

# Baby Humboldt penguin born at Oregon Zoo to celebrity mother

On March 27, a baby Humboldt penguin was born at the Oregon Zoo. Its parents, Pico and Bonita, are raising it. Bonita, the mother, is a bit of a pen-

guin celebrity – three years ago she was featured on the Animal Planet show “Growing Up Penguin.” The hour-long documentary, to be rebroadcast April 26

at 3:00 p.m., follows her life from hatching to first swim to leaving the nest for good. Because penguins do not have external sex organs, the

chick’s gender is currently unknown. “We won’t know its sex until we do a blood test, or it lays an egg or it doesn’t lay an egg,” says Rick Yazzolino, penguin keeper.

A video of the penguin chick can be seen at: <http://www.oregonzoo.org/VideoArchive/BabyPenguin.htm>.

Humboldt penguins are native to the warm coastal waters of Peru. Of the 17 penguin species, Humboldt penguins are among the most threatened. Several factors threaten the species including over-fishing, natural predators, and disruption of breeding habitat by humans. Humans harvest guano (bird droppings) for fertilizer, which disrupts the penguins nesting habitat and causes increased death rates in the penguin population.

Humboldt penguins (Sphen-

iscus humboldti) stand 15 to 18 inches tall and weigh an average of 9 pounds. They eat fish and squid in the wild; at the zoo, they enjoy smelt or herring. They are very agile in the water and can swim at speeds of up to 30 mph.

Humboldt penguins breed year-round and their eggs incubate for 40 days before hatching. The young penguins eat food regurgitated from their parents and try swimming for the first time at about 3 months. With nearly 30 penguins, the Oregon Zoo has one of the largest collections of Humboldts in the country.

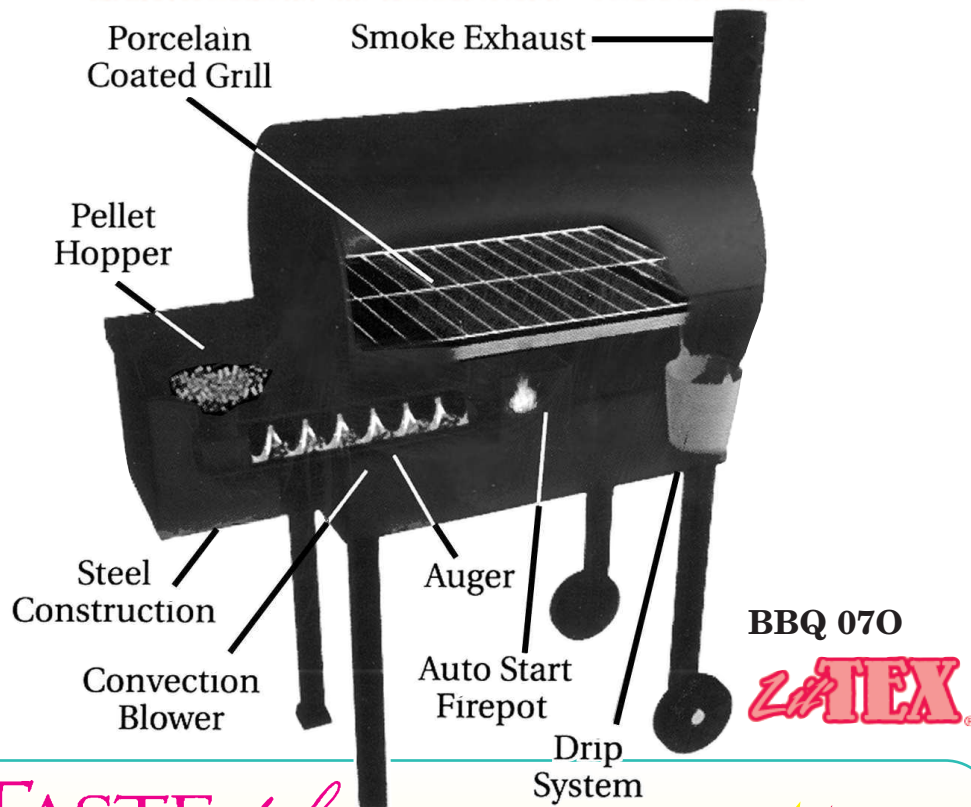
The zoo opens at 9 a.m. daily and is located just off Highway 26. General admission is \$9.75 (12-64), seniors \$8.25 (65+), children \$6.75 (3-11), and infants two and under are free.



Penguin Keeper Rick Yazzolino listens to the lungs and heartbeat of a 15-day-old Humboldt penguin during a health checkup at the Oregon Zoo.



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