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Press release

Birthday celebrations at the Zoo: Tilla turns two

Zoo Berlin's little gorilla celebrates her second birthday

To mark this special day at Zoo Berlin, keepers got up extra early to prepare a birthday surprise for little gorilla Tilla. The family of apes had a hunch something was going on, as they know by now that when the keepers act mysteriously there are usually treats in store. And today was no exception! To celebrate Tilla's second birthday, she and her family received a three-tier cake made of alternating layers of vegan, sugar-free courgette and carrot sponge, decorated with raw vegetables. The birthday girl tucked in to the delicious surprise with relish – as did mum Bibi (25) and the rest of the gang.

Tilla came into the world on the night of 15 February 2021. She was the first infant born to Bibi and dad Sango (18). The adorable gorilla baby not only stole the hearts of the five-strong gorilla group, but also of Zoo Berlin visitors. "Over the past two years, Tilla has grown into a curious and confident young gorilla," says curator and veterinarian Dr André Schüle. "Although her cheeky and playful nature regularly tests her housemates' patience, she was quickly welcomed into the family and everyone is very patient and affectionate."

The number of western lowland gorillas, which are classified as "Critically Endangered" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, is steadily decreasing in the wild due to poaching and habitat destruction through deforestation and mining. "Tilla and the rest of our gorillas represent this entire endangered species and help us draw attention to the serious threat facing these fascinating animals in their natural habitat," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. He also has a plea for all gorilla lovers: "The gorilla family are in urgent need of a new home, as their current housing conditions no longer meet our high standards. Unfortunately, we cannot fulfil this wish with our own funds, and are therefore hugely grateful for any support we receive." The current energy crisis is making fundraising for upcoming construction projects like the new Primate House even more of a challenge. Donations continue to be collected for Tilla and her family under the campaign motto "My gorilla needs a villa at the Zoo". Each and every contribution is greatly appreciated: <https://www.zoo-berlin.de/en/news/zoo-news/detail/tilla-needs-a-villa>

Background:

Gorillas are the largest and heaviest of the great apes. Adult males can weigh up to 200 kilos and reach two metres in height. Western lowland gorillas live in families made up of several females



and one dominant male who is known as the silverback. Gorillas are diurnal animals that spend most of their time eating. Their diet is almost exclusively vegetarian, consisting of leaves, herbaceous plants, roots and fruits. They play an important role as “gardeners” in their African rainforest home, as they spread the seeds of numerous plants and thus help to maintain a diverse ecosystem.