

New Bedford's Buttonwood Park Zoo's endangered Red Panda cubs reach first month of age

"The Buttonwood Park Zoo is proud to announce the birth of two red panda cubs, the second successful litter in BPZ00's 129-year history.

BPZ00's female red panda, 5-year-old Marie, gave birth to two cubs on May 27, 2023. The cubs underwent initial health screenings at 3 days old with one weighing in at 58 grams and the other at 125 grams. Marie, now a seasoned mom, is spending time behind the scenes bonding with the cubs. Mom and babies are all doing well.



Red Pand cub at 15-days old. Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.

The cubs will remain in the nest box, which is inside the red panda's night house, for approximately the next two months.

Red pandas are born with their eyes closed and they typically open somewhere between day 17 and 19; now 30 days, both cubs' eyes have opened, and they have begun to explore the nest box. The cubs will venture outside when they can safely navigate the perching in their habitat.

The cubs will remain with Marie for at least a year.

Jacob, BPZ00's 6-year-old male red panda, and Marie were brought to New Bedford based on a recommendation as part of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Species Survival Plan (SSP), which the Buttonwood Park Zoo is actively participating in. The goal of the SSP is to cooperatively manage animal populations to ensure the sustainability of a healthy and genetically diverse population while enhancing the conservation of this species in the wild.



Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.

BPZ00 is a Partner in Conservation with the Red Panda Network by helping in their campaign to Plant a Red Panda Home in Nepal. Once restored, the critical forest corridor that

connects Nepal and India will be part of the Panchthar-Ilam-Taplejung Red Panda Protected Forest in Eastern Nepal: the world's FIRST protected area dedicated to red panda!

About Red Pandas

Red pandas, *Ailurus fulgens fulgens*, live in high-altitude temperate forests of Nepal, northeastern India, Bhutan and part of China. Listed as Endangered by the International Union of Conservation of Nature, the global red panda population has declined by 50% over the last 20 years. Primarily threatened by habitat loss, red pandas are also susceptible to climate change, poaching, livestock herding and disease.



Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.

It is estimated that there are less than 10,000 and as few as 2,500 red pandas remaining in the wild. Currently, there are 240 red pandas at 85 AZA accredited institutions who are working together to save this endangered species.

Primarily bamboo eaters, red pandas need to eat 20-30% of their body weight each day due to the high amount of

indigestible fiber present in bamboo. Thanks to the success of the Zoo's Community Bamboo Program, the red pandas, elephants and others enjoy various species of bamboo harvested from private landowners throughout the community."-Buttonwood Park Zoo.



Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.