

# *Husbandry Update for August 16, 2010*

## **River Journey**

### **Seahorses**

Baby lined seahorses, *Hippocampus erectus*, were born in the *Caribbean Mangrove* exhibit on both Tuesday and Wednesday, August 10 and 11.

Also, several lined seahorses were added to the Chesapeake Bay exhibit on Tuesday, August 10. These seahorses, donated by the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center in March, are about one year old. This brings the total count of seahorses in this exhibit to 20.

### **Cove Forest**

On Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 10 warpaint shiners and three whitetail shiners were added to the exhibit next to the northern pine snake exhibit in the *Cove Forest*.

Also on Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 12 saffron shiners and 16 rosyside dace were added to the small exhibit behind the waterfall in the Cove Forest.

### **Discovery Hall**

The striped hermit crab in the estuary display molted this week and will likely be hiding for several days while its new exoskeleton hardens.

### **Rivers of the World**

The *Chinese Mountain Stream* has 21 new residents. White cloud mountain fish, *Tanichthys albonubes*, were added to the exhibit on Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Tennessee River**

A total of 34 fish were added to the *Tennessee River* Exhibit on Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Among the fish were seven flame chubs, one bluntnose minnow, six striped shiners, three southern redbelly dace, three warpaint shiners, five telescope shiners, one river chub and eight rosyside dace.

## **Ocean Journey**

### **Tropical Cove**

A juvenile white-blotched river ray, *Potamotrygon leopoldi*, was added to the *Freshwater Ray* exhibit in Ocean Journey. This ray, which has been in a backup area for several years, is one of the first freshwater rays born at the Tennessee Aquarium. It is about eight inches in diameter and is much smaller than the other rays on exhibit. This makes three species of freshwater rays in the exhibit, with the black ray, *P. henlei*, and white-blotched river ray, *P. leopoldi*, looking very similar. The difference is in the white spots. In *P. leopoldi*, the spots do not go all the way to the edge,

stopping about an inch or so from the edge of the disc. In *P. henlei*, the spots do go all the way to the edge of the disc.

Many fish use confined spaces as a means of protection and security. An epaulette shark uses its snake-like body to navigate into tight gaps or holes that few other animals can access. Although there are several hiding spots in Shark Island, The epaulette sharks on exhibit often bury their faces in small crevices within the rockwork. Although it may appear as if the shark is in distress, it is simply maintaining a sense of comfort. This is much like the better-known behavior of an ostrich burying its head in the sand.



Epaulette shark

### **Penguins' Rock**

The gentoo chick is now 47 days old and doing well. He/she has been eating whole fish for over a week now and can easily eat 30-40 fish in a day (plus what mom feeds)! In the backup area, the chick goes on "walkabouts," which gives it a chance to try out those wobbly legs and large feet. The chick's balance is not perfect yet but it is getting there.



Gentoo chick at 40 days old

The other penguins have increased appetites, which means molting season is right around the corner. Pepper has already molted for the year, but you can expect to see the gentoos and macaronis fattening and molting soon. The daily amount of capelin fed to the penguins has already increased by 10 pounds and will most likely go up even more.

### **Boneless Beauties**

Two pharaoh cuttlefish hatchlings were removed from the exhibit on Thursday, August 12th and placed in the quarantine room. There is only one adult remaining from those received from the National Resource Center for Cephalopods. This animal is a male and is currently in the Q-Room. The eight juvenile pharaohs on exhibit are hatchlings we have raised from the eggs produced in the exhibit a few months ago.

## **Animal Care Facility (ACF)**

Another group of small reef fish may be moved from the Animal Care Facility to the Secret Reef August 24th or 26th. When this transfer occurs, SCUBA divers will cover a rock pile with plastic

netting and then take the fish down in bags. The piles will remain covered until the next morning. This helps the fish adjust to their new home and locate suitable shelter from larger species.