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Press release

Pure Bliss

Panda twins move into their own bed at Zoo Berlin

Four weeks after their birth, the little panda cubs at Zoo Berlin still have one thing above all else on their daily programme: lots and lots of sleep! And that goes particularly well in the panda girls' new, cosy "bed", which was built especially for their needs in Zoo Berlin's workshop. They stretch and stretch with relish, grunt softly, yawn briefly and as soon as they have found the most comfortable lying position, they return to the land of dreams.

The two Berlin panda cubs are now a good month old and are looking more and more like 'real' panda bears. Not only have they developed the typical black and white colouring, they have also increased their birth weight more than tenfold. They also weigh almost the same: the sisters weigh 1,694 and 1,650 grams respectively. 'The two cubs are developing excellently. They can now hear and regulate their body temperature independently. They are therefore no longer dependent on the warming incubators and have now moved into the much more spacious bed,' reports biologist and panda curator Dr Florian Sicks, adding: 'The bed was lovingly built by hand from wood and Plexiglas for their brothers Pit and Paule in our zoo carpentry workshop in 2019. We are delighted that it can now be used again.' The panda cot is around two square metres in size and the lying surface is around 40 cm high. Inside, cosy blankets ensure a cosy atmosphere. A thermometer ensures that the cubs always have a cosy temperature of around 25 degrees, even in the new, open bed.

The two cubs (born on 22 August 2024) continue to take turns with mum Meng Meng (11) and drink exclusively from her. The young panda family will spend the 'familiarisation period' in the rear area of the panda barn for the time being and will not be visible to zoo guests until further notice. Even in the wild, male pandas are not involved in rearing cubs. Therefore, panda dad Jiao Qing (14) can still be seen eating bamboo and relaxing in the Panda Garden for zoo guests.

Background:

Without conservation measures, the giant panda would most likely already be extinct. The giant panda is a unique specialist with specific needs. Thanks to intensive measures against poaching and the promotion of protected areas and connecting corridors, the population has recovered somewhat, but the giant panda is classified as 'endangered' on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with just under 2,000 individuals in its natural habitat. The fragmentation of its habitat by roads, railway lines and agricultural land is a major problem for the solitary animal.

Zoo Berlin has been home to Germany's only giant pandas since summer 2017. On 31 August 2019, female panda Meng Meng gave birth to two baby pandas. They were the first panda offspring ever born in Germany. Pit and Paule left Zoo Berlin in December 2023 and



have been living at the Chengdu Panda Base in China ever since. In March of this year, after intensive observation and careful preparation by an international team of experts, Meng Meng was artificially inseminated. Female giant pandas are only able to reproduce for around 72 hours a year, and the fragmentation of their natural habitat makes it difficult for the animals to find each other at mating time.