



Press Release
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Critically Endangered Red Ruffed Lemur Gives Birth at Jackson Zoo

Jackson, Miss.— The Jackson Zoological Society is proud to announce that they have raised the number of critically endangered red ruffed lemurs in the world by two. On Saturday, May 27th, zookeepers arrived at work in the early morning hours to discover two newborn males in the lemur night house.

The mother, "Nekena," arrived at the Jackson Zoo in December of 2016 from Wildlife Safari in Winston, Oregon. She joined father and son, "Timmy" and "Phoenix," respectively, as part of the red ruffed lemur Species Survival Plan.

"The 2017 Breeding and Transfer Plan was published this past February. At that time we had 187 red ruffed lemurs in the Species Survival Plan[®] (SSP), where we recommended 18 males and 16 females for breeding," said Christie Eddie, Red ruffed lemur SSP Coordinator at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo. "We are in the midst of birthing season and these offspring are among birth reports from five SSP institutions. I expect more to come!"

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) lists the red ruffed lemur (*Varecia rubra*) as Critically Endangered. Found only in a small area of Madagascar, they are the most endangered type of lemur in the world due to increased cyclones, illegal logging, and the illegal exotic pet trade. According to the IUCN, there are only approximately 35 lemurs on average per square kilometer in their native habitat and declining rapidly. Less than 65% of newborn young survive to three-months of age in the wild, and there are less than 600 in zoos or refuges in the world.

"We are absolutely delighted to see these two little ones arrive, both for our park and the species as a whole" said Jackson Zoo Executive Director, Beth Poff. "More than a third of the animals at the Jackson Zoo are either endangered or threatened, and although every birth here is special to the staff, adding numbers to an endangered species is that much more precious."

The Jackson Zoological Society participates in Species Survival Plans for many other animals, including successful births for the Pygmy hippo and the Sumatran tiger. The Jackson Zoo also regularly submits information and samples to dozens of ongoing international studies.

It will be several months before the baby lemurs are out on exhibit, and viewing times at the Jackson Zoo Veterinary Hospital are still to be determined. Visitors and Jackson Zoo members can visit the adult lemurs during regular zoo hours (seven days a week from 9 am to 4 pm), and follow the Jackson Zookeepers on Instagram (@JacksonZoo) for close-ups and behind-the-scenes photos of all the park residents. People can also "adopt" the baby lemurs (or their parents) for twelve months by contacting EJ Rivers at ejrivers@jacksonzoo.org.

For more information about the red ruff lemur, visit the Lemur Conservation Foundation online at lemurreserve.org.

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The Jackson Zoo is accredited by the Zoological Association of America, and certified by the Better Business Bureau. The mission of the Jackson Zoo is to provide visitors with a quality recreational and educational environment dedicated to wildlife care and conservation. For more information, visit The Jackson Zoo online at jacksonzoo.org, or on [facebook.com/JacksonZoo](https://www.facebook.com/JacksonZoo)

