

Pandas meet but are not yet matey

✘ This has just come in :-

Edinburgh Zoo is delighted to announce that giant pandas Tian Tian and Yang Guang met for the first time this morning and then again several times this afternoon.

Based on a combination of hormone testing and behavioural observation over several weeks, experts decided the time was now right for the panda pair to meet.

The pair have now met five times, for five minutes each time, and although they have not yet mated, signs are very positive.

Just before each meeting, Tian Tian called out incessantly to Yang Guang and pressed her paws and nose up to the grate separating them. Her body language was also very encouraging. Yang Guang has responded promisingly each time.

Yang Guang showed little aggression during their time together, which included him mounting Tian Tian and panda wrestling! Although both pandas have bred before naturally whilst still in China, and both have born cubs, they are still a relatively inexperienced pair. Pandas are only fertile for three days, but it is important to stress we are only at the very early stages of Tian Tian's breeding season.

The pair will not be introduced again until tomorrow morning.

New updates will also not be available now until tomorrow morning.

To keep you going meantime, here is some footage of Tian Tian and Yang Guang about to meet for the first time. The panda with her back to the camera and the closest is female Tian Tian.