

Edinburgh Zoo welcomes first ever banteng calf



Edinburgh Zoo's hoofstock keepers have welcomed their first ever beautiful banteng calf! Although only four weeks old, the bubbly boy loves to canter around outdoors with his parents.

The calf, who has been named Kala, was born to resident banteng Tino and Leticia and is the first ever banteng calf to be born at Edinburgh Zoo. Dad Tino was born in July 2007 and he arrived at Edinburgh Zoo in 2011 from Wroclaw and mum Leticia was born in 2001 and arrived in 2012 from Munich.

Listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, banteng are native to South East Asia, with hunting and habitat loss as the two biggest threats to the species. They are very close to becoming locally extinct in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Lorna Hughes, Team Leader of Hoofstock and Primates at Edinburgh Zoo, said: "Kala is doing really well; it is great to see him out and about after such a long wait. He's going from strength to strength and is already proving very popular with our visitors – he certainly has a lot of character! This birth is a positive step in helping towards the conservation of these endangered animals as well as educating visitors about their plight."

Banteng females give birth to a single calf after a pregnancy that lasts 285 days. The banteng baby will stay close to mum Leticia for around 6 to 9 months, then he will start venturing and exploring further.

Banteng, also known as Tembadau, live in herds of between two and 40 individuals. They like to feed mainly on grasses, bamboo, leaves and fruits and are more active at night due to

human encroachment on their natural environment.

Mature males have a dark brown coat, while females are a much lighter brown, with a dark strip down their back, making it very easy to distinguish between the sexes. The baby banteng although born with a light brown coat like all male banteng calves, will turn the more prominent darker colour as he reaches maturity.