



CITY OF  
TUCSON



---

## NEWS RELEASE

---

**Contact:** Vivian VanPeenen  
Curator of Education, Reid Park Zoo  
520-837-8188 / 520-248-3607 cell

**Date:** May 6, 2015  
**TDD:** 520-791-2639

### REID PARK ZOO MALAYAN SUN BEAR EUTHANIZED

Reid Park Zoo regrets to announce the death of a Malayan sun bear named Dresena yesterday afternoon. At more than 34 years of age, Dresena was the oldest known Malayan sun bear in captivity. The median life expectancy for females of this species is 23.

“Her long life is a testament to the scientific advances in zoo geriatric husbandry, as well as the love our staff had in caring for this wonderful animal,” stated Jason Jacobs, the Zoo Administrator. “She will be missed by staff, visitors, and volunteers alike.”

Dresena moved to Tucson from the San Diego Zoo in 2001. Over the past few years, as her eyesight declined, she chose to spend most of her time off exhibit. Her den remained a highlight of behind-the-scenes tours and education programs, where she would always visit with groups and receive a few of her favorite treats.

Until recently, Dresena’s health had been fairly stable, with natural decline mostly due to age-related issues which were carefully monitored and treated by Zoo Keepers and veterinary staff. “Her quality of life began declining quickly over the past several weeks, with clear neurologic symptoms,” said Dr. Alexis Moreno, the Zoo’s veterinarian. “She was evaluated by specialists late last week, and test results confirmed significant abnormalities in her brain.” With a poor long-term prognosis and a continued decline in her condition, it became clear her quality of life would not improve and the very difficult decision to euthanize her was made.

The Zoo does not have plans to house additional sun bears at this time, but will continue to work closely with other professionals to share expertise regarding issues facing all bear species. Native to Southeast Asia, sun bears are a vulnerable species due to deforestation (habitat loss) and hunting. Sun bears are commonly poached for their gallbladders – which are still used in some cultures for traditional medicine.

Reid Park Zoo is located in central Tucson within Reid Park and hosts over half a million visitors each year. The Zoo is home to a diverse collection of over 400 animals, many of which are rare or endangered. Admission is \$9 for adults and \$5 for children ages 2 -14. The Zoo is currently open from 9am to 4pm daily. For information, call (520) 791-4022 or visit the Reid Park Zoo website at [www.reidparkzoo.org](http://www.reidparkzoo.org).

###