

MARYLAND ZOO

NEWS

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CONTACT: Claire Aubel
O: 410/454-1333

MARYLAND ZOO DISHES UP NEW PENGUIN NAME WITH A SPICY THEME

-Picked by popular vote in an online naming contest -

BALTIMORE, MD – Introducing Sage! The Maryland Zoo’s first penguin chick to hatch in the 2019-2020 season was officially named today by popular vote.

Sage, a female penguin, hatched on Oct. 19, 2019. The Zoo has been hatching penguin chicks for more than 50 years, celebrating the arrival of Mille, chick number 1000 in 2018 and naming the chicks each year with a new theme. This year, the *Penguin Coast* care team selected spices as the naming theme.

The Zoo held a public online naming contest for the first hatchling, which ended January 3. Nearly 7,000 votes were received, and the name Sage beat out three other contenders: Sesame, Tarragon and Thyme.

Currently 10 chicks have hatched so far this breeding season. Since the newest "batch" of chicks will add a bit of flavor to the colony of more than 90 endangered birds, the Zoo has partnered with Maryland-based McCormick & Company for the naming contest and name announcements.

“We’re so excited to be 'adopting' these little chicks for the season and taking them under our wing,” said Jill Pratt, VP of Marketing Excellence at McCormick. “We have supported the Zoo for years and are pleased to bring more attention to the great work they do in our community and conserving animals in the wild.”

Once each chick hatches, it is assigned an individual identification number, and each is named according to the theme once DNA tests reveal whether the chick is male or female. Previous themes include literary characters, famous scientists, space, types of fish, and types of trees.

Breeding season at *Penguin Coast* begins in mid-September and lasts until the end of February, mimicking the spring to summer breeding season for these endangered birds in their native South Africa. Penguin chicks hatch 38-42 days after the eggs are laid.

“With African penguins, it is both the male and the female who care for the eggs, taking turns incubating, and once the chick hatches, they rotate care for the chick, protect, feed, and keep the chick warm for 2-3 days and then switch off,” said Jen Kottyan, avian collection and conservation manager.

At *Penguin Coast*, chicks stay with their parents for about three weeks after they hatch and are fed regurgitated fish from their parents. During this time, the *Penguin Coast* animal care team and vets keep a close eye on the development of the chicks, weighing and measuring them every few days until they are three weeks old to make sure that the parents are properly caring for each chick. When a chick is

three weeks old, the keepers remove it from the nest, and start to teach the chick that they are the source of food. This step is critical as it will allow staff to provide long term care for the birds including daily feeding, regular health exams and both routine and emergency medical care. Penguin breeding recommendations are made by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) African Penguin Species Survival Plan (SSP).

While Sage and the other penguin chicks are not viewable to the public, the rest of the colony, including juvenile and adult penguins, can be seen at *Penguin Coast*. The penguins are fed in front of the public twice daily and behind-the-scenes *Penguin Coast* Tours and Penguin Encounters are offered throughout the year for an additional fee.

To see pictures of the growing penguin chicks, please visit www.marylandzoo.org or our www.facebook.com/marylandzoo.

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 in areas 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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