

Edinburgh Zoo say No panda cubs this year

✖ Edinburgh Zoo have issued a statement about their female Giant Panda, Tian Tian, this morning. In a week when Washington Zoo announced the birth of twin panda cubs, our attention was directed towards the Corstorphine resident, but the news is a repeat of previous years.

Chris West, CEO of the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, said:

“Based upon our scientific data, the window has now passed during which Tian Tian would have given birth; therefore RZSS has to advise that we now do not believe that our female giant panda will have a cub.

“Tian Tian is still showing behaviour of a pregnant panda, being sleepy and off her food, but we now must assume she has resorbed her pregnancy in late term. It is believed that resorption is a common occurrence in giant pandas, as it is in other species, and may well be the true explanation behind many so-called ‘fake’ pregnancies.

“This year we believe we have achieved the world’s most comprehensive hormone analysis of an individual female giant panda. We are also hopeful that RZSS has made some key discoveries relating to giant panda pregnancy, which will add to the global understanding of this endangered species.

“The conservation of giant pandas is a complex international effort. Although still early in the birthing season, this year we have had fantastic news from the National Zoo, Washington, and Zoo Negara in Malaysia. Our hopes and best wishes are now with Memphis Zoo and Ocean Park Hong Kong. No giant panda zoo works in isolation and success for one institution means success for the overall giant panda conservation programme.

"I would personally like to thank all those involved within RZSS and our external partners for their professionalism and dedication over many months of preparation and hard work.

"Going forward we will conduct an exhaustive review and consult with other colleagues. RZSS is committed long term to giant panda conservation and working with our many research partners and colleagues in China."

The outdoor viewing area of the panda enclosure at RZSS Edinburgh Zoo will open to the public today, 25 August 2015.