



## Photo Release

# **Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo marks historic first with birth of Humboldt Penguin chicks**

**Dubai, UAE; April 18, 2011:** They have been seen blushing and their vital activity is to preen their feathers to look and feel as 'cool' as they can get. The popular Humboldt Penguin community in Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo has now just added two new members to its fold.

The penguins chicks were born to three-year-olds Rami and Circo, marking the first-ever births at Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo.

The hatching of the two chicks has set a historic first for Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo, as visitors throng to watch the newborns, which entertain the visitors with innocent frolics.

Circo, the mom, was identified as pregnant three months ago and in typical penguin fashion, Rami started making nests shoving rocks around. The aquarists, the only people authorized to enter the penguin enclosure, started providing wood branches and rocks, supporting Rami in his nesting activity. After an incubation period of about 45 days, the first Penguin chicks were welcomed to the colony

The aquarists took extra care not to unsettle the nest with the penguin chicks, as Rami shared his feed of fish with the little ones. The chicks having been relishing their dad's fish feed from 15 days of age.

Circo continues to keep a watchful eye over the young ones. The chicks have now started treading out of the nest and mingling with their wider family, although they will stay in their nest until they are fully grown in about 80 days.

Very soon they will show the trade-mark and fun-to-watch antics that Humboldt Penguins, which are seen constantly engaged in preening their feathers with oil gathered from the preening gland. This keeps the feathers waterproof, insulating the birds from the cold. They also adopt the usual penguin tactics of camouflaging themselves in the water, using their white and black body colour.

The Humboldt penguins are medium-sized penguins and grow to about 65-70 cm long. They are a warm-weather species found on rocky mainland shores and offshore islands of Chile and Peru. Underwater Zoo had also introduced another six Gentoo Penguins, which are located in a different exhibit maintained at sub-zero environment. Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo ensures that all guidelines of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) are met.



Gordon White, General Manager at Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo, said: “The hatching of the Penguin eggs and these new additions to the family of Humboldt Penguins within the Underwater Zoo is a strong testament to our success in creating a sustainable environment for our animals. The little penguins will be a must-see attraction for our visitors.”

Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo, managed by Emaar Retail LLC, is one of the largest and most diverse aquariums in the world, featuring the world’s largest acrylic viewing panel. New species are regularly added to the aquatic animal community with recent additions including the exquisite Scalloped Hammerhead Sharks and Silver Tip Sharks.

A 270-degree walk-through tunnel experience, Glass Bottom Boat Rides, Cage Snorkeling Experience, The Ocean School Programme, feeding presentations and the Aquarist Programme are some of the activities that add to the interactive experience for visitors.

An unprecedented ‘Shark Fest,’ is ongoing until May 15, 2011, marked by the introduction of seven new and exotic species of sharks at Underwater Zoo and the world’s largest collection of Sand Tiger Sharks in the aquarium. Shark Fest offers a unique opportunity to further understand the shark community, watch feedings of different species of shark and gain an overview of the operations of the aquarium through several interactive events.

Underwater Zoo, located on Level 2 above the main Aquarium tank, presents the bio-diversity in different ecological zones including Rainforest, Rocky Shore and Living Ocean. Apart from Humboldt Penguins and Caiman Crocodiles, the animals featured here include Piranhas, Giant Spider Crabs, Water Rats, Sea Jellies and Clown fish.

In addition to Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo, Emaar Retail LLC manages a strong portfolio of exclusive leisure and retail concepts including the Olympic-sized Dubai Ice Rink; Reel Cinemas, the UAE largest megaplex with 22-screens; KidZania®, the first of its kind edutainment concept in the entire region; and SEGA Republic, the region’s first and largest SEGA indoor theme park - all in The Dubai Mall. Reel Cinemas has also introduced the first ‘premier’ boutique 6-screen Cineplex at Dubai Marina Mall.

**-ends-**

**For further information, please contact:**

Kelly Home / Meral Hassan

ASDA’A Burson-Marsteller

Tel: (+9714) 334 4550

[k.home@asdaa.com](mailto:k.home@asdaa.com), [m.hassan@asdaa.com](mailto:m.hassan@asdaa.com)