



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **HOT, COOL SUMMER FUN AT ATLANTIS MARINE WORLD AQUARIUM! *Aquarium Asks Guests, "Who Wants to Meet a Penguin?"***

**RIVERHEAD, NY** (June 21, 2010) – Ever wonder what it's like to be up close to a penguin? Maybe what their feathers feel like? Or even how some are able to live in a climate similar to ours, while others enjoy a much colder climate similar to that of Antarctica? Join [Atlantis Marine World](#) as they launch **Penguin Encounter** on July 3, 2010 – a brand new, once-in-a-lifetime, interactive opportunity to have a close up encounter with an African Penguin and learn how our animal experts care for these playful birds.

The 45-minute program will be comprised of a few different elements – first, guests will experience the inner workings of the [Penguin Pavilion](#) exhibit, then they will learn how staff cares for the exhibit's current residents, and finally they will meet one of the Aquarium's newest arrivals and stars of the Encounter – one of the three penguin chicks that haven't quite moved into the exhibit just yet! Guests will enter **Penguin Preschool** and see the chick waddle, swim, even shake its tail feathers. In fact, the penguin will be walking freely among the group, perhaps even allowing guests to touch and pet it. After this unforgettable interaction, photos will be permitted to capture this unique meet-and-greet moment forever.

"There's nothing like a live encounter with an animal," says Aquarium curator, Joe Yaiullo, continuing, "You could visit the Aquarium and watch any one of our animals inside of their exhibits, but nothing compares with meeting those animals face-to-face. So we're happy to offer another interactive experience at the Aquarium that is safe, fun, and unique for all members of the family."

Guests are invited to wear whatever attire they'd like even though the penguin is sure to sport its very formal black and white suits. Offered three times per day at 11:00am, 1:30pm, and 3:30pm, **Penguin Encounter** is open to those ages 12 and older; a paying parent or guardian must accompany guests under 12. The price for the 45-minute program is \$50.00 (\$45 for Aquarium Members). Guests are advised to reserve this program prior to their visit by calling 631.208.9200, ext. H2O (426).

#### **About the African Penguin**

The African penguins exhibited at [Atlantis Marine World](#) were captive-bred in South Africa and imported illegally into the US. They arrived here in April 2004, when the US Fish and Wildlife Service contacted the Aquarium about providing the penguins with a new home. The African Penguin population has declined dramatically in the wild over the last century. In the early 1900s, the population stood at 1.5 million penguins; today, just over 179,000 remain. Although the African penguin breeds throughout the year, the

main breeding season starts in January. They are a monogamous species and the lifelong partners take turns to incubate their eggs and to feed their young. African penguins are comfortable in temperate regions like Long Island. They stay cool by swimming, resting in shady areas, and keeping their backs to the sun to shade their feet, flippers, and faces. The African penguin is also called the “jackass” penguin, because its call sounds like a donkey’s bray.

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### **About Atlantis Marine World Aquarium**

Atlantis Marine World (AMW) opened in Riverhead, NY on June 15, 2000, as the first large-scale Aquarium to open in New York State in more than 35 years. Situated on 3.2 acres along the Peconic River, [AMW](#) is open from 10:00am to 5:00pm daily (closed December 25). [General Admission Rates](#) are \$18.50 (plus tax) for Children 3 – 17 and Seniors 62+; \$21.50 (plus tax) for Adults 18 – 61; Children 2 and under are always free at AMW. AMW is also the home of The Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, New York's only authorized marine mammal and sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation center. Atlantis Marine World was recently ranked by *Parents Magazine* as one of the [“Top Aquariums for Kids.”](#) Additional information can be found at [www.atlantismarineworld.com](http://www.atlantismarineworld.com).

### **Photo:**



*African penguin chick, Pam, along with curator, Joe Yaiullo, meet some very special guests at Atlantis Marine World Aquarium’s Penguin Encounter.*

### **Photo Credit:**

*Courtesy of Atlantis Marine World Aquarium.*