

One of our pandas is pregnant!



The latest news from Edinburgh Zoo is in. And it confirms that Tian Tian is pregnant.

Iain Valentine, Director of Giant Pandas for the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, said:

“The latest scientific data suggests Tian Tian the giant panda is now pregnant and that implantation has taken place, therefore she may give birth at the end of the month. This is all very new and complex science and we still have a bit of time to go yet, as like last year, the late loss of a cub remains entirely possible.

“Just to recap, artificial insemination was carried out on female giant panda Tian Tian on Sunday 13 April 2014. Our team of internal and external experts have continued to analyse specific hormone and protein levels on a daily basis in Tian Tian’s urine. In simplistic terms, when this information is studied retrospectively this allows us to predict if she is pregnant, if she is likely to carry to full term and when she is likely to give birth. It is very likely that we will not know 100% if Tian Tian is pregnant until she gives birth; however very new scientific tests will give us a strong indication, they are just too new to be definitive.

“Monitoring a female giant pandas behaviour – for example if she is sleeping a lot, eating more or spending time in her cubbing den – is not an indicator of if she is pregnant or otherwise, as giant pandas experience pseudo pregnancies and she will show ‘pregnant’ type behaviour whether she is pregnant or not.

“Two of our Chinese colleagues are due to travel to Scotland in mid-August and we continue to monitor and wait.”

In 2013, RZSS successfully performed the first artificial insemination procedure to take place on a giant panda in the UK. The team have since been able to confirm that Tian Tian did become pregnant, however most likely reabsorbed the foetus late term – a common occurrence in giant pandas both in zoos and the wild.