

NW China province asks public to name panda cubs

Northwest China's Shaanxi Province launched a naming campaign Thursday, asking fans to name its three newest panda cubs.

The public can suggest names via phone, email or instant messaging platform QQ, before October 20, according to Dang Shuangren, deputy head of the provincial forestry department.

Dang said the final names would be announced by the end of October.

The three pandas include twin cubs given birth by a panda named Ai Bang on June 12 at the breeding and research center for endangered wild animals in Zhouzhi county, Shaanxi. Another baby panda was delivered by a panda called Zhu Zhu on August 21.

A total of four panda cubs, including the three babies who are yet to be named, met the public for the first time on Thursday.

Since 2003, 16 panda cubs have been born at the base, bringing its number of captive-bred giant pandas to 23.

The number of wild pandas in Shaanxi has grown to 345. Researchers are conducting wilderness training programs to help restore the wild population.

Giant pandas are one of the world's most endangered species and live mainly in the mountains of northern Sichuan Province as well as southern Gansu and Shaanxi provinces.