

PRESS RELEASE

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Woodland Park Zoo celebrates the hatching of penguin chicks

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo may be temporarily closed but the animals continue to receive excellent care by dedicated staff every day, and new life carries on: The zoo is proud to announce the hatching of a pair of Humboldt penguin chicks!

The first chick hatched on April 3 to mom Rosie and dad Leo, and their second chick hatched three days later. The parents have produced seven other chicks together from previous breeding seasons.

The incubation period for penguins is approximately 40 days. The sex of the chicks is unknown until DNA testing can be conducted.

The new chicks represent the 73rd and 74th successful hatchings of Humboldt penguins at the zoo since its first breeding season in 2010, which was a year after the zoo opened the state-of-the-art penguin habitat. With the new additions, the zoo's colony currently consists of 41 penguins.

"Being playful, curious and charismatic, penguins are a favorite for our guests, and we can't wait to share the new penguin family with our community," said Mark Myers, bird curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "Every chick produced in our colony is an important addition to the Association of Zoos & Aquariums' Humboldt Penguin Species Survival Plan and these two hatchlings offer a bright spot and sense of normalcy for us, especially during these difficult times."

The chicks are currently living in nesting burrows where they are under the care of both parents. The penguin keepers minimize hands-on intervention except for periodic weigh-ins to ensure they are achieving growth milestones.

"Both parents play an important role in raising their chicks in the wild and in zoos. They take turns incubating the eggs and share in the day-to-day care for their chicks," explained Myers. "The chicks look well and are thriving."

Penguin chicks fledge between 10 and 12 weeks of age. "Before the new chicks reach fledging age and go outdoors on exhibit, our penguin keepers will remove them from the nest so they can condition the birds to become acclimated to keepers for hand feeding, weighing and other animal care activities," said Myers. The chicks also are given access to a shallow pool where they can learn to swim in a more controlled and less crowded environment. The chicks will join the colony in the outdoor habitat sometime in early summer.

Fascinating facts

- Unlike their ice and snow-dwelling Antarctic cousins, Humboldt penguins inhabit hot, dry coastlines in Peru and Chile.
- Penguins are playful by nature and also noisy. Their vocalizations sound much like a donkey braying.
- These birds are built to swim. Using their strong wings, they "fly" underwater, usually just below the surface, at speeds of up to 20 miles per hour, steering with their feet and tail.
- Humboldt penguins lose all their feathers each year and systematically replace them with new feathers in a process called molting, which can take up to a few weeks.

A vulnerable species, approximately 40,000 Humboldt penguins survive in their natural range. Woodland Park Zoo has long been committed to conserving the species by supporting [The Center for Conservation of the Humboldt Penguin in Punta San Juan, Peru](#), breeding the species through the Humboldt Penguin [Species Survival Plan](#), and encouraging visitors to



choose sustainable seafood options as directed by Monterey Bay Aquarium's [Seafood Watch](#) program. Punta San Juan is home to approximately 5,000 Humboldt penguins, the largest colony in Peru.

Where to see the zoo's penguins

Woodland Park Zoo is temporarily closed following state recommendations to slow the spread of the coronavirus. When the zoo reopens, the colony of penguins can be found during regular zoo hours in the award-winning penguin exhibit near the West Plaza.

Please visit www.zoo.org/relief to help support the animals at Woodland Park Zoo.

While the zoo is closed to the public, the exceptional animal care and veterinary teams, and other staff continue to work to provide dedicated care to more than 900 animals. As a non-profit organization, the zoo is relying on the community now more than ever to help these wonderful animals continue to thrive. Contributions, both big and small, will help creatures of all sizes.

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