

BLUE FROGLETS AT THE DEEP

May 31st 2010

The Deep aquarium in Hull is rearing baby Blue Poison Dart frogs, *Dendrobates azureus*. The baby frogs or froglets as they are known, are tiny replicas of their parents. They have hatched from spawn laid in one of the displays at the aquarium. Blue Poison Dart Frogs are so deadly that indigenous people in the rainforest where the frogs can be found, used to wipe their arrow and darts on the frogs skin before going hunting, hence the name dart frog. The baby froglets are thriving and now measure just under 2cm long, nose to tail.

Aquarist Emma Burdon, who has special responsibility for the froglets explains, "We have successfully bred these stunning frogs by mimicking their natural habitat – lowland rainforest. In the wild frogs naturally breed in the rainy season when pools fill up. We can recreate this here by spraying their vivarium to mimic rainfall. The eggs were laid on New Year's Day this year. These hatched into 10mm long tadpoles in mid January. The tadpoles metamorphosed into froglets over several weeks, finally climbing out of the water as fully formed miniature replicas of their parents. I have been keeping a watchful eye over them in their mini vivariums and they are growing fast. When fully grown, they will have more than doubled in size"

Many people ask how Emma avoids the deadly poison of these charismatic creatures Emma reveals her secret, "When bred in captivity, this species is not toxic to humans. It is thought that this is because they are not eating the same kinds of insects and bugs which make them produce toxic slime in the wild" The baby froglets are thriving under Emma's watchful eye in frog quarantine, behind the scenes at the Deep. Visitors can see adult Blue Poison Dart Frogs in a spectacular display in the Slime exhibit at The Deep.

Press Opportunity The Deep at 9.30 am on Tuesday June 1st

Press are invited to meet Emma and the Blue Poison Dart froglets in frog quarantine at 9.30 Tuesday June 1st. Please contact Linda Martin to make arrangements, 07751 288434.

Background

In the wild, Blue Poison Dart frogs live in central and south American rainforest. Blue Poison Dart Frogs are thought to be at a high risk in the wild and are classified on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) red list as 'vulnerable'. This is due to continual loss of habitat and a fungal disease called chytrid, which wipes out amphibians.

The Deep has obtained its parent Blue Poison Dart Frogs from a sustainable captive breeding programme at Chester Zoo.

For further information

Press: please contact Linda Martin at The Deep, 07751 288434

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