



**For Immediate Release: August 27, 2009**  
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## **Rare Clouded Leopard Cubs On Exhibit September 4**

Three clouded leopard cubs are making their public debut at Nashville Zoo beginning Friday, Sept. 4. Zoo visitors can spot the trio at the Zoo's Critter Encounters area until the weather gets too cool, around November.

"The clouded leopard cubs represent a significant milestone for the Zoo and our continued commitment to clouded leopard conservation," says Nashville Zoo President Rick Schwartz. "This is a great opportunity for our guests to experience these rare animals."

At three months old, the cubs are full of energy and play rough with each other, with lots of biting and climbing. "This is a very important stage for the cubs, as they are beginning to become clouded leopards," said Karen Rice, mammal curator at Nashville Zoo. "This behavior will continue for several months and Critter Encounters will be a great place for guests to see this interaction."

Clouded leopards are seriously endangered due to deforestation, the pet trade and poaching. Since 2002, Nashville Zoo has been a partner in the Thailand Clouded Leopard Consortium working with the Smithsonian National Zoological Park, Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, the Clouded Leopard Species Survival Plan and the Zoological Park Organization of Thailand to develop a multi-faceted conservation program. The cubs' parents, Arun and Jing Jai, were one of two pairs of clouded leopards that came to the United States in 2008 as part of the Consortium's effort to create genetic diversity among the species. The other pair went to National Zoo's Conservation & Research Center in Front Royal, VA. In March of this year, National Zoo's female gave birth to two males. Their birth, along with the three cubs' birth at Nashville Zoo, introduced new genes into the American population for the first time in 20 years.

Nashville Zoo is accredited by the prestigious Association of Zoos and Aquariums, assuring the highest standards of animal care and husbandry. The Zoo is a nonprofit organization located at 3777 Nolensville Road and is open every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The mission of Nashville Zoo is to inspire a culture of understanding and discovery of our natural world through conservation, innovation and leadership. For more information about Nashville Zoo, call 615-833-1534 or visit [www.nashvillezoo.org](http://www.nashvillezoo.org).

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