

Endangered orangutan in New Orleans expecting twins

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In this image provided by the Audubon Nature Institute, Menari, critically endangered Sumatran orangutan, climbs in her enclosure at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, on Sept. 25, 2015. Menari is pregnant with twins, the zoo in New Orleans announced Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021. The births in December or January

will be the first for Menari, 12, but the third and fourth sired by Jambi, a male brought to New Orleans in late 2018 from a zoo in Germany. Credit: Susan Poag/Audubon Nature Institute via AP

A critically endangered Sumatran orangutan in New Orleans is pregnant with twins, the zoo in New Orleans announced Thursday.

"We are very excited about this pregnancy," Bob MacLean, senior veterinarian at the Audubon Zoo, said in a news release. "Twinning is extremely rare in orangutans—there is only about a 1% chance of this happening."

The births in December or January will be the first for Menari, 12, but the third and fourth sired by Jambi, a male brought to New Orleans in late 2018 from a zoo in Germany.

It may be six years or more before the group's next babies.

Sumatran orangutans wean their offspring at about 7 years old and have the longest period between births of any mammals—8.2 to 9.3 years, according to the [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#).

The great apes named for their long [red hair](#) have been decimated by hunting as well as the destruction of the forests and peat swamps where they spend nearly all their time up in trees.

About 13,500 are believed to exist in sustainable wild populations, and "overall numbers continue to decline dramatically," according to the IUCN.

Watching matriarch Feliz and Reese, who came to New Orleans in 2018

from ABQ BioPark in Albuquerque, give [birth](#) to and bring up their daughters has helped prepare hand-raised Menari for motherhood, officials said.



In this image provided by the Audubon Nature Institute, Jambi, a male orangutan in the Orangutan, sits in an exhibit at the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, on Feb. 6, 2019. A critically endangered Sumatran orangutan in New Orleans is pregnant with twins, the zoo in New Orleans announced Thursday, Oct. 21, 2021. The births in December or January will be the first for Menari, 12, but the third and fourth sired by Jambi, a male brought to New Orleans in late 2018 from a zoo in Germany. Credit: Susan Poag/Audubon Nature Institute via AP

Bulan was born in July 2019 to Feliz, who also is Menari's mother. Reese's daughter Madu was born in February.

The zoo said keepers and veterinarians are giving Menari daily training and enrichment sessions to prepare her for motherhood and the possibility that she might need help raising one or both.

If all goes well, the orangutan twins will be the second pair born at Audubon.

Bon Temps and Lagniappe, nicknamed Bonnie and Lana, were hand-raised after their birth in 1985 to an [orangutan](#) named Sarah. Bonnie died in 2016 at Zoo Miami; Lana, 36, is in Greenville Zoo in South Carolina.

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