

# VIRGINIA ZOO WELCOMES NEW OTTERS

Norfolk, VA – The Virginia Zoo’s two newest additions are otterly adorable. Asian small-clawed otters Puba and Alana arrived last month as social companions as part of the Zoo’s Species Survival Plan.

Female otter, Alana, was born in October 2018 at the Columbus Zoo and male, Puba, was born September 2007 at Zoo Miami. The pair completed a routine quarantine period and wellness exams before being introduced to each other behind-the-scenes at their Asia – Trail of the Tiger exhibit.

The pair have been brought together by a social-companionship recommendation from the Association for Zoos and Aquariums’ Species Survival Program®, which oversees and manages species’ population in zoos by pairing individuals for companionship or breeding as well as monitoring breeding to maximize genetic diversity and long-term sustainability of populations.

Alana and Puba officially made their debut on exhibit in late February. The pair are acclimating to their new habitat and will soon be introduced

to their other exhibit-mates, white-cheeked gibbons Dexter and Asia, when temperatures are consistently warmer.

They can be distinguished from one another by the color of their necks; Alana has a white neck while Puba’s neck is tan. Keepers also say their personalities



stand out from the other. While Puba is outgoing, vocal, energetic, and seems to enjoy swimming deep to the bottom of the pool, Alana is shy, very smart, food motivated and seems to enjoy swimming around the waterfall.

About Asian small-clawed otters

Asian small-clawed otters are native to coastal mangrove swamps, marshes and freshwater wetlands of Southeast Asia. They are the smallest species of otter and can grow up to three feet in length and weigh from two to 12 pounds. Asian small-clawed otters

are carnivores, consuming fish, crabs, snakes, rodents and snails. The species is considered vulnerable to extinction due to destruction of their native habitat.

## About the Virginia Zoo

The Virginia Zoo, located in Norfolk, Virginia, is home to more than 700 exceptional animals representing over 150 fascinating species. Founded in 1901 and residing on 53 beautifully landscaped acres, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to saving and protecting the world’s wildlife by inspiring a passion for nature and taking conservation action at home and around the world. The Virginia Zoo is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is recognized as a global leader in education, recreation, science, wildlife conservation, and animal care and welfare. For more than a century, the Zoo has connected adults, families and school children with the natural world and its wildlife. To learn more, visit [www.virginiazoo.org](http://www.virginiazoo.org).

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