



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATLANTIS MARINE WORLD INTRODUCES RESCUED OTTER TO MARINE EXHIBIT

RIVERHEAD, N.Y. (February 9, 2010)—Atlantis Marine World announced today that they will introduce a new North American river otter, named Baby Girl Otter, to a public exhibit at the Aquarium this weekend. Baby Girl Otter will be in a rehabilitation tank located in the Riverhead foundation section of the Aquarium.

Baby Girl Otter has been a part of the Atlantis Marine World family since June of 2009—when she was brought in to be nursed back to health after being found malnourished and weak in an upstate New York resident's backyard.

Brought to Croton Animal Hospital, the five-month-old Baby Girl Otter weighed only four pounds and showed dependency on humans almost immediately. The hospital treated her malnutrition with vitamin injections and antibiotics—but they knew she needed proper rehabilitation to fully recover. Now, after almost eight months of rehabilitation at Atlantis Marine World, Baby Girl Otter weighs over 15 pounds and eats between two and three pounds of food daily—including herring, trout, shrimp and clams. She even eats fruits and vegetables for enrichment.

“She is strong, healthy and energetic,” said Joseph Yaiullo, Curator and Co-Founder of Atlantis Marine World. “It’s heartwarming to see how far she’s come and how so many people have helped her get to this point. She truly is a member of our family. And now the public can get to see her up close and very active in her new home.”

After careful consideration, the marine experts at Atlantis Marine World decided it would be too dangerous at this time to release Baby Girl Otter back into the wild after rehabilitation. For now, they are thrilled to introduce her to the public as the newest addition to the Atlantis Marine World otter family. Atlantis Marine World currently has an otter exhibit, Otter Falls, featuring two North American River Otters PB & J, who were both born in the wild but came to Atlantis Marine World from another facility.

North American river otters are one of four New World river otter species. There are 13 different species of otters throughout the world and they are closely related to minks and weasels. They primarily feed on fish and crustaceans, but they have been known to feed on a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, small mammals and birds. Their average life span is 10 years in the wild, but they can double their lifespan when cared for in a zoo or aquarium facility like Atlantis Marine World, where they receive excellent care.

North American river otters are rare or extirpated from many parts of their range, particularly throughout much of the eastern, central, and southern U.S. Their decline is due to over-hunting and habitat destruction. Efforts are being made to reintroduce North American river otters to areas where they have disappeared. The river otters at Atlantis Marine World are enrolled in the Species Survival Program with zoos and aquariums across the U.S. Their gene pool is very

valuable, and long-range goals are to get them breeding and to possibly reintroduce their young back into the wild where they are rare or are no longer found.

Atlantis Marine World invites the public to join them in welcoming Baby Girl Otter to their Aquarium and to explore all the wonder Atlantis Marine World has to offer. Atlantis Marine World offers a variety of fascinating experiences including marine life exhibits (like PB & J's home, Otter Falls), Aquatic Adventures, and educational programs to feed the minds of all marine-life enthusiasts. For more information about Atlantis Marine World, visit www.atlantismarineworld.com or call 631.208.9200, ext. H2O (426).

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.

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