Rainforest Wild Adventure Celebrates the First Okapi Born in Southeast Asia

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Rainforest Wild Adventure has welcomed a new arrival thatâ??s a first for the region: Southeast Asiaâ??s first okapi calf. The male calf was born on the morning of 27 July 2026 to first-time parents seven-year-old Kisala and four-year-old Xandor, who arrived in Singapore under the EAZA Ex situ Programme (EEP), a coordinated international breeding programme for threatened species.

Image: Mandai Wildlife Group

Now nearly two months old, the calf has more than doubled its birth weight to a healthy 48kg. Ms Cecilia Tang, Curator, Animal Care (Operations) at Mandai Wildlife Group, said the team began preparing for the possibility of a pregnancy after noticing changes in Kisalaâ??s appetite and body

condition, with an ultrasound in July confirming the good news. â??Kisala has been an excellent mother, and her calf is thriving, gaining nearly a kilogramme a day on average,â?• she shared. The calf has recently been given access to its outdoor habitat, though it is still taking time to get used to its new surroundings.

An Elusive Species by Nature

Okapis have one of the longest gestation periods among hoofed mammals, lasting around 440 days, or 14 to 15 months. They are also famously elusive, an instinct that shows from birth: unlike many newborn animals that follow their mothers around, okapi calves naturally spend much of their early days hidden and still to avoid detection by predators, with mothers returning only a few times a day to nurse.

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Image: Mandai Wildlife Group

To support this natural behaviour, the Mandai team built a quiet, secluded calving box where the calf could rest and feed undisturbed during its first few months, drawing on husbandry practices from other zoos that have successfully bred okapis.

Listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, okapis are native to the northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and only a handful of zoos worldwide care for the species. They are the closest living relatives of giraffes, sharing traits such as long, flexible tongues and ossicones, the bony, horn-like structures found on males.

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Image: Mandai Wildlife Group

Help Name the Calf

Members of the public are invited to help name Southeast Asiaâ??s first okapi calf via Mandai Wildlife Reserveâ??s Facebook and Instagram pages. Three Africa-inspired options are up for vote: Imara (meaning strong, in Swahili), Mayaka (meaning pearl, in Lingala), and Kiah (meaning dawn or new beginnings, in Swahili).

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Image: Mandai Wildlife Group

Where to Spot Kisala, Xandor and the Calf

Visitors can head to Hidden Forest at Rainforest Wild Adventure East for a chance to see Kisala and her calf, while Xandor can be spotted in a separate nearby habitat. As the calf is still settling in and may retreat to its off-exhibit den, guests can also catch a glimpse via a â??baby monitorâ?• livestream. Those keen to learn more can join the daily Okapi Ranger Talk at 10.30am and 3pm.

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Image: Mandai Wildlife Group

In celebration of the calfâ??s arrival, an okapi-inspired cake will be available from October at select dining spots including Rangers Pitstop, Rangers Retreat and Owa Bistro, while the retail shop at Rainforest Wild Adventure East is stocking okapi-themed soft toys, tumblers, lanyards and more.

New Neighbours at Rainforest Wild Adventure East

The okapi calf isnâ??t the only new face at the park. The sitatunga, a swamp-dwelling antelope identifiable by its chestnut coat and faint white stripes, has joined Red Ravine, while Lemur Land will progressively welcome the crowned lemur and red-bellied lemur by November, bringing the Madagascan-themed habitatâ??s total lemur species count to four.

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Image: Mandai Wildlife Group

Residents with a WildPass membership enjoy local admission rates to Rainforest Wild Adventure from S$25 for senior citizens, S$32 for children aged three to 12 and local students aged 25 and below, and S$45 for adults. Visit www.mandai.com for more details.

For more family-friendly things to do around Singapore, check out our Things to Do section and our recent coverage of the grand opening of Rainforest Wild Adventure East.

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