

Asian small-clawed otters are relatively small, about the size of a house cat. The young are relatively slow to develop and do not open their eyes until about 40 days after birth.

KNOXVILLE ZOO CONTINUES WHITE RHINO SUCCESS

Knoxville Zoo continued its success as a breeder of the southern white rhinoceros with two births in 2004. The two rhinos, Roscoe P. born in February and Mayor Bill born in August, are doing well and are on exhibit together. The pair marks the 26th and 27th rhinos born at the Zoo since the mid-70s.

WILDLIFE SAFARI WELCOMES NEW LITTERS OF CHEETAHS

On 7 May 2004, Wildlife Safari welcomed the park's first litter of cheetah cubs in five years. The 2.2 cubs are healthy and visible to guests from the Drive-Thru. On 1 October 2004, Wildlife Safari welcomed a second litter of 2.2 cubs. These births are important to Wildlife Safari as the cheetah symbolizes the park's conservation mission. This success is just one step in the park's plan to expand its footing in the realm of conservation and breeding of endangered species.

Wildlife Safari began breeding cheetahs in 1973, with the first successful litter of

four cubs born to Kruger (male) and Trian (female). Since then, 35 litters and 143 cheetahs have been born at the park. These statistics place Wildlife Safari as one of the top breeders of cheetahs in the U.S. and the western hemisphere. The park is especially excited about this year's litters from their female, Topaz, as she is the great-great-granddaughter of Kruger and Trian.

LITTLE ROCK ZOO ANNOUNCES BIRTH OF SLOTH BEARS

On 26 December 2004, 10-year old Nocona and 13-year old Francois became proud parents of two sloth bear cubs. The 1.1 cubs are being raised by their mother. Nocona had her first cubs last December, but neither survived, which is not unusual for first time mothers.

Sloth bears usually have one to three cubs with two being the most common. Adults weigh approximately 175 to 300 plus pounds. At two days old, the first opportunity the Zoo had to weigh the cubs, the female weighed 1 pound 1 ounce and the male weighed 1 pound 1 ½ ounces. The cubs are gaining weight daily, and by the time they begin walking at four weeks of age, they should weigh around three to four pounds.



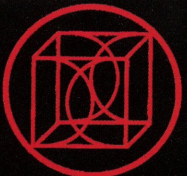
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Depending on the weather and their health, the sloth bear cubs will go on exhibit in April. Nocona was born at the Little Rock Zoo on 11 December 1994 and Francois was born at the

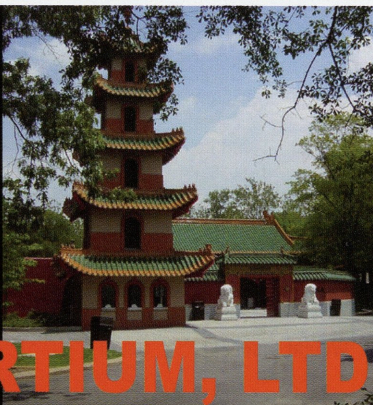
National Zoo on 21 January 1991 and came to the Little Rock Zoo in April 2003 as recommended by the AZA sloth bear SSP.

Sloth bears are typically nocturnal. A distinguishing feature of the sloth bear is a white or cream colored U-shaped patch of fur on the chest. Sloth bears feed extensively on termites and have special adaptations for doing this. The lips are capable of protruding, and the inner pair of upper incisors are missing, which forms a gap through which termites can be sucked in. The sucking noises made by feeding in this manner can be heard from over 300 feet away.

Sloth bears are found in forested areas and in grasslands, predominantly at lower elevations and they favor drier forests. They are found in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The average life span of a sloth bear in captivity is 25 to 30 years. ■



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