

MARYLAND ZOO

NEWS

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CHANGES COMING TO POLAR BEAR WATCH AT THE MARYLAND ZOO

-- Anoki the polar bear to move out, polar bear cubs from Columbus Zoo to move in --

BALTIMORE, MD -- This fall Anoki, the Maryland Zoo's 23-year-old female polar bear, will be moving from Baltimore to another zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and the Zoo will then welcome female polar bear cubs Neva and her half-sister Amelia Gray from the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium. "We are tremendously fond of Anoki here at the Zoo, so this is bittersweet for us," stated Don Hutchinson, president/CEO of The Maryland Zoo. "On a national level, the moves have been recommended by the AZA's Polar Bear Species Survival Plan® (SSP) and we are happy to welcome the bears from the Columbus Zoo later this year."

Anoki came to The Maryland Zoo in 2009 from the Albuquerque BioPark in New Mexico and has been a community favorite since her debut. Her moving date has not yet been set, but her fans are encouraged to come and visit her within the next few weeks to say goodbye.

"Anoki is a very smart bear, she adapted quickly to her Baltimore home and the staff has done an incredible job with her training program," said Erin Cantwell, mammal collection and conservation manager for the Zoo. "For the past two years she has been a participant in the Cincinnati Zoo's Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife's (CREW) polar bear reproductive research project where she was artificially inseminated. She did not have a cub in 2017, so the procedure was repeated in February of this year."

"Low reproduction is one of the biggest factors affecting the aging zoo polar bear population, so the opportunity to participate in groundbreaking research and contribute to the overall knowledge of polar bear reproduction was very appealing to us," continued Cantwell. "Anoki will be missed, but we are confident she will be well cared for in her new home."

Amelia Gray, Neva and her twin brother Nuniq were the only polar bear cubs born at a North American zoological facility in 2016 and the young bears have gained a large following since their births in November 2016.

Amelia Gray was born on November 8, 2016 to first-time mother Anana. The name Amelia means "defender," which represents that she is a conservation protector for her species, and Gray is a nod

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to one of her unique features—a small gray patch of fur located along the left side of her neck. Neva and her twin brother Nuniq were born a few days later on November 14, 2016 to Aurora. Neva means “white snow” (and is also a river in Russia), and Nuniq is a derivative of Nanuq, the bears’ late father.

Amelia Gray was not raised together with Neva as female polar bears typically raise their young independently. However, they had daily opportunities to view one another, which will help in the introductions of Amelia Gray and Neva at The Maryland Zoo.

“Since the moment they were born, the polar bear care team has shared in so many incredible moments with Neva and Amelia Gray. From seeing them emerge from their dens and swim for the first time under the watchful eye of their moms, to learning their distinct personalities and training them for voluntary blood draws so they are able to participate in their own health care, our team has remained committed to ensuring they receive the best possible care,” said Carrie Pratt, curator of the Columbus Zoo’s North America region. “We are, of course, sad to see them leave, but we are also filled with a deep sense of pride, knowing that we are working to help protect their threatened species and that this is the next necessary step as they continue to grow into adult bears.”

“At the moment, we do not know when Neva and Amelia Gray will make their first public appearance at The Maryland Zoo,” said Cantwell. “After they arrive, they will be in mandatory quarantine while they are introduced to their new home and new animal care team.” Several Maryland Zoo staffers recently met the bears in Ohio while planning the moves, and the Columbus Zoo care team will travel to Baltimore with them to help facilitate the transition.

Polar bears are native to the circumpolar north, including the United States (Alaska), Canada, Russia, Norway, and Denmark (Greenland). They are at the top of the Arctic food chain and primarily eat seals. Polar bear populations are declining due to the disappearance of sea ice, and experts estimate that only 20,000-25,000 polar bears are left in their native range. Some scientists believe if the warming trend continues, two-thirds of the polar bear population could disappear by the year 2050.

For updates regarding Anoki’s departure and the arrival of Neva and Amelia Gray, follow The Maryland Zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and our website www.marylandzoo.org.

About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo’s varied natural habitat exhibits in areas such as the award-winning Penguin Coast, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the Children’s Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit www.marylandzoo.org.

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