

MARYLAND ZOO

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
25 January 2021

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HELP NAME MARYLAND ZOO'S FIRST PENGUIN CHICK OF 2021!

-- Vote now through Monday, February 8th --

BALTIMORE, MD – The Maryland Zoo and Smyth Jewelers are adding some bling to this year's chicks in the ever-growing African penguin colony! The Zoo has been hatching penguin chicks for more than 50 years and this year, the *Penguin Coast* animal care team has selected gemstones as the theme for naming chicks hatched during the 2020-2021 season. Previous themes include spices, literary characters, famous scientists, space, and types of fish.

Several of the chicks hatched early this season have already been named – Diamond, Pearl, Topaz and Onyx. “We’re thrilled to be partnering with the Zoo to help them name this year’s rare penguin chicks after equally precious gemstones,” said Ruthann Carroll, director of advertising at Smyth Jewelers. “African penguins are endangered in their native range, so we are pleased to bring more attention to the great work the Zoo does on behalf of the penguins in their care as well as in the wild.”

The Zoo is now asking for the public’s help in selecting the name for the first chick to hatch in 2021. This little chick could be named:

- Emerald - A gemstone known for its rich green color, it is believed to bring good fortune and health.
- Sapphire - This gemstone is most commonly recognized for its shades of celestial blue but can be found in almost every color. It's known as the gem of sincerity and illuminates the true inner beauty of its owner.
- Ruby - This fiery red gemstone, a variety of the mineral corundum, is associated with deep love and great courage.
- Garnet - A gemstone that spans multiple shades but is best known for shades of red signifies faith, loyalty and friendship.

To see pictures of the Zoo’s newest additions and to cast your vote, visit our website at www.marylandzoo.org/preciouspenguins. Voting is open now through 10 a.m., Monday, February 8th. You can vote once per day, and the winning name theme will be announced on The Maryland Zoo Facebook page!

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BACKGROUND

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. 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.

“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 the penguin chicks are not viewable to the public yet, juvenile and adult penguins can be seen at *Penguin Coast*. Penguin Feeding programs are offered twice daily, free with admission, and there are several special experiences where you can get closer than ever to penguins including Penguin Encounters, the Penguin Fish Toss and Penguin Training, which are all offered throughout the year for an additional fee. For more information on Zoo Experiences, visit www.marylandzoo.org/experiences

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.

About Smyth Jewelers

Since 1914, Smyth Jewelers has been the family-owned jeweler where Maryland gets engaged. Smyth’s three Maryland showrooms in Timonium, Annapolis and Ellicott City offer the largest selection of engagement rings, wedding bands, fine jewelry watches and gifts on the East Coast.

It’s not just the merchandise that sets Smyth apart. It’s the experience. Whether you’re shopping in-store or online, every knowledgeable, non-commissioned associate at Smyth makes sure each customer “feels the love.” For more information or to shop online, visit www.smythjewelers.com.