



Berlin, 17 July 2018

Press release

A bonobo birthday party

Celebration for a new arrival at Zoo Berlin

If you've visited the apes at Zoo Berlin over the past few days, you may have noticed a new face. On 10 July, female Monyama joined the bonobo group here in the German capital. And today she celebrates her birthday!

With her humorous nature, and dreamy eyes, the new bonobo has integrated into her new family extremely well. "Introducing individuals into existing groups can cause some commotion, as hierarchies have to be realigned," explains Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. "So we're especially pleased that Monyama has settled in so seamlessly." It's also great news that the group accepted Monyama in time for her eighth birthday, just a week after her arrival. She was born at Apenheul zoo in the Netherlands on 17 July 2010 to the group's alpha female, and lived there until her move to Berlin. Bonobos live in matriarchal groups that are always led by a female. Alongside chimpanzees, they are humankind's closest relatives.

Monyama came to Berlin as part of the European Endangered Species Programme (EEP) for bonobos. A member of the Berlin group, Likemba, who was born here, will probably move to another zoo in the autumn. Zoo Berlin has been home to bonobos since 1987.

Bonobo protection

The goal of all EEPs is to conserve viable reserve populations of threatened species. Bonobos are an endangered species that are only found living wild in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Zoo Berlin is supporting efforts to protect the apes in Salonga National Park – one of the few places where they exist in relatively large numbers. The greatest threat facing bonobos is poaching for the bushmeat trade. As bonobos have an extremely low reproduction rate, each and every death puts at risk the survival of the species as a whole.