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A Perfect Mother's Day Gift: Two Lemur Babies **Critically endangered species make debut in World of Primates**

(New Orleans, La.) - Mother's Day was extra special this year in the World of Primates at Audubon Zoo as Tahiri, matriarch of the lemur habitat, gave birth to a pair of male newborns.

The black-and-white ruffed lemurs, Andro and Louie, arrived May 14. They join big sister Maki, who was born in April 2016. Lemurs are critically endangered.

The duo is making their public debut, exploring their habitat at the Zoo.

Maki's birth last year was a first for Audubon Zoo which had been attempting to breed lemurs since Tahiri and father, Gascar, arrived in 2013. Gascar and Tahiri were paired because their genetics are considered ideal for increasing a genetically diverse population.

"This species is critically endangered due to habitat loss from unsustainable agricultural practices and hunting for bush meat," said "Courtney Eparvier, Curator of Primates and Sea Lions at Audubon Zoo. "Sadly, the next step for them is extinction. That's why breeding lemurs in zoos is so critical."

Eparvier said Tahiri is once again being a "great mom," watching over the two newborns as they get comfortable with their new home, grow and become more independent.

The lemur is found only on the island of Madagascar off the southeast coast of Africa.

Andro means "day" (a nod to his birthday, Mother's Day) in Malagasy, the national language of Madagascar. Eparvier said Louie was chosen because it is a wonderful New Orleans name that fits the newborn's personality.

Lemur Facts:

- The lemur, a species found only on the island of Madagascar off the southeast coast of Africa, is critically endangered. The primary threat to the species is habitat loss due to lack of sustainable agriculture practices that affect most wildlife around the world. Due to its size, the black-and-white ruffed species is also hunted for food.
- Everyone can play a role in protecting the species by checking for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) stamp of approval when buying wood and paper products. The stamp offers assurance that the products come from a responsible source.
- Visually, lemurs are striking animals whose name in Latin means "spirits of the night." Lemurs are agile climbers with hands similar in structure to a human hand, including opposable thumbs that allow them to grip when climbing and to hold objects. a genetically sustainable zoo population through cooperative breeding programs

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