

NEWS RELEASE



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VIRGINIA ZOO ANNOUNCES DEATH OF RED PANDA

Norfolk, Va. – The Virginia Zoo is deeply saddened to report the death of its female red panda March 5, 2011.

“Yin’s loss is a tragedy,” said Greg Bockheim, executive director of the Virginia Zoo. “Our staff and members of the community were very attached to her.”

Yin was recovered from her habitat by keepers after reportedly collapsing and falling from a branch attached to her stilted house. She was rushed to the Zoo’s on-site veterinary clinic, where she registered a high fever. Despite emergency treatment, she did not survive.

As with all animals at the Zoo, red pandas receive regular veterinary care and a species-specific diet designed to provide proper nutrition. There were no reported warning signs prior to Yin’s death.

Tissue samples from Yin’s remains were sent for analysis in order to determine a cause of death, but preliminary results have been inconclusive. An underlying cause of death has yet to be determined and the analysis is ongoing.

“Our top priority is to try and determine what happened, and to take whatever steps we can to prevent something like this from happening again,” said Bockheim.

Yin was born at the San Diego Zoo June 21, 2006. She came to the Virginia Zoo May 7, 2007.

RED PANDA

Red pandas are small tree-dwelling animals native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China. Slightly larger than a domestic cat and with markings similar to a raccoon, red pandas have soft, dense reddish-brown and white fur. Although red pandas are protected by national laws in their range countries, their numbers in the wild continue to decline because of habitat loss, poaching and inbreeding due to habitat fragmentation.



Yin, a female red panda at the Virginia Zoo, died March 5, 2011 (Virginia Zoo photo).

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