

Audubon Aquarium Penguins Welcome a New Bundle of Feathery Joy

By: Milaena Hamilton



African blackfooted penguins Puddles and Millicent with their baby Chicory. Photo Credit: Audubon Aquarium of the Americas

Congratulations are in order for a pair of African blackfooted penguins at the [Audubon Aquarium of the Americas](#) in New Orleans. New parents Millicent and Puddles welcomed their first chick, Chicory, on April 23, 2015.

While many of the current residents of the Audubon's penguin exhibit were hand-raised by the aviculture staff, Millicent and Puddles will take on full parenting responsibilities when it comes to raising their little one. Chicory's gender will not be released for a few more weeks until genetic testing is complete, but what is known is that the chick is healthy, and Millicent and Puddles are taking to parenthood just fine.

According to Senior Aviculturist Darwin Long, "The chick is already beginning to venture out of its nestbox as it begins to explore the world around it. Soon the parents will begin feeding it outside of the nestbox. The chick will look like a big brown fuzzy penguin for the next 4-5 weeks, but will take on a more blue-gray appearance by July."



Chicory was born on April 23. Photo Credit: Audubon Aquarium of the Americas

This exciting baby news comes as the Audubon Aquarium celebrates 25 years since it first opened in 1990. Since then, the Aquarium's successful penguin breeding program has reared 52 chicks including a record of 11 hatched in 2013 under their Species Survival Plan in conjunction with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.

Chicory's birth also marks a triumph for the African blackfooted penguin species, which was categorized as endangered in 2010 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The [IUCN estimated in 2013](#) that only 52,000 mature African blackfooted penguins exist in their native habitats between Namibia and South Africa. These low numbers result from many natural and anthropogenic factors such as habitat loss, overfishing, and oil spills. However, zoos, aquariums, and wildlife organizations worldwide are on the forefront of conservation efforts seeking to protect these animals and guarantee that they will continue to exist in the wild and at zoos for generations to come.

Chicory joins a colony of forty African blackfooted and three South American Rockhopper penguins, who all can be seen 24/7 on [Animal Planet L!VE's Penguin Cam](#). On APL!VE, you can tune in for daily penguin feedings at 11:30AM and 4PM ET. Penguin Chats with the Audubon Aquarium's aviculturists are also hosted on Thursdays during the afternoon feeding.