



News from Newquay Zoo

For Immediate Release: 14 February 2025

PRESS RELEASE - A Valentine's Day Match: New Otter Arrives at Newquay Zoo



Caption: Asian short-clawed otters Tamale (left) and Branston (right) at Newquay Zoo

Love is in the air at Newquay Zoo, as a new male otter has arrived just in time for Valentine's Day. Branston, a four-year-old Asian short-clawed otter, travelled from Messingham Zoo last night and was introduced to his new partner, Tamale, this morning over a breakfast buffet of trout and smelt. The pairing marks an important step in the conservation breeding programme for this playful and charismatic species. Branston is easily distinguished by his strikingly unique markings and his slightly larger, darker appearance compared to Tamale, who was born at Newquay Zoo in 2019. Their introduction follows the recent departure of Tamale's brother, Lloyd, who moved earlier this week to form a new breeding pair at Noah's Ark Zoo Farm in Bristol. "We're thrilled to welcome Branston to Newquay Zoo, and we couldn't have asked for a more fitting day to introduce him to Tamale," said Mike, team leader of animals at Newquay Zoo. "Asian short-clawed otters form strong pair bonds, and our hope is that this new couple will settle in quickly and start building a nest together very soon."

Asian short-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*) are the smallest otter species in the world and are known for their intelligence and highly social nature. Native to wetlands and riverbanks across South and Southeast Asia, they are currently classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List due to habitat destruction, the illegal pet trade and from pollution and overfishing, which affects the fish and crustaceans that the otters feed on. For now, Branston and Tamale will spend the day bonding in their playroom and nesting box before Branston explores his new outdoor home in the Oriental Garden. Visitors can see the budding romance unfold daily from 10 a.m. as the pair get to know each other and, hopefully, start a family of their own in the near future.

Visitor Information:

Newquay Zoo's special Winter pricing offers reduced admission:

- Adults; £17 (normally £19)
- Children; £12.50 (normally £14.25)
- Children under 3; Free
- All prices include Gift Aid donation
- Opening hours: Daily from 10am (closing times vary seasonally - current closing time 4.30pm)
- Free parking in the Cornwall Council carpark adjacent to Newquay Zoo
- Full accessibility
- On-site refreshments and retail facilities

Visitors can book tickets in advance online. Each visit supports Wild Planet Trust's vital conservation work both in the UK and overseas. Gift Aid declarations on ticket purchases provide additional funding at no extra cost to visitors. To book tickets, or learn more about how you can support Newquay Zoo, please visit newquayzoo.org.uk

Notes to Editor

Wild Planet Trust is a conservation charity encompassing Paignton Zoo, Newquay Zoo and three nature reserves - Slapton Ley National Nature Reserve, Primley Park and Clennon Gorge.

Newquay Zoo, established in 1969, is Cornwall's leading wildlife attraction, set within 13 acres of lush, landscaped grounds. The zoo attracts over 140,000 visitors annually and is home to more than 1,000 animals representing over 120 species from around the world. With a focus on conservation and education, Newquay Zoo is actively involved in breeding programmes for endangered species and plays a vital role in the protection of wildlife both locally and globally. The zoo also boasts a range of exciting animal encounters and experiences that allow visitors to learn about the vital work being done to safeguard endangered species.

The Trust leads vital conservation and research projects in the UK and internationally, focusing on animal behaviour, nutrition, enrichment and ecology. Our mission is to Help Halt Species Decline by protecting endangered species and preserving biodiversity for future generations.

Both Paignton and Newquay Zoos are accredited members of the British & Irish Association of Zoos & Aquariums (BIAZA), a prestigious network of over 100 leading zoos and aquariums committed to conservation, education and scientific research.

Paignton Zoo is also a member of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), participating in vital European breeding programmes.

Registered charity numbers: Wild Planet Trust 306622, Paignton Zoo and Newquay Zoo 300923

Registered offices: Paignton Zoo, Totnes Road, Paignton, Devon, TQ4 7EU. Newquay Zoo, Trenance Gardens, Newquay, Cornwall, TR7 2NL.

All media visits must be pre-arranged with the Press Office. Photography and filming guidelines are available upon request.

For media enquiries or interview requests, please contact:

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Media Resources

High-resolution images available upon request.

Connect With Us

- Website: newquayzoo.org.uk
- Wild Planet Trust: wildplanettrust.org.uk
- Social Media: @NewquayZoo (Facebook, Instagram)
- @WildPlanetTrust (Twitter/X, YouTube, LinkedIn)

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