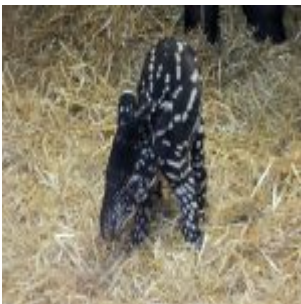


Baby tapir born at Edinburgh Zoo

A tiny new arrival managed to make a big appearance just hours before 2014 drew to a close.

A male Malayan tapir was born to mother Sayang and first time father Mogli in the early hours of Wednesday 31 December.





Lorna Hughes, Hoofstock Team Leader, said:

“Experienced Malayan tapir mother Sayang gave birth to a male calf on the evening of 31 December. The last birth of the year at Edinburgh Zoo, the calf has had a big impact on keepers and visitors already. Mekong, after the delta river which flows through where they are found in the wild, is lively and very distinctive.

“Although they are not genetically related and are much larger, Malayan tapirs are similar in build to pigs, but have noses and upper lips that form a long prehensile snout and large, barrel shaped bodies made for crashing through dense forest vegetation. Adult tapirs are black, with a white or grey midsection, whilst youngsters like Mekong are born with spots and stripes all over their small bodies, face and legs. Mekong’s adult colouration will come in between four and seven months of age. When Mekong is fully grown he is likely to stand at over three feet tall and be up to eight feet in length, weighing up to 900 pounds.

“Sayang is a great mum with lots of experience as she has had five babies now and really knows the ropes. Tapirs are pregnant for around 13 months so it is great to finally see another healthy calf being born. However, although we are very pleased with his progress and he is putting on weight steadily, the first week or so is a sensitive time for mother and baby.”

This species is the only tapir native to Asia and in the wild the Malayan tapir are under threat from natural predators, as well as hunting and wide-scale deforestation due to farming

and logging. This species are listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, which means that they face a very high risk of extinction in the wild. It is estimated that less than 2,000 individuals make up the wild population.

The young tapir is on show to visitors at Edinburgh Zoo at the Malayan tapir enclosure.

Images Maria Dorrian