

NEWS RELEASE

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Virginia Aquarium Welcomes Newborn Spotted Eagle Ray *Birth marks the first successful spotted eagle ray reproduction at Virginia Aquarium*

(VIRGINIA BEACH, VA) – The Virginia Aquarium is proud to welcome a newborn spotted eagle ray. The ray, born on Monday, July 20, 2020, marks a major milestone for the Aquarium and for zoos and aquariums worldwide. Prior to this birth, spotted eagle ray pups have been born at only nine other Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) institutions around the world.

The newborn pup was born to mother Sadana. The sex of the pup and a naming contest will be announced in the coming weeks.

Newborn spotted eagle rays do not require parental care and are self-sufficient at birth. Currently, the pup is in an off-exhibit quarantine area while staff continue to closely monitor the diet, behavior, and welfare of the newborn animal. Our veterinary and animal care teams are providing the pup with additional nutritional support as it gets better at eating on its own. Sadana also passed a nonviable pup shortly before the live pup. It is not uncommon for sharks and rays to be pregnant with multiple pups but have fewer remain viable through birth. Spotted eagle ray reproduction is exceedingly rare, and the typical gestation period can be from six to 13 months, so the Aquarium team collaborated with other facilities for advice from the beginning. Spotted eagle rays are listed as Near Threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and are included in a Species Survival Plan through AZA.

We do not have immediate plans for moving the animal into the larger exhibit but will share updates and videos on our social channels as milestones are met.

The Virginia Aquarium is open to the public. More information about the new procedures, including a welcome back and frequently asked questions page, can be found on the Virginia Aquarium's website:

<https://www.virginiaaquarium.com/visit/Pages/WelcomeBack.aspx>

Even during these trying times, the Virginia Aquarium continues to care for our animals and perform important research like the birth of this spotted eagle ray pup. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has impacted the Aquarium Fund immeasurably. Please consider supporting our mission and operations by giving to the Aquarium Fund [here](#).

The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums. The Aquarium is also a member of World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Virginia Aquarium's mission is to inspire conservation of the marine environment through education, research and sustainable practices. It is located at 717 General Booth Boulevard, just south of Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach.

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