



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 2, 2017

CONTACT: Shayla Moriarty, director of communications
419-385-5721 ext. 2155 or Shayla.moriarty@toledozoo.org

Note: Veterinarian and director of animal health and nutrition, Dr. Ric Berlinski, will be available for interviews tomorrow at 10 a.m. Please RSVP to the Communication team. Pictures of the female cub are also available upon request.

Snow Leopard Cubs Born at the Toledo Zoo

TOLEDO, Ohio – Look out world, a new snow leopard is on the prowl! The Toledo Zoo is excited to announce the birth of two snow leopard cubs on June 8, 2017.

The cubs, one male and one female, were born to first time parents, 3 year old mother, Greta, and 4 year old father, Shishir. Both parents arrived at the Zoo last spring from Europe as part of a Species Survival Plan recommended move to breed and start a new bloodline in the United States snow leopard population.

Unfortunately, shortly after birth the male cub was diagnosed with a series of genetic anomalies. After consultation and a full report from a board certified veterinary radiologist, the difficult decision was made to humanely euthanize the cub. The female cub, Dariga, which means surprise in Kazakh, is in good health and has bonded well with her parents off exhibit. The family will be on exhibit to the public as of today, Monday, October 2, 2017.

Snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*) have pale green or gray eyes, white or gray coats with large black spots and a long tail used for balance and to wrap around their bodies for warmth. They are native to the mountains of central Asia and are known as the ghost cat for their elusiveness and because they are rarely seen due to the extreme temperatures and terrain of their home areas. Snow leopards are listed as endangered on the IUNC red list due mainly to human-wildlife conflict, specifically retaliatory killings for snow leopards preying upon farmers' livestock. Other causes of concern for the snow leopard and its mountain ecosystem include climate change and human encroachment. Current estimates of the wild population are 4,000 – 6,600 and declining.

“As snow leopards are an endangered species with a declining population, we hope the community will enjoy watching the female cub grow as much as we do and learning more about conserving this amazing species through her development,” said Toledo Zoo’s veterinarian and director of animal health and nutrition, Dr. Ric Berlinski.

The Toledo Zoo is committed to inspiring others to join us in caring for animals and conserving the natural world. As part of that mission, the Toledo Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a leader in global wildlife conservation. AZA member institutions are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for visitors and a better future for all living things. Submitted by: Kim Haddix

###