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TWO MAGELLANIC PENGUIN CHICKS HATCH AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO

Penguin chicks pass their first physicals

Tacoma, Wash. – “Pink” and “Red” now have two hungry mouths to feed.

The Magellanic penguin parents, known by the colors of the bands on their wings, welcomed two chicks in their burrow at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium earlier this week.

Zookeepers and a veterinarian gave them their well-chick examinations yesterday. Zoo head veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf carefully examined each chick for overall body condition and energy and hydration levels to assess their health.



“They look healthy and in good condition and were very active during their physical examinations,” said zoo head veterinarian Dr. Karen Wolf.

The 4-day-old chick hatched on Monday weighed 5.4 ounces, and the 3-day-old-chick hatched on Tuesday weighed 4.3 ounces, Wolf said.

“Pink and Red are very attentive parents,” said staff biologist Amanda Shaffer. The parents take turns brooding the chicks, keeping them warm with a special patch on their abdomen that allows the chicks

contact with their skin, Shaffer said.

The new little family of four is on exhibit in the Penguin Point habitat at the zoo, but spotting the chicks will take patience. They’re safely hidden under one of the parents while they’re being kept warm during the day, coming out occasionally for feeding. The parents feed the chicks a slurry of regurgitated fish after the adults have eaten herring and capelin.

Parents incubate the eggs in shifts. They generally hatch between 38 and 42 days after they’re laid.

The hatchings are a result of a breeding recommendation through the Species Survival Plan® (SSP) for Magellanic penguins.

Four of the nine penguins at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium were rescued after washing ashore in South America, nursed back to health at a rehabilitation facility and found a home in Tacoma. Four penguins were hatched here and one was hatched at Blank Park Zoo in Iowa.

The medium-sized penguins, native to the South American shores of Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Brazil, are listed as near-threatened on the IUCN Red List, which the International Union for Conservation of Nature compiles to indicate the status of various species whose numbers are drastically dwindling in the wild

Penguins are threatened in the wild by a number of factors, including the proliferation of plastics in the ocean, spills of oil and other hazardous materials, and overfishing



Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is open from 9:30 to 5 p.m. daily.

For more information about the zoo go to www.pdza.org.

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Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, the Northwest's only combined zoo and aquarium, practices and promotes responsible stewardship of the world's resources through education, conservation, research and recreational opportunities. The zoo, a division of Metro Parks Tacoma, is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums (AMMPA).

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