

Tiny, pink and identical: Giant panda twins born at Madrid zoo

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Giant step for panda kind: The birth of twin cubs is a 'great contribution' for the conservation of the species.

A giant panda gave birth to twin cubs at Madrid zoo on Monday in what officials hailed was a "great contribution" to the conservation of the

vulnerable species.

Madrid's Zoo Aquarium said its female panda—Hua Zui Ba—gave birth to the first cub at around 8:30 am after more than four hours of labour, while the second followed just after midday.

Footage of the first one being born showed a tiny pink hairless cub squeaking furiously after emerging into the light, its mother gently cleaning it up and placing it onto her stomach.

The newborns will be "totally dependent" on their mother for the first four months until they can walk on their own, a zoo statement said.

Two technicians from China's Chengdu panda breeding centre will help local vets care for the pair, whose sex has not yet been determined, it added.

The cubs are the fifth and sixth of Hua Zui Ba and her partner Bing Xing, it added.

Their [birth](#) is "a great contribution to the field of [conservation](#) of threatened species," the zoo said.

Female pandas often have two offspring at a time.

Panda reproduction—in captivity or in the wild—is notoriously difficult, experts say, as few of the animals get in the mood or, even when they do, they do not know how to mate.

Further complicating matters, the window for conception is narrow since female pandas are in heat only once a year, for about one or two days.

The [giant panda](#) is listed as a vulnerable [species](#) by the International

Union for Conservation of Nature, with fewer than 2,000 thought to remain in the wild.

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