

KONNICHIWA TANUKIS!

- Wildlife Reserves Singapore welcomes its first pair of raccoon dogs

Singapore, 23 April 2010 – Wildlife Reserves Singapore, the parent company of award-winning attractions Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari and Singapore Zoo and the upcoming River Safari, recently welcomed its first pair of tanukis from Asahimaya Zoo, Japan. Tanukis are a subspecies of raccoon dogs native to Japan, and these beautiful canids mark the first animal exchange between WRS and Asahimaya Zoo under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two parties last year.

To celebrate the partnership and welcome the tanukis, a gala dinner was hosted by Asahimaya Zoo and Wildlife Reserves Singapore last night. Notable guests included HE Mr Makoto Yamanaka, Ambassador of Japan to Singapore and Ms Fanny Lai, Group CEO of Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

Named Pom and Poko, the tanukis will be housed at a permanent exhibit in the upcoming River Safari, Asia's first river-themed park. Significant to the Japanese culture, these beautiful animals have been a part of the country's folklore since ancient times. Unfortunately, the tanukis' silky coat has attracted the unwanted attention of furriers, and they have been commercially farmed since 1928. Even today, raccoon dogs are reportedly bred in cruel conditions and are often skinned alive. The practice has led to global campaigns against the use of raccoon dog fur in fashion.

The raccoon dog gets its name from its resemblance to the unrelated raccoon, and is native to East Asia. They were introduced into parts of Europe for hunting purposes in the early to mid-nineteen hundreds and are now considered an invasive species.

Wildlife Reserves Singapore Group





HH_1204: Pom, the male raccoon dog exploring his new home in Singapore



HH_1216: Poko, the female raccoon dog, resting during her quarantine period. They have long torsos and short legs with ears that protrude only slightly outside of their thick fur.



HH_1217: The raccoon dog is a member of the canid family and is indigenous to east Asia. Japanese raccoon dogs are known to produce sounds higher in pitch, sounding similar to cats.

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Photo credits:

HH_1204 and HH_1216: Wildlife Reserves Singapore

HH_1217: Bjorn Olesen

About Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS)

Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) is the parent company of award-winning attractions Jurong Bird Park, Night Safari, Singapore Zoo and the upcoming River Safari. At WRS, we strive to be world-class leisure attractions, providing excellent exhibits of animals presented in their natural environment for the purpose of conservation, education and recreation.

WRS parks have been conferred the Best Leisure Attraction Experience Award at the Singapore Tourism Awards 18 times. The record achievement affirms WRS parks' status as

Singapore's premier leisure venues. To date, WRS parks have welcomed more than 70 million visitors.

In the areas of conservation and research, WRS parks have undertaken multiple projects, which focus on species such as the oriental pied hornbill, pangolin and orang utan, through collaborations with various organisations and institutions. Recent conservation efforts have included hosting the inaugural regional Asian pangolin conservation workshop. All WRS parks are designated rescued wildlife centres by the governing authority.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF	:	Wildlife Reserves Singapore
BY	:	ICON International Communications 28 Maxwell Road #03-03 Red Dot Traffic Building Singapore 069120
CONTACT	:	Cheryl Wen, Andrew Wong
DURING OFFICE HOURS	:	6220 2623 (Office)
AFTER OFFICE HOURS	:	96971512 / 9199 3623 (Mobile)
EMAIL	:	cwen@iconinternational.com.sg / awong@iconinternational.com.sg

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