



County of Onondaga
Office of the County Executive

J. Ryan McMahon II
County Executive

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Contact: Mark Nicotra (315) 435-3516

County Executive Ryan McMahon Introduces Two New Penguin Chicks

Lima & Peru were born in May

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – Two new Humboldt penguin chicks that hatched at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in May were introduced to the public by Onondaga County Executive Ryan McMahon today. The County Executive welcomed the new arrivals at the zoo’s Penguin Coast exhibit, where they hatched on May 1 and May 4.

“Our zoo has had amazing success breeding Humboldt penguins, which are under threat in the wild,” McMahon said. “I want to congratulate the zoo on these new chicks and spotlight the work our zoo does on behalf of endangered species.”

The two new chicks are both males and are named Peru and Lima (“Lee-ma”) in honor of their native habitat off the coast of Peru. The zoo adopted an “I Love New York” theme for naming new animals this year. Both Peru and its capital, Lima, are names of towns in New York – Peru in Clinton County and Lima in Livingston County.

Zoo Director Ted Fox said the new chicks were bred as part of the Species Survival Plan for Humboldt penguins overseen by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). More than 55 penguin chicks have hatched at the zoo since it joined the SSP in 2005, and many have gone to other AZA institutions to help preserve the species.

The two new chicks are the offspring of penguin parents Frederico and Poquita. Foster parents Venti and Isa are helping to raise the older chick, Peru, to give both chicks a strong start, Fox said. The parents will feed the chicks until they are big enough to take fish directly from keepers. Penguins at the zoo are hand-fed twice a day so animal care staff can keep records of how much food each bird consumes.

Fox said Peru weighed 67 grams (only .14 of a pound) when he hatched on May 1, and he now weighs 1952 grams, or 4.3 pounds. Lima weighed 52 grams (only .11 of a pound) when he hatched on May 4, and he now weighs 1680 grams, or 3.7 pounds.

The new chicks bring the number of birds in the zoo's Humboldt penguin colony to 34. They will remain off exhibit with their parents until their waterproof feathers come in, then they will practice their swimming skills in the small indoor pool before joining the rest of the colony later this summer.

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