

Press release - PARADISE PARK WILDLIFE SANCTUARY - CORNWALL

Houdini the 'outdoor' penguin has her first chick at Paradise Park Wildlife Sanctuary in Hayle, Cornwall

For photos and videos please click Dropbox

link https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/82xy2yhrfc91aplenkqfn/AF_L5N3J0qBblqp7-I_n4a0?rlkey=8koxylDVov50235njb6b3v2lj&e=1&st=2yth2ok1&dl=0



Penguin chick Pebbles snuggles up with mum Houdini outside in the enclosure at Paradise Park Wildlife Sanctuary

Humboldt's Penguins Houdini and Rory have a special little chick who was hatched and is being reared in full view of the visitors to Paradise Park Wildlife Sanctuary.

Keeper Becky Waite comments "Lots of people will know of Houdini. She is a friendly penguin, famous for escaping the enclosure in her younger days, hence her name. She would scale the waterfall, and using rocks for leverage, would jump up and over the wall.



Above LEFT: Houdini and Rory on the nest. RIGHT: Both calling

Houdini is now 29 years old, and unlike all the other penguins which use the specially built huts, she has always been an 'outdoor' bird. She made nests and laid eggs in full view, but she had never found a committed partner. For a couple of years, we tried to give her a large wooden house in her chosen spot, but she would still lay her eggs outside the box next to the wall. She does accept an umbrella in a stand which protects her from too much sun or heavy rain.

About five years ago she paired up with Rory, now age 9, and they produced eggs on a few occasions. Sadly, the eggs were not successful, due to inexperience or being predated by gulls in the exposed location even though she is super protective when she is breeding. Sometimes we have to coax her into eating as she can be so broody.

But after a few years the pair have learned how to care for a chick and, as a precaution against bird flu, we have added netting over the enclosure so that gulls no longer have contact with the penguins or their water.

We were all waiting to see what would happen this year and were delighted when the egg pipped (when the chick breaks through the internal *membrane* and pecks at the shell), and then fully hatched on the 27th of June.



Above: Rory looking immensely proud of little Pebbles!

It is unusual to be able to see a chick developing at this early age, as it would normally be happening out of sight in one of the dens, so we are very lucky. Many visitors will enjoy sharing this very special rare experience this summer.

We have named the chick Pebbles, some penguins make a nest of sticks, others use burrows, but Humboldt's carefully choose and arrange a few pebbles of just the right size before laying eggs.

View video of Rory feeding Pebbles and Houdini preening next to them > <https://youtu.be/sO8tsXmJ20c?si=rciPB2KXCjeipQPA>

Pebbles has started to have a wander a little way from the nest every now and then (clearly taking after mum) and you can sometimes see this on the LIVE WEBCAM. Pebbles is doing amazingly well, gaining weight and had a vet check last week and all was good!"

LIVE WEBCAM HERE > <https://paradisepark.org.uk/events-and-news/penguin-webcam/> and Houdini, Rory and Pebbles are positioned over to the right side under the umbrella.

The Humboldt's Penguin lives along the coasts of Chile and Peru where it can be very warm. They have a bare patch of skin on their faces which can blush red, helping them to cool down. This species is endangered in the wild due to human interference & pollution.
END

PARADISE PARK WILDLIFE SANCTUARY & JUNGLEBARN PLAY CENTRE

Email: michelle@paradisepark.org.uk

Website: www.paradisepark.org.uk

Home of the **World Parrot Trust** parrots.org

and **Operation Chough** chough.org



Facebook [@ParadiseParkCornwall](https://www.facebook.com/ParadiseParkCornwall)

Instagram [@paradiseparkcornwall](https://www.instagram.com/paradiseparkcornwall)

X [@CornishParadise](https://twitter.com/CornishParadise)

Youtube [@cornishparadise](https://www.youtube.com/c/cornishparadise)