother Tonja in Tierpark's polar bear enclosure at a media photo-op.



Hertha was greeted by a phalanx of cameras when she stepped out in public last month with her mother Tonja

The mortality of polar bears tends to be very high in the first weeks and Tonja lost three of her cubs in less than two years.

To the great relief of her keepers, Hertha has made it through the crucial first three months when a captive cub's chances of survival hang in the balance.

To celebrate, Hertha has now been named, but her father Wolodja, who has been moved to a zoo in the Netherlands, will miss the celebrations.



Herthinho (L), the mascot of Bundesliga club Hertha Berlin, and a person dressed in a polar bear suit placed gifts for polar bear cub Hertha

Every birth of a polar bear is greeted with delight in Berlin since Knut became an overnight celebrity, as visitors flocked to glimpse the white cub, born in 2006.

Berliners took Knut to their hearts after he was abandoned by his mother and raised by Thomas Doerflein, a zoo employee who also became a minor celebrity.

A European Union breeding plan is attempting to boost numbers of the bear, whose population in the wild is estimated at around 26,000.



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