

Florida zoo welcomes furry baby Hoffman's two-toed sloth

February 6 2024, by CODY JACKSON and FREIDA FRISARO



A baby sloth is seen with its mother at the Palm Beach Zoo Conservation Society, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024 in West Palm Beach, Fla. Zookeepers have been monitoring the baby sloth and its mother, Wilbur, since witnessing the birth early in the morning of Jan. 23. Credit: Palm Beach Zoo via AP

An adorable, furry baby Hoffman's two-toed sloth has made its debut at

zoo in Florida.

Zookeepers at the [Palm Beach Zoo & Conservation Society](#) have been monitoring the baby sloth and its mother, Wilbur, since witnessing the birth early in the morning of Jan. 23.

"This happened right in front of my eyes as we were on a 24-hour watch," said Kelly Fad, the zoo's general curator who also witnessed the birth. "The hanging mom literally scoops down and helps baby come up onto her body. She starts cleaning and the nursing started within just a couple of hours."

Wilbur, who was the last sloth born at the Palm Beach Zoo 21 years ago, and her mate Dustin are part of a professional scientific breeding program called the Species Survival Plan. It manages the population of sloths in human care since their genetics may contribute to [wild populations](#) in the future, zoo officials said.

Fad says Wilbur and Dustin were matched in a way she compared to dating apps for humans.

Turns out, they were a perfect match.

"We work with other zoos. There's a keeper, species survival plan coordinator so that we can find the best genetic matches," she said.



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The goal is to "coordinate and work together so that we can help the conservation of these guys and have the best genetics and diversity possible in managed care."

Male sloths do not play any part in the raising of babies, so Dustin remains in his original habitat at the zoo.

Zoo officials are waiting to identify the baby sloth's gender before deciding on a name.



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"Gender is often a little bit hard to determine," Fad said. "The mother's name is Wilbur, which is typically more of a male name. And that's because it's not always easy to tell. So we like to give it a few weeks, and really be able to know for certain what the gender is before we start with the naming process."

But the public is now welcome to visit the baby [sloth](#).

"We're excited for guests to witness the development of this unique little baby," said Renee Bumpus, Chief Animal Conservation Officer. "In the meantime, Wilbur is very attentive, and the baby will stay closely attached to mom for a while."

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