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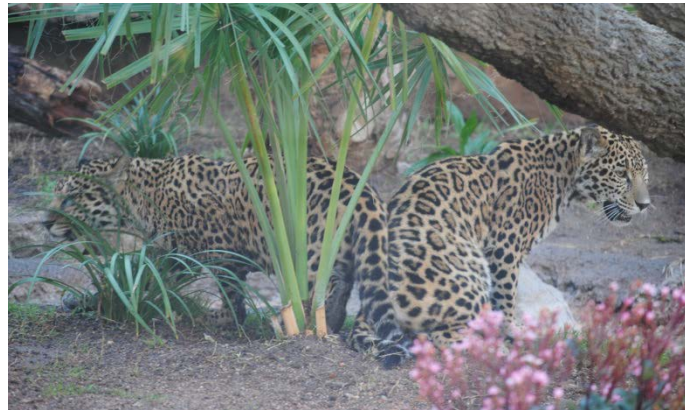
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****March 1, 2016****MEDIA CONTACT:**

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### **Zoo welcomes jaguar sisters**

ABILENE, Texas – The Abilene Zoo staff is over the moon to show off two new stars: a pair of jaguars named Luna and Estrella.

The nine-month-old sisters recently came to Abilene from the Fort Worth Zoo, where they were born in May. The two cats were introduced to their lair Monday and cautiously have been exploring their new home.



“We expect them to hide a lot during their first couple of weeks, so guests may have to search for them,” explained Enrichment and Training Coordinator Liz Kellerman. “But don’t worry. Jaguars are active animals, and soon they will be climbing trees and playing in the pool.”

Luna currently weighs 52.8 pounds and Estrella weighs 57.2 pounds. When fully grown, they will weigh 100 to 120 pounds.

The Abilene Zoo participates in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Jaguar Species Survival Plan (SSP), a conservation program that maintains a healthy, self-sustaining population of vulnerable animals to help prevent their extinction. Among the bond projects approved by Abilene voters last year was the upgrading of the zoo’s facilities to incorporate a jaguar breeding program. When Luna and Estrella reach maturity, the SSP program will choose a mate for the females, and the Abilene Zoo will keep one breeding pair.

Jaguars historically are native to the southern United States. Due to habitat alteration, the jaguar can now only be found from the U.S./Mexico border south into Central America.

**About the Abilene Zoo:** The Abilene Zoo is home to more than 1000 animals of 250 different species. The zoo is open 7 days a week (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Last admittance is 4 p.m. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$4.50 for children ages 3-12, \$6 for seniors aged 60 and older. Members are admitted free. [www.abilenezoo.org](http://www.abilenezoo.org). 325-676-6085.

**Mission Statement:** The Abilene Zoo is a place of learning and adventure, where families make memories, share the joy of discovery and become inspired to preserve wildlife.

All zoo press releases can be found at: <http://abilenezoo.org/zoo-news/>