

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOING APE AT FRESNO CHAFFEE ZOO

FRESNO, Ca. -- The newest member of the Fresno Chaffee Zoo family is a baby siamang (*Hylobates syndactylus*) born July 14.

The tiny infant (approximately 1 ½ lbs) is in the care of its mother, 24 year old Lottie, and keepers have not yet determined its sex. Lottie and the baby will be off-exhibit for several more days in order for keepers to monitor maternal care and the baby's health. A siamang social group consists of a monogamous pair: one male, one female and up to three dependent offspring. Lottie and her infant are joined off-exhibit by the father, 38 year old Biong, and brother Jambi, almost three years of age. Siamangs reach maturity at eight to nine years of age and their life span is 20-25 years in the wild and 30-40 years in zoos.

The siamang's loud calls usually occur in the morning hours and are used for communication and to maintain cohesion with the family group. Their inflatable throat sac acts as a resonating chamber for vocal cords and their hooting call can be heard for two miles.

Siamangs are the largest of the lesser apes reaching heights up to three feet and weighing 17 to 28 pounds. This agile ape's five foot arm span, well-developed forearms, and hook like hands facilitate movement through the treetops. In the wild, they rarely descend to the ground instead living in the upper canopy of forested regions of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. Loss of habitat through agriculture has severely reduced their numbers in the wild and they are an endangered species.