

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ZOO STAFF SADDENED BY SUDDEN DEATH OF SEA LION

*Fresno, Ca. – Nadine, a 25-year-old California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*) died unexpectedly today at Fresno Chaffee Zoo. Animal care staff noticed she appeared “distracted” during a training session, conducted daily for staff to perform preventative health care and enrichment activities. They were closely monitoring her behavior when she began moving irregularly in the water. Her keepers entered the water to assist and she died moments later.*

Nadine came to Fresno Chaffee Zoo in 1993 from the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium. She was born in 1982 at a rehabilitation center. She shared her habitat at Fresno Chaffee Zoo with five-year-old sea lion “Pismo” and a 21-year-old harbor seal named “Buck”.

“Nadine was wonderful because she was a very patient and gentle animal. She was great with new staff members that were learning to work with sea lions. During training Nadine would respond with the expected behaviors even if the trainee didn’t give the cues exactly right. She often trained the trainee” said her keeper Sarah Acosta.

A preliminary necropsy is being performed. Final laboratory results regarding cause of death will not be available for several weeks. At 25 years of age Nadine was considered an old sea lion. According to the Association of Zoos and Aquarium’s database for this species median life expectancy is 24.75 years.

California sea lions are the most common pinniped and can be found in large numbers along the California coast. Their range extends as far north as Oregon, Washington and British Columbia and south to Mexico and the Galapagos Islands.

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 the 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).

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