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Aquarium's WAVE Foundation gives to shark, penguin and turtle organizations

Newport, Ky. -- 'Tis the season for giving to those in need. And thanks to the generous Greater Cincinnati community, animals are getting help they need year-round.

The WAVE Foundation has received nearly \$22,000 from the "Dollars for Conservation" campaign (from Aquarium guest donations) and profits from Penguin Encounters (where Aquarium guests get to spend 20 minutes with the African penguins Paula, Randy and Simon). All of the funds raised are going to support conservation groups for sharks, penguins and turtles.

WAVE has provided \$6,200 to the Shark Research Institute (SRI) to fund satellite tags for whale sharks in support of their Whale Shark Research program that tags and tracks these endangered animals for research and protection. WAVE donated \$5,000 to the Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) to be used in the direct care and rehabilitation of rescued penguins and other sea birds in South Africa. These gifts come on the heels of WAVE's \$10,500 donation to fund satellite tracking for two loggerhead turtles in North Carolina.

Sharks

WAVE's grant, along with funds from the World Wildlife Fund, has allowed Shark Research Institute (SRI) researchers to place placard identification tags on whale sharks off the coast of Tanzania. As the tagged sharks are re-sighted, scientists learn where the giant sharks travel. The grant also allows for deployment of satellite tags for eight sharks. The satellite tag, also known as a PAT tag, archives locational and depth data, then detaches from the host animal on a pre-programmed date and transmits its archived data to the Argos satellites, a system of orbiting polar satellites. The Argos satellites, in turn, forward data from the tag to scientists at SRI.

The SRI works to correct misperceptions about sharks and stop the slaughter of 100 million sharks annually. Current programs involve visual and satellite tracking, behavioral and DNA studies of sharks, ocean advocacy, publications and public education. More information can be found at www.sharks.org.

"Satellite technology allows us to gather critical data needed to save this species from extinction," says SRI researcher Matt Potenski. "If we can uncover the migratory route of the whale sharks along the east African coast, determine where they are at most risk, then SRI will be able to concentrate its conservation efforts in those areas."

Penguins

WAVE's donation will provide fish to save 100 orphaned penguins. The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) is the nonprofit sea bird rehabilitation centre predominantly responsible for conserving the vulnerable African penguin population along the Southern African coast. SANCCOB has responded to every oil spill along this coast since 1968, and continues to treat about 1,000 oiled, orphaned, ill and injured African penguins every year that there is not a major oil spill (and thousands more when there is an oil spill incident). More information can be found at www.sanccob.co.za

"SANCCOB would not be able to achieve the successes we do without such generous support," said Alan Jardine, SANCCOB Chief Executive Officer. "[WAVE is] giving the African penguin a second chance."

Turtles

This fall, WAVE donated \$10,500 to fund satellite tracking for two loggerhead turtles in North Carolina. Two turtles were tagged with the help of N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, staff from the Bald Head Island Conservancy and the Marine Turtle Research Group. The data the turtles provide is helping researchers determine why the population of sea turtles has decreased dramatically in the last few decades.

The Bald Head Island Conservancy, SEATURTLE.ORG, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the Marine Turtle Research Group at the University of Exeter, UK. These nonprofit organizations all support research and conservation efforts for the sea turtle community. See www.seaturtle.org for more information.

"We are so grateful to our community for their continued support. WAVE is proud to continue to serve as a leader in conservation in our community. Local support makes a global impact to support these endangered animals," said Katharene Snavelly, WAVE Foundation's Executive Director.

The WAVE Foundation, designated as a 501(c) 3 organization, is an education foundation located at the Newport Aquarium. The WAVE Foundation's mission is to excite, engage and educate the public about the wonders of aquatic life and the importance of conservation. The WAVE acronym stands for Welfare of Aquatic Animals and Natural Resources, Advocate for Conservation, Volunteer Pursuits and Educational Opportunities. For more information visit www.wavefoundation.org.

Newport Aquarium showcases thousands of animals from around the world in a million gallons of water. This state-of-the-art facility was named the No. 1 aquarium in the Midwest in the Zagat Survey's U.S. Family Travel Guide in 2004 and the Best Rainy Day Outing in 2006 in Cincinnati Family Magazine. Like its sister aquarium, Adventure Aquarium, on the Camden Waterfront, Camden, NJ, Newport Aquarium is an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a leader in global wildlife conservation. The Aquarium is open to the public 365 days a year and is located only two minutes from downtown Cincinnati at Newport on the Levee. For more information, visit www.newportaquarium.com or call 859-261-7444.

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