



25 October 2019
Press release

A cosy pen for our pandas

Zoo Berlin's panda twins move into a temporary new home

A black-and-white ball of fur stretches sleepily and blinks its eyes. As soon as it has found a comfortable position, it drifts back off to sleep with satisfied little grunts. The new panda “playpen” at Zoo Berlin is the perfect place for our cubs to snooze and snuggle.

It has been almost eight weeks since Germany's most talked-about twins were born. In that time, Zoo Berlin's two panda cubs have already changed dramatically. They now not only sport the species' typical black-and-white fur, but have also put on plenty of pounds. They opened their eyes for the first time last week, and are now getting more and more active as they begin to discover the world around them. And so the time has come for them to say farewell to the incubator and move into a far more spacious “playpen”.

“At the moment, our two young pandas weigh 15 times more than they did at birth,” reports Zoo and Tierpark Director Dr Andreas Knieriem. “Of course, we are keeping our fingers crossed that they will continue to develop this well and will soon outgrow their new accommodation.” The playpen was lovingly built by zoo carpenters, who handcrafted it from wood and plexiglass. It measures almost two metres by one and a half metres and is roughly 40 cm high. Inside, fluffy blankets provide plenty of warmth and comfort.

The two cubs still spend alternating shifts with mum Meng Meng and only drink their mother's milk. They now measure over 30 cm in length and weigh 2,578 and 2,521 grams respectively.

Background:

Zoo Berlin has been home to Germany's only giant pandas since summer 2017. On 31 August 2019, female panda Meng Meng gave birth to two cubs weighing 186 and 136 grams. Father Jiao Qing (9) is not involved in the rearing of the cubs – as is normal for giant



pandas. Most recent estimates suggest that there are only 1,864 adult giant pandas living in their natural habitat worldwide. Giant pandas are therefore classified as “Vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Zoo Berlin pays an annual loan fee to keep these rare animals, and 100 percent of that sum is channelled into conservation work such as the breeding, protection and reintroduction into the wild of the bamboo-eating bears. Panda pair Meng Meng and Jiao Qing are sponsored by cooperative banking association Berliner Volksbank.