

PALM BEACH ZOO NEWS

To: News Editor

From: Gail Eaton – Director of External Communications

Re: LOCAL STUDENTS ADDRESS GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Photo: Save Vanishing Species Semipostal Stamp

Contact: Claudia Harden, Palm Beach Zoo (561) 214-1667

West Palm Beach, FL, November 21, 2011 – On Tuesday, November 22, approximately 25 fifth-grade students from Palmetto Elementary School in West Palm Beach will participate in a campaign to save the Malayan tiger, an endangered sub-species of which fewer than 500 are believed to remain in the wild. The students have composed letters to the Malaysian embassy in Washington, D.C. thanking the Malaysian government for their efforts to protect the tigers and asking for their continued support of wildlife conservation initiatives. The program addresses several educational objectives: students will learn about the geography of Southeast Asia, the political process of international relations, strategies for conservation of wild animals and wild places, and the proper composition of compelling letters of advocacy.

The students will bring their letters to the Palm Beach Zoo on Tuesday, November 22nd to be postmarked using custom-designed zoo pictorial postal indicia and stamped with the new “Save Vanishing Species” stamp which features the face of a tiger cub. They will participate in a press conference on Tuesday at the Palm Beach Zoo at 10:00 a.m. where the new stamp will be unveiled. The Palm Beach Zoo is partnering with the U.S. Postal Service & the US Fish and Wildlife Service to bring zoo patrons a unique opportunity to buy the new “Save Vanishing Species” Semipostal stamps and have their mail postmarked with the special zoo indicia. Staff from the West Palm Beach Post Office will be positioned at the zoo’s *Tiger Falls* exhibit from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. where the tiger cub stamp will be available for purchase and the custom-designed zoo pictorial postmark will be available to stamp collectors at no additional charge.

The stamp unveiling ceremony will take place at 10:00 a.m. followed by a tiger cub training session featuring the three tiger cubs that were born at the Palm Beach Zoo in May of this year. The zoo’s Education Department will be on hand with tiger craft activities for young guests. The new stamp, featuring the image of an Amur tiger cub, will cost eleven cents more than a first class stamp, and net proceeds from stamp sales will go to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to support the Multinational Species Conservation Funds. Today, only 3,200 tigers populate 42 source sites across thirteen countries in Asia that are now the last hope and greatest priority for the conservation and recovery of the world’s largest cat. Source sites contain the majority of the world’s remaining breeding females – approximately 1,000 individuals – and have the potential to seed the recovery of tigers across wider landscapes. Multinational Species Conservation Funds, soon to be supplemented by proceeds from the stamp, provide critical support to programs that protect these last remaining tiger habitats.

The tiger cub stamp is important because all proceeds raised from the premium will support advertising, efforts to help combat tiger poaching, habitat protection, disease prevention, and education for local communities. Other endangered species supported by these funds include African and Asian elephants, great apes, rhinoceroses, and marine turtles. These stamps are the result of a ten year effort begun and led by the World Wildlife Foundation, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Postal Service, the Wildlife Conservation Society and other international conservation organizations.

The stamps could generate millions of dollars for international wildlife conservation at a time when Congress is making deep funding cuts. These proceeds can't replace vital federal funds for international species conservation, but they are a new, creative way to raise awareness and contribute to the protection of endangered wildlife. -30-