

## Columbus Zoo elephant ready to give birth

*by UPI*

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Officials at the Columbus Zoo say Phoebe the Asian elephant is ready to give birth after packing on nearly 750 pounds at the Ohio facility.

Zoo assistant curator Harry Peachey said Phoebe's weight gain during the pregnancy is well above optimal levels, which typically range from 500 to 600 pounds, The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch said Monday.

As a precaution, zoo officials are monitoring Phoebe's blood to determine her progesterone levels and have been conducting weekly ultrasounds.

Peachy, along with other zoo animal keepers, will also be spending nights outside the elephant's cage in preparation of sudden labor pains.

A successful birthing by Phoebe would only mark the second time in the zoo's history that a live elephant has been born at the site.

"We're all on pins and needles about the birth," zoo veterinarian Michael Barrie told the Dispatch.

Peachy said since Phoebe was only born in 1987 and has already given birth twice, the birthing process should be little to no problem.

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