



Singapore Zoo's First-Ever Litter of Sri Lankan Leopard Cubs Make Their Public Debut

Description

Three adorable **Sri Lankan leopard cubs** have officially made their public debut at **Singapore Zoo**, and visitors can now spot the playful triplets exploring their exhibit at **Wild Africa**. Born to mother Yala and father Asanka on 1 January 2026, the two males and one female are the pair's first litter and a significant milestone for wildlife conservation.

These cubs are among only around **80 Sri Lankan leopards in zoos worldwide**, making this a truly special occasion. It marks the first birth of the species at Singapore Zoo, with the last successful birth recorded at Night Safari three decades ago.

A Vulnerable Species Finds Hope

Sri Lankan leopards are listed as **Vulnerable** on the IUCN Red List, threatened by habitat loss, declining prey and illegal wildlife trade. With fewer than 800 individuals estimated to remain in the wild, every birth in a managed population plays a vital role in supporting the species' long-term survival.



Yala with her cubs in their nest box, a month after their birth on 1 January 2026. Photo credit: Mandai Wildlife Group

Anand Kumar, Curator, Animal Care (Operations) at Mandai Wildlife Group, shared his excitement about the milestone. The pairing of Yala and Asanka took nearly three years and close collaboration

across continents, making the arrival of three healthy cubs all the more rewarding.

Three Years in the Making

Yala and Asanka were paired as part of the **European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Ex-situ Programme (EEP)**, an internationally coordinated breeding programme aimed at maintaining healthy and genetically diverse populations of threatened species.

Yala, 8.5 years old, arrived from Banham Zoo and Aquaria in the United Kingdom in 2024, while Asanka, about five years old, was transferred from the National Zoo & Aquarium in Australia in 2025. Their introduction was gradual and carefully planned – beginning with visual contact through a barrier, followed by shared spaces at different times so they could become familiar with each other’s scent.

Growing Up Fast

Now over three months old and weighing around 5kg each, the cubs are growing steadily and becoming more confident. They have transitioned to a partial meat diet and are often seen playfighting or curled up together – behaviours that help develop social and survival skills they will rely on as adults.

Each cub has a distinct personality: the two males tend to be more laid-back, while the female is feistier. The animal care team can already tell them apart by their demeanour and the unique spot patterns on their foreheads – like fingerprints.

When Can You Visit?

Visitors can spot the cubs in the exhibit with their mum **daily until mid-May**, and subsequently every **Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday**. The triplets’ names, to be announced in partnership with exhibit sponsor Haw Par, will be revealed soon.

With these new arrivals, Singapore Zoo is now home to **six Sri Lankan leopards**, with one more individual at Night Safari.

Local residents with the free WildPass enjoy discounted admission to Singapore Zoo from \$39.20 for adults and \$27.20 for children. Visit www.mandai.com for more information.

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