



Media Contact:
Katie Sullivan
801-495-4448 ext. 203
Katie.s@thelivingplanet.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 27, 2007

The Living Planet Aquarium's Giant Pacific Octopus lays eggs in captivity.

The Giant Pacific Octopus at The Living Planet Aquarium is laying eggs in her aquarium habitat which is modeled after a small den. The Octopus, whose species name is *Enteroctopus dofleini*, will lay hundreds of eggs over a period of several days. Brandon Eyre, curator of animals at the aquarium, explains that it is rare for an octopus to lay eggs in a captive environment. He stated, "The fact that this is occurring is a sign that the octopus is comfortable in her environment. It's a sign of a healthy system and a happy environment." This is the second time that an octopus has laid eggs in captivity at the aquarium. Aquarium officials said that it is unlikely that the eggs are fertilized because the octopus has been with the aquarium since a young age.

While aquarium officials take comfort knowing that the octopus is thriving, the news is also bittersweet. Eyre explained, "The Giant Pacific Octopus has a life span of only 3-5 years. Mature females often mark the end of their lives by laying eggs. The female will care for her eggs by cleaning and aerating them, but she will also stop feeding and typically expire shortly after the eggs are laid." Eyre continued, "This may seem short to us, but this is a natural progression for the Giant Pacific Octopus. Our job is to make sure that all of our animals are comfortable and cared for throughout their life span. There will likely come a time when we will take this octopus off exhibit to ensure her comfort."

When this time comes, aquarium staff will introduce another giant pacific octopus already in their collection. Director of Operations Madlyn Runberg explained that the new male octopus is younger and much smaller than the octopus currently on display, but that the octopus is very active and curious and will grow quickly.

Eyre is committed to displaying only male octopus in the future so female octopus can stay in the wild and reproduce. "Leaving female octopus in the wild to reproduce is an important part of our dedication to conservation."

-- More--

About The Living Planet Aquarium:

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.

The Living Planet Aquarium Preview Exhibit presents a peek at Utah's lake and stream ecosystems and tropical coral reef habitats with two exhibit galleries. In the Utah Waters Gallery Visitors can take a virtual boat ride and learn about the Great Salt Lake ecosystem, see fish that are native to Utah and some that are endangered and labeled sensitive species. In the Marine Gallery visitors can come face-to-face with sharks, razor-toothed eels and delicate corals or imagine themselves at the bottom of the sea amidst colorful giant coral, sponges and the ship-wrecked 1830s Albatross. This preview exhibit, a glimpse of what's to come in the future with plans for a world-class aquarium, brings more than 600 animals and 150 species of animals to people who might not have the chance to see them or their ecosystem in a natural setting.

The Living Planet's facilities and programs benefit a wide spectrum of constituents: families, students, educators, scientists, researchers, the environment, and the thousands of our living planet's animal species whose preservation is intrinsic to the aquarium's mission.

To date, more than 625,000 guests have visited the preview exhibit since it opened in June, 2004 and our education programs reach thousands of students of all ages each year. We are particularly proud of our ability to educate Utah school children. Our in-house and outreach educational programs have reached a total of over 300,000 students. Due to tremendous growth, our educational programs now reach over 50,000 school children annually.

Individuals and organizations can support the aquarium in many ways including: becoming aquarium members, shopping in the gift shop, having lunch at Calypso's Café, adopting an animal, making a tax-deductible charitable donation, having a birthday party or event at the aquarium, and visiting the aquarium often.

The Living Planet Aquarium, located at 725 E 106000 S in Sandy, is open for regular hours Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission tickets are \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, students and military personnel, \$6 for children ages 3-17 and free for children under 2 years of age. The first Monday of every month The Living Planet Aquarium offers half-priced Family night from 4-6 p.m. Visitors can purchase annual memberships for \$15 for each adult and \$9 for each child. Memberships entitle visitors a full year of admissions plus 10% discounts in the gift shop and for birthday parties in the sunken ship.

--End--