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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baby Piranha among new offspring at The Living Planet Aquarium

Sandy, UT (April 28, 2009) --- Ten catshark eggs, three baby seahorses, 15 piranha fry, ten tetras and fifteen least chub fry are the newest residents of The Living Planet Aquarium, delivered just in time to be considered spring offspring.

The Living Planet Aquarium received one male and two female **Coral Catsharks** last fall, which will be on display at the aquarium sometime this summer. They began laying eggs almost immediately, but the eggs were infertile until recently. The oldest fertile egg is one month old, and is scheduled to hatch in late July or mid-August. The Living Planet plans to have the eggs on display in the BioFacts Station in May.

The Living Planet's **Longsnout Seahorses** recently became parents again! The males incubate the eggs in an abdominal pouch and the female has nothing to do with the eggs or babies. "We have had baby seahorses periodically, but due to the extremely small size of the babies and their need for live food, it is very difficult to raise this species," said Andy Allison, Curator of Animals. The babies are now about 2" long, and as soon as they are reliably eating frozen food they will be on display with their parents.

Even the newest exhibit, *Journey To South America*, has recently seen some new residents join the family! The Living Planet had at least two species that have bred in the **tetra** tank, one is the Emperor Tetra and the other is still too small to determine. Babies will be held in quarantine until they are large enough to be placed back in the display with their parents. "We have seen breeding activity from many different species in this tank, and could soon have many more babies," said Allison. Babies range from one week to three weeks old.

Another species residing in the *Journey To South America* exhibit, the **Red Piranha**, were captive bred in Hong Kong. Two females visibly nest in the tank where they have chewed the plants down to the nubs in a softball-sized area of the tank. While eggs were never seen, many fry have been removed and are growing in a holding tank. The Living Planet already has a number of piranhas, therefore these babies will be offered to other public aquariums around the country when they grow older. Right now, they're only one week old.

The Living Planet Aquarium has also seen growth in species native to Utah! The **Least Chub** has been proposed for listing as federally endangered because of severe habitat loss. They have been restocked in some areas in an effort to help control mosquito populations. The fish came from a Division of Wildlife Resources hatchery program and The Living Planet Husbandry Staff recently found a few fry in the display. Babies will be kept off-display until they grow large enough to compete with their parents for food.

Last summer, Division of Wildlife Resources agents collected boreal toad eggs from four clutches of wild toads from southern Utah. The exotic chytrid fungus has decimated their populations and the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources worried that these populations may not have any toads at all left as early as this summer. Toads from two of the four egg clutches were given to The Living Planet to raise as a refuge population, so in case the wild populations do crash there will be some alive in captivity for possible future captive breeding and reintroduction efforts. The boreal toads on display are part of this refuge group. They are still babies themselves, but the offspring from these toads may one day help re-colonize Utah.

The Living Planet Mission Statement

The Living Planet Aquarium is dedicated to celebrating life on Earth by fostering a greater awareness and knowledge of Earth's diverse ecosystems and creating a deeper understanding of our place in the global system of life.

Visit www.thelivingplanet.com or call 801-355-FISH (3474) for more information about the exhibits, aquarium hours of operation and membership, tickets and prices.

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