



News From

Cheryl Dinolfo

Monroe County Executive

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DINOLFO ANNOUNCES ZOO'S PARTICIPATION IN POLAR BEAR CONSERVATION PROJECT

Seneca Park Zoo partners with Cincinnati Zoo's Center for Conservation & Research of Endangered Wildlife; polar bear Anoki recently artificially inseminated

Monroe County Executive **Cheryl Dinolfo** and Seneca Park Zoo officials today announced that the Zoo has partnered with the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden's Center for Conservation and Research of Endangered Wildlife (CREW) to participate in the development of assisted reproductive technologies by artificially inseminating Anoki, the Zoo's 22-year-old female polar bear.

*"With the dramatic decline of the polar bear population world-wide, and only eleven breeding pairs of polar bears still in human care at American zoos, conservation is of critical concern to the future of the species," said **Dinolfo**. "Having Anoki participate in this project will advance the knowledge of polar bear reproduction, which could help ensure that this incredible species remains in zoos like ours in the future. Regardless of the outcome, Monroe County is proud to partner with the experts at CREW to support polar bear conservation."*

Seneca Park Zoo has a history of working with CREW on polar bear reproduction. Aurora, the Zoo's prior polar bear and Anoki's mother (through natural conception) was the first polar bear ever to undergo an artificial insemination procedure in 2012. That attempt, and the handful of attempts with polar bears since then, have not resulted in cubs.

This is the third attempt of artificial insemination with Anoki. The first two procedures were conducted when Anoki lived at the Maryland Zoo.

CREW has attempted artificial insemination on seven bears since 2012.

*"Because Anoki has been treated in the past, we already have a reference for how she may respond to a particular hormone treatment. Based on information we've learned from her and from other carnivore species, this year we modified the hormone regime in an attempt improve the chance of a success," said **Dr. Erin Curry**, reproductive physiologist at CREW and leader of its signature polar bear project. "We remain hopeful that Anoki may be the first polar bear to produce cubs as a result of an AI procedure," she added.*

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IN POLAR BEAR ASSISTED REPRODUCTION PROJECT

The AI procedure involves the use of hormone therapy to prepare the female polar bear for the procedure. Seneca Park Zoo animal care staff worked extensively with Anoki to train her to voluntarily accept hand injections of the hormones.

The procedure, conducted in partnership with the Zoo's veterinarian Dr. Louis DiVincenti and animal care staff, was performed earlier this week using sperm from a genetically valuable male. Dr. Louis performed a complete physical exam and diagnostic testing while Anoki was under anesthesia, and she appears to be in good health.

Polar bear reproduction is a complicated process that includes "delayed implantation," which means that while polar bears breed in the spring, the embryo doesn't implant for 4-8 months. If the embryo does successfully implant, cubs are typically born in November or December. Unfortunately, there is no pregnancy test for polar bears, so it won't be determined if the AI was successful for many months, if and when cubs are born.

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