

Breeding Programmes at Papanack Park Zoo

Papanack Park Zoo is involved in a number of National and International breeding programs. The primary objective for these breeding programs is the conservation of endangered species.

Snow Leopards:

The first program that we became involved in was the Species Survival Program for Snow Leopards. Georgina, our first Snow Leopard arrived in 1995 from Jungle Cat World in Orono, Ontario, but it was not until three years later in 1998 that we welcomed her mate from Germany. Yashin, as he was aptly named by a group of visiting school children, proved to be a good mate and Gemini, the first Snow Leopard to be born at Papanack arrived on the birthday of Keith Forgie, the owner of Papanack in 1999. These births were followed by a set of twins, Grumpy and Grumpier, then Baggins and Bella. Most of the babies have left for other facilities, but Grumpy is still with us and will replace Yashin and Georgina when they retire from the breeding program. His new mate will be a young female named Berlin, who came to us from Berlin, Germany! Yashin went to Assiniboine Park Zoo in Winnipeg this fall to continue his part in the species survival program there. We are anxiously awaiting news of his success. With less than 700 snow leopards in captivity globally and less than 20 of those in Canada it is essential to maintain good genetic diversity. Due to the political situation in the countries that provide the native habitat for snow leopards it is not practical for us to re-release them back into the wild at the present time, so the primary focus of the SSP is to create a sufficiently diverse gene pool of captive snow leopards to guarantee success when they are eventually re-released back into the wild.

White Bengal Tigers:

Phoenix and Aquarius – two of our white tigers are away on breeding loan, but we still have our male, Neptune and our snowball female Venus at Papanack. White Tigers are not Albinos; they usually have some pigmentation in the form of dark stripes and have blue eyes. Albinos have no pigmentation and red eyes. At present, Neptune is too young to breed with Venus, but hopefully in the future we will see White Tiger cubs born at Papanack, as part of the U.K. based Global Tiger Patrol.

Your Admission Dollars at Work!

For those of you who have supported Papanack since the beginning, you will have seen the expansion and improvements that we have made to the zoo over the years. To those of you who are visiting for the first time, the changes may not be as obvious. To give you some insight into the growth, the original area of the zoo is now Lemur junction, where our Junior Zoo Keeper Camp takes place and some of the surrounding area which is now used for storage and maintenance. So you can see we have grown quite a bit since then! Many of the enclosures that were built in the early days of Papanack have now been renovated, expanded and re-structured, such as the lion and bear enclosures. Your admission dollars also go towards feeding the animals that we house at the zoo, both those that are on show and those that, for one reason or another, are off-exhibit. Even though we are only open for a few short months in the summer, the animals still need to be fed and taken care of all year round. You also help to pay for our staff to take care of the animals and any veterinary care that the animals may need. When we started the zoo we had a staff of four, who were all family volunteers and now employ over 35 employees in the summer – most of whom are local students from our area, but some of our full-time staff are university graduates from all over Canada. We also try to stimulate our local economy by employing local people and supporting our local suppliers, which you have played a part in by visiting the zoo today.

These are just a few of the visible areas where you can see your admission dollars at work, so once again, the staff and animals at Papanack Park Zoo would like to thank you for visiting us and we hope to see you again, so you can see more work that your dollars have done!

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