



New Orleans, 09 July 2021

Endangered Baird's Tapir Born at Audubon Zoo

Audubon Zoo is happy to announce that its three-year-old Baird's tapir Ixchel has given birth to her first offspring, the result of successful breeding with Tybalt, the Zoo's four-year-old male Baird's tapir. Ixchel's male calf was born on July 2, 2021.

Ixchel came to Audubon Zoo from Franklin Park Zoo in 2019 as part of an Association of Zoos and Aquariums' [Species Survival Plan](#) recommendation to breed with Tybalt, who arrived at Audubon in 2018 from Nashville Zoo. Species Survival Plans are collaborative conservation efforts among AZA-accredited institutions that recommend breeding based on genetic compatibility.

"Ixchel and the new calf are doing well," said Audubon Zoo's Vice President and General Curator Bob Lessnau. "Our veterinary and animal care teams are keeping a close eye to ensure both mother and calf are progressing. This is the first Baird's tapir born at Audubon Zoo, and we are very excited to share his development with the community."

Baird's tapirs occur in lowland forests of Central and South America. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, they are considered an endangered species. While they are hunted for food and sport, their greatest threat to survival is habitat destruction due to logging and the clearing of land for agriculture and development.

The average gestation period for Baird's tapirs is 13 months. The tapir's long gestation period and low birth rate make it hard for wild populations to recover.

Similar to deer fawns, Baird's tapir calves are distinctly marked with watermelon-like white stripes and spots, which help them camouflage in the dappled light of the rainforest. The markings begin to fade at five to six months of age.

Mother and calf are currently bonding behind-the-scenes at this time.

The Baird's tapirs at the Zoo serve as ambassadors, teaching guests about the plight of this species in the wild. Being a good steward to the environment by reducing, refusing, recycling, and reusing can help to reduce the need for raw materials extracted from rainforests. Small actions can make a big difference for wildlife. Audubon is committed to helping create experiences that spark individual action and empower visitors to leave the natural world better than they found it.

Audubon Nature Institute operates a family of museums, parks and research facilities dedicated to celebrating the wonders of nature. Through innovative live animal exhibits, education programs, and scientific discovery, Audubon makes a meaningful contribution to preserving wildlife for the future. Audubon Nature Institute flagships include Audubon Park, Audubon Zoo, Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy Giant Screen Theater, Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium, Audubon Louisiana Nature Center, Freeport-McMoRan Audubon Species Survival Center, Woldenberg Riverfront Park and Audubon Wilderness Park. Ron Forman is President and CEO of Audubon Nature Institute.

<https://newsroom.audubonnatureinstitute.org/en-us/endangered-bairds-tapir-born-at-audubon-zoo/>

Media Contacts

Melissa Lee
DEVENEY Communications
audubonpr@auduboninstitute.org
(985) 290-0231