

Press Release

Brötchen – a name with a taste

Mini pygmy hippo has a name | Enie van de Meiklokjes becomes honorary sponsor at Zoo Berlin

Take an adorable baby animal with big, sparkling eyes, add Germany's favourite snack, and season it with a pinch of Berlin hippo nostalgia – and you get this summer's freshly baked public favourite: Brötchen. With her new name, the young female hippo is absolutely en vogue: "Naming animals after food items currently seems to be a popular internet trend," says Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr. Andreas Knieriem. "Strictly speaking, however, Berliners already knew decades ago that small round snacks make excellent animal names: the hippo Bulette was one of the great favourites at Zoo Berlin until 2005." With her distinctive name, the young pygmy hippo joins the ranks of well-known hippo personalities at Zoo Berlin. Internationally, animals such as penguin Pesto and pygmy hippos Haggis, Moo Deng, and Poppy also delight fans with their creative, food-inspired names. The young animal, now weighing over 20 kg, has been working diligently over the past few days with her "lifeguards" to get accustomed to water. Just one month after her birth on 9 May, she was already ready for her first outing into the large outdoor enclosure – significantly earlier than her sister Toni, who first explored the outdoor area only 2.5 months after birth. With a fine sense for the perfect recipe for adorable favourites, one of Germany's best-known baking stars is now taking on the honorary sponsorship of little Brötchen: Enie van de Meiklokjes. "Zoo, Tierpark and Aquarium Berlin are very important institutions in our capital city for me. I grew up in Potsdam and live in Berlin, so these places have always been part of my life," says the presenter. "It is all the more wonderful to now be part of it myself. I am very happy to take on the honorary sponsorship for little Brötchen and to support the zoo in further promoting the protection of endangered species such as pygmy hippos."

Pygmy hippos are among the rarest mammals in Africa. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), they are classified as Endangered, with fewer than 2,500 adults remaining in their natural habitat in West Africa and numbers continuing to decline. They still inhabit parts of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. In Nigeria, they are already extinct. Their greatest threat is human activity – primarily habitat loss due to deforestation for mining and agriculture. Modern zoos not only play an important role in conservation breeding programmes but also support conservation efforts in the animals' countries of origin.

Background: Conservation of pygmy hippos

Zoo Berlin has been involved in keeping and breeding pygmy hippos for more than a century. The first successful European breeding of this highly endangered species took place here in 1921. Pygmy hippos are largely solitary animals, which is why males do not participate in raising offspring. International conservation breeding programmes run by zoological institutions make a significant contribution to the long-term survival of the species while also raising awareness for the protection of their natural habitats. Thanks to the popular hippo Toni, Zoo Berlin was able to raise more than €5,000 in a charity auction in 2024 for the Pygmy Hippo Project of Gola Rainforest Conservation in Sierra Leone. The donation helped

fund conservation measures in Gola Rainforest National Park to better protect the local pygmy hippo population. In addition, Zoo Berlin supports an ongoing conservation and research project in the pygmy hippos' native range in Côte d'Ivoire. The aim is to reassess the species' distribution in two key protected areas, providing an important basis for updating the IUCN Red List. The focus lies on the Cavally Nature Reserve in the west and the Dassioko Classified Forest in the southwest of the country. As part of the project, two master's students are using camera traps to confirm or rule out the presence of pygmy hippos and to analyse factors influencing their distribution. The results are expected to close important knowledge gaps and provide a scientific foundation for future conservation measures.

Background: Enie van de Meiklokjes

Enie van de Meiklokjes is known for her unmistakable style. She began her career in 1996 at the music channel VIVA, later becoming a presenter of BRAVO TV. In 2004, the trained decorator showcased her craftsmanship in the daily VOX programme "Wohnen nach Wunsch – Ein Duo für vier Wände!" and from 2008 in "Wohnen nach Wunsch – Das Haus." From 2012 to 2024, she hosted her own show on sixx, "Sweet & Easy – Enie backt," demonstrating her baking skills. Since 2014, she has been hosting the successful SAT.1 show "Das große Backen," including its spin-offs "Das große Backen – die Profis" and "Das große Promibacken." The latest season of "Das große Backen – die Profis" currently airs on Wednesdays at 8:15 p.m. on SAT.1.