



Springfield Park District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HENSON ROBINSON ZOO WELCOMES BABY GIBBON

[Springfield, Illinois] - The Henson Robinson Zoo has welcomed a new addition, a 10 month old white-handed gibbon. Transferred from the Jackson Zoo in Jackson, Mississippi, the baby gibbon named Jari joins the zoo's longtime resident Kimmy.

White-handed gibbons, which are a species of lesser ape, are very social animals and the match between Kimmy and Jari fulfills a need for both animals. Kimmy, who has been a resident of the Henson Robinson Zoo since 1995, lost her long time mate just over a year ago. The zoo staff searched diligently with the coordinator for the Associated of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Lar Gibbon Species Survival Plan to identify another mate for Kimmy. An older male was found and plans were made to transfer her to the facility that housed this male. During the medical work up that is typical prior to an animal transfer, Kimmy was diagnosed with diabetes. As a result of her diagnosis, it was decided that Kimmy would not be transferred and efforts to match Kimmy with another gibbon resumed. A match was found in 10 month old Jari who was rejected by her mother and has been cared by the Jackson Zoo staff since her birth. As Jari grows, the need for interaction with other animals of her species has increased in order to teach her typical gibbon behavior.

Kimmy and Jari will be slowly introduced with hopes that the pair will eventually be housed together. Upon her arrival, Jari was housed within Kimmy's sight and each expressed interest in the other. The two were then transitioned into adjoining enclosures and can see and touch each other. Kimmy, who is an experienced mother, has given birth to five babies. Most recently, Kimmy has experienced heart break and has given birth to three still born babies. In the weeks to come, the pair will be transitioned into closer contact in hopes that Kimmy will be a great mom to baby Jari. The pair will be viewable during the zoo's normal operating hours.

White-handed gibbons, *Hylobates lar*, are listed as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Native to the evergreen forests of Indonesia and Malaysia, the white-handed gibbon lives off a diet of mainly fruits and leaves. These animals are important seed dispersers with some plant species relying solely on the gibbon for dispersal. The main threats to the wild gibbon population are hunting and habitat loss.

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