



## **Endangered Ducklings Hatch at the Isle of Wight Zoo**

### **The first Meller's Ducks on the Isle of Wight have successfully bred**

Staff at the Isle of Wight Zoo were thrilled on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July to be greeted by two very special new animals. Meller's ducks are an endangered Madagascan variety, and last year a pair were loaned to the zoo by the Madagascan Government via Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust. Clearly they settled in well, as last month they produced a pair of eggs, which have now hatched into ducklings.

These are the first Meller's ducks to be born on the Isle of Wight, and in fact less than twenty births were recorded in zoos worldwide over the last year. Native to Madagascar, the ducks are an endangered species that were overlooked for many years due to their seemingly drab appearance. At first glance they might look like the common mallard female, but on close inspection their beaks are longer, their behaviour is different and the males do not have the bright colours of the common mallard.

Once it was realised that these birds were actually a distinct species it became clear that they were in danger, and a European Breeding Programme has now been set up. Although still found in very few zoos, staff at the Isle of Wight Zoo hope that they will be able to help conserve the Meller's duck for the future. In the meantime, they are celebrating the waddle of tiny feet!

-Ends-

Media enquiries: Sonia Mitchell, Marketing Supervisor, Isle of Wight Zoo  
marketing@isleofwightzoo.com 01983 403883 <http://www.isleofwightzoo.com>

#### Notes to editors:

The Isle of Wight Zoo aims to promote the survival of endangered species through first class educational and recreational experiences, exemplary animal management, conservation and research. As a centre for surplus or rescued big cats, all have come to the Zoo at different stages of their lives and from a variety of backgrounds. The Zoo strives to encourage the social development and natural behaviour of each cat in their care. Every species of big cat residing at the Zoo is currently under considerable threat in its natural habitat. The Isle of Wight Zoo is currently home to 11 tigers, 4 lions and 2 jaguars.

Isle of Wight Zoo, Yaverland Seafront, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8QB  
Tel: 01983 403883, E-mail: [enquiries@isleofwightzoo.com](mailto:enquiries@isleofwightzoo.com),  
[www.isleofwightzoo.com](http://www.isleofwightzoo.com), VAT Reg No. 411 4766 71