

NEWS RELEASE



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ZOO ANTICIPATES BABY NEW YEAR

NORFOLK, Va. – Baby New Year is at the Virginia Zoo, but it still has to come out of its shell.

Zoo staff discovered an egg laid on New Year's Day by members of the world's largest pigeon genus. Victoria Crowned Pigeon eggs take nearly a month to incubate and young are actively tended to by both parents for an additional three months before they leave the nest.

“Victoria Crowned Pigeons have what is undoubtedly one of the most flamboyant head crests,” said Greg Bockheim, the Zoo's executive director. “Their crests, large size, blue-grey color and red eyes make them one of the most popular birds in our Asia – Trail of the Tiger exhibit, and a personal favorite of mine.”

Currently inside for the winter, the Zoo's Victoria Crowned Pigeons will return to their aviary in the Trail of the Tiger exhibit in the spring. The fledgling should join the pair in the aviary by late spring.

Named after Britain's Queen Victoria, the large, ground-dwelling pigeons are native to the New Guinea region. As adults, the birds can reach 30 inches long and weigh more than five pounds. Victoria Crowned Pigeons are a threatened species due to habitat loss and hunting.

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ZOO BABY NEW YEAR, 2 OF 2



A male Victoria Crowned Pigeon incubates its egg, laid New Year's Day, at the Virginia Zoo Thursday, Jan. 3, 2013. Although females do most of the rearing, both parents help raise the young (Virginia Zoo photo by Alexandra Zelazo-Kessler).

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As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits more than 400 animals on 53 beautifully landscaped acres. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to education and conservation, and offered a fun-filled day for visitors of any age. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11 for adults, \$10 for seniors (age 62 and over) and \$9 for children ages 2-11. Visit www.virginiazoo.org or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.