

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STINGRAY PUPS NOW SWIMMING WITH THE BIG “DOGS”

FRESNO, Ca. – The six southern stingray pups (*Dasyatis americana*) born in late May at Fresno Chaffee Zoo are now swimming alongside the adult rays. Until today the six young stingrays were cared for in a protected area of the 14,500 gallon specially constructed saltwater pool.

Zoo officials were pleasantly surprised at the discovery of three newborn stingrays on May 27 and were equally elated when three more were born a few days later.

“We were cautiously optimistic about the survival of these young pups since we were, as the saying goes, in uncharted waters” said CEO/Director Lewis Greene. “Since birth the young stingrays’ diet and subsequent growth have been carefully monitored and we now feel they can join the adult southern and cownose rays and become part of the overall Stingray Bay experience.”

Southern stingray babies are born after a gestation period of four to 11 months meaning the mothers were pregnant when they arrived at Fresno Chaffee Zoo. Litter sizes generally range from two to ten stingray pups. At birth, the young stingrays are about six inches wide, are thin in proportion to the adult, and come out folded like a newspaper. The young pups must immediately fend for themselves. The female adult southern stingray can reach up to six feet across and weigh up to 150 pounds. The smaller males grow up to two and a half feet.

Stingray Bay: A Touching Experience opened March 31 and runs through September 30, 2007. Admission to Stingray Bay is \$1 with regular Zoo admission. Fresno Chaffee Zoo members and children under 2 years of age are free.

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Fresno Chaffee Zoo is open every day of the year from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. General admission is \$7 for adults, \$3.50 for children 2-11 and seniors 62+. Children under 2 and Fresno Chaffee Zoo members are free. The mission of Fresno Chaffee Zoo is to provide a fun, unique and up-close experience that strengthens the bond between people and wildlife. The Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA).