



Madrid Zoo welcomes a new pair of giant pandas, reaffirming its commitment to panda conservation

The Zoo is preparing to return the existing family of five pandas to China and welcome a new pair of pandas in the near future.

The Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, the Mayor of Madrid and the CEO of Group Parques Reunidos attended the official farewell ceremony of the five pandas.

From 23 to 28 February, the public can leave their dedication to the entire panda family on the farewell mural in Chu Lin Square.

Madrid, February 22, 2024. The Madrid Zoo Aquarium de Madrid, in partnership with The China Wildlife Conservation Association (CWCA) will continue its commitment to the conservation of giant pandas with a new pair coming to Spain in the near future.

This was announced during an official ceremony today, along with the announcement that the five giant pandas currently living at the Madrid Zoo will return to China on February 29. This marked the end of the technical cooperation agreement, which led to the arrival of the breeding pair "Hua Zui" and "Bing Xing" in Madrid in 2007 from the Chengdu Giant Panda Breeding Base.

Speaking at an institutional event attended by Ambassador **Yao Jing** of the People's Republic of China, he highlighted the Madrid Zoo's new commitment to the conservation and breeding of the giant panda and the symbolism of the species as an ambassador for conservation between the two countries. "The giant panda is an ambassador of friendship between the Chinese and Spanish peoples, and I firmly believe that with the arrival of a new pair of giant pandas, this friendly relationship, which has lasted for more than 40 years, will continue."

Pascal Ferracci, CEO of Parques Reunidos, highlighted the privilege of this international collaboration for Madrid, "We are very much looking forward to welcoming a new pair of giant pandas in the coming months, and our goal is to continue our efforts to protect this species and to succeed in a new phase of its reproduction, making Madrid a great home for the giant pandas in Spain and throughout Europe."

The mayor of Madrid, **José Luis A. Martínez Almeida** highlighted the honor of being the godfather of one of the panda twins who are about to travel to China. "Yoyo allowed us to enjoy some very special moments with our baby panda born in 2007. This is a milestone in the breeding of this species and the city of Madrid will be pleased to welcome another pair of giant pandas to Madrid Zoo. This privilege will allow us to understand and protect this symbolic animal."

After 16 years of close collaboration with the China Zoo Association (CAZG), formerly a technical partner, Madrid Zoo has acquired and developed valuable knowledge, techniques and expertise in the care, protection and propagation of this emblematic species, supported by Spanish scientific experts assisting in the reproduction of endangered species; with the technical support of the Laboratory of Animal Germline Sperm and Cryopreservation of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences, the Department of Animal Physiology of the College of Veterinary Medicine of the Complutense University, and the Chengdu Base, **six panda cubs were successfully born**: Bao and Dede twins (2010/9/7), Xingbao (2013/8/30), Chu Lina (2016/8/30), Youyou and Jiujiu twins (2012/6/9).

The end of the last round of successful and fruitful cooperation in giant panda research and conservation in Madrid coincided with the couple's entry into old age, aged 20 and 23, respectively, and according to the agreement, they will return to their country of origin. They will be accompanied by giant pandas Hua Zui Ba and Bing Xing, born in 2016, Chulina and two-year-old twins You You and Jiu Jiu, along with zookeepers, Chinese veterinarians and technicians to Chengdu.

The future of the panda in Madrid

Giant panda conservation programs are critical to protecting the species and coordinated efforts with Chinese breeding centers and animal agencies around the world, along with efforts to protect the protected areas where they live in central China, have reduced their threat status from endangered to vulnerable in recent years.

According to the latest census of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, the number of giant pandas in the wild has grown from about 1,100 in the 1980s to **1,900 in 2023 and the captive population has reached 728 from zoos and breeding centers around the world, including 46 born in 2023.**

Farewell events and murals are available for public viewing

As part of the goodbye celebration for the panda family, the public can visit them and participate by leaving a message on the farewell mural, the mural will be installed **in the Plaza de Chu Lin from February 23 to 28, between 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Visitors will be able to join in with all the free educational activities at the zoo about the panda family allowing the Spanish public to pay tribute to such symbolic animals that have and will continue to play an integral part of our lives in Madrid.

About Madrid Zoo Aquarium

Located in the heart of the city, the Madrid Zoo was inaugurated on June 23, 1972, in the Casa de Campo neighborhood. Within the framework of EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquariums), it participates in conservation projects for 63 endangered species, such as the white rhinoceros and the Indian rhino, the giant otter, the Bornean orangutan, the coastal gorilla, and the imperial eagle, among others. Some of these projects include the reintroduction of species such as giant otters, staghorns, or the release of eagle owls and barn owls in Madrid communities.

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