



Audubon Zoo
A Facility of Audubon Nature Institute

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rare Ocelot Kitten Born at Audubon Zoo
Kitten to Make Public Debut in Coming Weeks

(New Orleans, La.) - A rare, male ocelot kitten was born at Audubon Zoo on May 6, 2020, to parents "Milagre" and "Joaquin." The wild cat species is about twice the size of the average domestic feline and is known for its striking dappled coat.

Due to some mammary gland concerns from Milagre's last pregnancy, animal care staff are weighing the kitten twice a week.

"The mother and kitten are doing great and he is eating like a champ," said animal care team member Kylie Linke. "Milagre has been very accepting of us weighing him and always is ready to carry him back into the den when we're done. He's gone from around 200g at birth to now weighing more than 700g in just three short weeks! We're already seeing personality and he's just starting to zoom around on his own."

Milagre ("miracle" in Portuguese) and Joaquin came to Audubon Zoo in 2017 from the Dallas Zoo. The kitten's birth comes as part of Audubon's participation in the [Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Species Survival Plan](#) for Brazilian ocelots.

Native to the southwestern United States, Mexico, and Central and South America, the ocelot was nearly driven to extinction in the 20th century by hunters who saw great profit in its lustrous fur coat.

With regulatory measures now in place, the ocelot has recovered and is no longer considered endangered. Some ocelot populations, however, are small and unstable—particularly in Texas—and numbers are decreasing due to deforestation, habitat destruction, and poaching.

"What joyous news to share as the Zoo reopens its doors to the public. A birth like this serves as an important reminder of the spirit of hope and renewal inherent in all life," said Audubon Nature Institute board and Zemurray Foundation board member Ludovico Feoli. "Like his parents, this kitten will serve as an important ambassador for the animals of Central and South America to the people of New Orleans. My family and I are delighted that our support of Jaguar Jungle could help bring this new life into the world to inspire thousands of Zoo visitors to make a positive impact on wildlife across the globe."

The kitten is not on public view while it is being cared for. The veterinarian team expects the ocelot to be ready for his public habitat in about 8 weeks after all rounds of vaccinations have been administered. Audubon plans to share updates on social media regarding his name and debut date.

Linke added, "He doesn't have a name yet, but he's already stolen our hearts!"

Audubon Zoo reopened to the public on Wednesday, June 3, 2020 following a nearly three month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following the guidance of State and City public health directives, Audubon is reopening its family of parks and museums following a phased approach that strictly limits attendance and programming. Advance tickets to the Zoo are required and can be reserved [here](#). Audubon Aquarium of the Americas and Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium are temporarily closed.

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