

MARYLAND ZOO

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10 July 2018

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MARYLAND ZOO RAISES, RELEASES CRITICALLY ENDANGERED TURTLE

BALTIMORE, MD – Last summer, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore got a big surprise from a very small patient in their care. The Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) delivered a critically endangered bog turtle with a foot injury to the Zoo for surgery.

One week after her arrival and surgery, she laid five eggs – one of which successfully hatched on August 29, 2017. The mother turtle healed and was released back at her original location in Delaware. The hatchling spent the winter at the Zoo, and was released at the same location last month.

Bog turtles (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) are both the smallest and rarest turtles in North America. Hatchlings measure about one inch and are considered full size at four inches, about the size of a baseball. They live in marshes, swamps and wet meadows, but are increasingly threatened by habitat loss. One third of all bog turtles live in Maryland, while isolated populations can be found in their native range from New York State to Georgia.

“This opportunity to help turtles in Delaware was made available to us through our ongoing efforts in Maryland, and our relationship with our state agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources,” said Kevin Barrett, reptile and amphibian collection and conservation manager at the Zoo. “Collaborating with different agencies throughout the bog turtles' range is exciting and something that needs to be done to protect one of our most endangered native reptile species.”

The Delaware DFW has been able to track the mother turtle and confirm that she is thriving. They hope to be able to track the newly released juvenile turtle too.

The Maryland Zoo does not have bog turtles on exhibit at the Zoo, however they are a featured species in the Zoo's Animal Embassy. Zoo educators introduce bog turtles and other Animal Ambassadors to audiences in education outreach programs both on and off grounds.

About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo's varied natural habitat exhibits such as the award-winning Penguin Coast, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the Children's Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit www.marylandzoo.org.

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