

ZOO

Dragon Viewing's a Snap

Zoo introduces new Komodo dragon hatchlings.

Story courtesy the Zoo; Photo by Tad Motoyama/Zoo

On Aug. 8, the first of 22 Komodo dragons hatched at the Los Angeles Zoo. Over the course of the next 11 days, 21 additional Komodos hatched. Several of the young Komodos that hatched at the Zoo are exploring their newly renovated exhibit in the Winnick Family Children's Zoo.

"These hatchlings are a landmark event for the L.A. Zoo," said Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians Ian Recchio. "We're excited to be able to display these young dragons and think Angelenos are equally excited to come and see them."

On Jan. 22, Lima, the Zoo's female Komodo dragon, laid 23 eggs. Twenty-two of the 23 eggs hatched. Less than 10 zoos in North America have been able to breed Komodos; this marks the L.A. Zoo's first success at breeding them. These Komodo hatchlings will go on to play an important role in the conservation of the species.

Hatchlings are 14 to 20 inches long and weigh about three to four ounces. Komodos, the world's largest lizard, can grow to approximately nine feet, weighing up to 200 pounds or more. Because Komodos are cannibalistic, readily eating the young and eggs of their own species, hatchlings are on their own from the start. In the wild, just after hatching the young scurry up nearby trees to avoid being eaten by the adults. They remain in the trees, feeding on insects and small lizards, until they are too heavy to forage successfully up above.

Native to only a few islands in Indonesia, this dragon has the smallest range of any of the world's large carnivores. The Komodo dragon is the major predator found on the islands and uses its excel-

lent sense of smell to find prey. An opportunistic scavenger and predator, Komodos feed on snakes, lizards, eggs, carrion, and large mammals such as deer, wild pigs, horses and water buffalo.

Contrary to popular belief, Komodos don't produce toxic saliva. Their saliva picks up pathogenic bacteria (most commonly E. coli.) through their scavenging habits and re-infestation from carrion. They are rarely affected by these pathogens themselves because chemicals and proteins in their blood act as natural antibiotics. Komodos in zoos are fed cleaner food, which virtually eliminates these infectious pathogens.



Actress Betty White and Zoo Curator of Reptiles Ian Recchio with a Komodo dragon at the L.A. Zoo.

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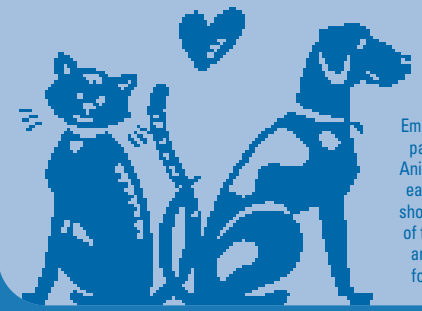
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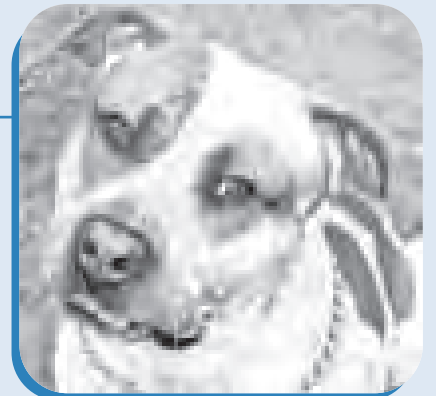
The City Employees Club partners with Animal Services each month to showcase some of the pets that are available for adoption.

This Month's Pets For Adoption:

freckles

Freckles is a four-year-old neutered American staff/Australian cattle dog mix. He's a very smart boy that knows how to sit, down, stay, speak, shake and high five! Please help Freckles find his perfect home.

ID #A1121651: West Los Angeles Animal Care Center.



gisele

Gisele is a four-year-old spayed German shepherd. She's a very sweet and outgoing girl that loves to fetch, knows how to sit and is housetrained!

ID #A1036686: West Los Angeles Animal Care Center.



frodo

Frodo is an eight-year-old neutered domestic short hair cat. He's great with people and dogs. Frodo also is litter-box trained and must remain an indoor cat because he's been declawed.

ID #A1115971: West Los Angeles Animal Care Center.



tony

Tony is a five-year-old neutered domestic short hair cat. He was brought to the Care Center because his family's landlord didn't allow cats. Tony is now looking for a home where pets are encouraged! Help this sweet boy out!

ID #A1117494: West Los Angeles Animal Care Center.

cashmere

Cashmere is a six-month-old neutered rabbit. Luckily, Cashmere was fostered in a loving home as a baby and exposed to lots of different environments and people. He loves playing with children and is used to dogs.

ID #A1094591: West Los Angeles Animal Care Center.



Meet your new hope coordinator!



All of the following animals are available for adoption at the West LA Animal Care Center, 11361 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles CA 90064. New Hope Coordinator **Samantha Westbrook** may be reached at (213) 485-0494.

To see more animals available for adoption, please visit www.laanimalservices.org