



NEWS EDITORS: Here's the link to a gallery of downloadable photos.

<https://pdza.smugmug.com/Category/Media-Galleries/Penguin-chick/>

Password: (case sensitive) penguin chick

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 27, 2017

TWO NEWLY HATCHED PENGUIN CHICKS PASS FIRST PHYSICALS AT POINT DEFIANCE ZOO

Tacoma, Wash. – Zookeepers and a veterinarian carefully lifted two small gray balls of fluff out of their burrow – and very briefly away from their parents – this morning to weigh the newly hatched Magellanic penguins and give them well-chick examinations.



A newly hatched penguin chick received its first physical - and first professional photo session - this morning at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

The verdict: Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium's newest residents are healthy and appear to be thriving. They are the first penguin chicks hatched at the zoo since 2006.

The 4-day-old chick hatched on Tuesday weighed 5.3 ounces, and the 2-day-old chick hatched on Thursday weighed 3.9 ounces, staff biologist Amanda Shaffer said. Each chick was tenderly placed on a towel in a lightweight container and weighed on a portable scale.

"They both look great and were quite active during their physical examinations," said zoo veterinarian Dr. Kadie Anderson. Anderson carefully examined each chick for overall body condition and energy and hydration levels to assess their health.



The hatchlings are the offspring of 7-year-old mother “Pink” and 7-year-old father “Red.” The Magellanic penguins at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium are not named but rather are known by the colors of the identification bands on their wings.

“Pink and Red are attentive parents,” said Shaffer, the zoo’s lead penguin keeper. Pink often keeps watch over the burrow while Red broods the chicks, keeping them warm with a special patch on his

abdomen that allows them contact with his skin. The father also has exhibited protective behavior and vocalizations, 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.

The zoo has four male-female pairs of adult penguins, and all have been sitting on eggs.

Top: Zoo veterinarian Dr. Kadie Anderson examines one of two penguin chicks hatched this week at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium.

Above: The chick was placed on a towel in a lightweight bin for weighing.



Both of Pink and Red’s eggs hatched. It’s possible a chick from one of the other adult penguin pairs could pip (or break) its way through an egg in the next week or so. The penguins’ remaining eggs are believed to be infertile.

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

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



To learn more about penguins, go to www.pdza.org/magellanic-penguin.

Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium is open from 9:30 to 6 p.m. daily, including Memorial Day.

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

One of two hatchlings is examined by veterinarian Dr. Kadie Anderson at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium this morning.

All photos courtesy of Brian DalBalcon for Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium

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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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