



A flamingo chick at the LA Zoo.

Zoo

6 New Flamingoes

Zoo welcomes first Chilean flamingo chicks in more than 10 years.

Photos by Ted Motoyama, Zoo

"Breeding wasn't an option because we don't allow our animals to hybridize," said Susie Kasielke, Curator of Birds at the Los Angeles Zoo. "When the Caribbean flamingos in our collection were relocated to another AZA-accredited facility to join a larger flock, the L.A. Zoo was able to start considering breeding the Chilean flamingos for the first time in over 10 years."

The chicks were produced using a new breeding technique for the Zoo that allows the flamingos to have access to both on and off-display areas of their habitat during the breeding season. In the past, breeding birds stayed off-display for nesting, with a smaller group of non-breeding individuals out on display. The new system of expanding their environment during breeding proved to be an immediate success.

"They started building nests right away," said Susie Kasielke. "The new system has gone really well and has exceeded our expectations."

Guests are encouraged to come watch these youngsters discover their new habitat while they find their place amongst the flock of beautiful, pink birds. Although the chicks hatched with fluffy gray down, their feathers will start to turn pink around four months old but will retain some gray feathers until they

are mature at three to four years old. There are currently 87 Chilean flamingos in the flock at the L.A. Zoo as well as a flock of 35 Greater flamingos located in the Zoo's Aviary.

The Los Angeles Zoo and Botanical Gardens is in Griffith Park at the junction of the Ventura

(134) and Golden State (5) freeways. Admission is \$18 for adults and \$13 for children ages 2 to 12. The Zoo is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For information, call (323) 644-4200 or visit the L.A. Zoo Web site at www.lazoo.org.



A flamingo chick at the LA Zoo.

The Zoo has added six flamingo chicks to its current flock of Chilean flamingos. The fluffy, gray youngsters, three male and three female, range in age from one month to four and half months old. Four of the baby birds can now be seen on exhibit with their parents, while two of the recently hatched chicks are being hand-reared off-display and will soon be introduced to the rest of the flock. In addition, there are two eggs currently in an incubator behind the scenes that are expected to hatch soon.

These babies are the first Chilean flamingo chicks to hatch at the L.A. Zoo in more than 10 years. Previously the Zoo had a mixed flock containing Chilean and Caribbean flamingos in one habitat, which didn't allow for breeding.

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Zoo



An introduction of hippos.

Hippo, Meet Hippo

Zoo introduces two hippos to each other.

Photos by Ted Motoyama, Zoo

Mara, who is from the Topeka Zoo, arrived at the Los Angeles Zoo on Dec. 16 with the hope of being a potential companion for Adhama. Upon arrival she lived in an adjoining habitat that allowed the two hippos visual access to each other until they were ready for an introduction. Zookeepers also switched the hippo's habitats on occasion, so they could get used to each other's scents in their environment.

On the day of the big introduction, Zookeepers waited until Mara was swimming in the pool before they allowed Adhama to have access to the habitat.

Once Adhama entered, Mara, the older and larger of the two, immediately got out of the pool and curiously approached him. The pair spent the remainder of their day interacting together and swimming in the pool.

Mara and Adhama aren't considered a breeding pair.

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On Feb. 12, the Zoo introduced hippos Adhama, 3, male, and Mara, 10, female, to each for the first time in the same habitat, and the results were nothing short of animal magnetism.

"The introduction went very well," said Jeff Holland, Curator of Mammals at the Los Angeles Zoo. "They were immediately interested in each other. This is the first time in several years we have introduced a pair of hippos here at the Los Angeles Zoo. So far we haven't seen any aggression, and we think they will make great companions."