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A ROYAL ARRIVAL AT MOODY GARDENS: NEW KING PENGUIN CHICK HATCHES

Galveston, Texas — February 6, 2026 — Moody Gardens is excited to announce the hatching of a new **king penguin chick**, a rare and adorable addition to its penguin colony. The chick hatched on **January 26, 2026**, during Winter Storm Fern, weighing just **216 grams** at birth and already thriving, growing to **472 grams** as of February 5.

The chick was born to proud parents **Watt**, named after JJ Watt, and **Astro**, named in honor of the Houston Astros. The chick hatched **right in its exhibit alcove**, under the watchful care of its dad, with mom nearby. King penguin chicks are born largely bald, with only a small amount of fuzzy down on the top of their heads, and begin growing full down feathers over the first two to three weeks of life.

The Moody Gardens penguin exhibit is designed to mimic **South Georgia Island**, one of the natural habitats of king penguins, including rocks, grasses, ice flows, and seasonal conditions. Penguin care at Moody Gardens follows strict **Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) guidelines**, ensuring the highest standards of welfare and supporting global penguin conservation efforts.

King penguins are listed as **Least Concern** in the wild, but they, like all penguins, face threats from **pollution and environmental hazards** such as plastics and oil spills. Breeding programs in accredited facilities like Moody Gardens help maintain healthy populations in human care and educate the public about conservation.

Staff will soon consider a name for the newest chick after a DNA test is performed to determine gender, with possibilities inspired by sports, local culture, and the dramatic winter storm during which it hatched.

For more information about Moody Gardens' penguin colony and to view live webcam footage of the exhibit, visit **www.moodygardens.org**.

Moody Gardens® is a public, non-profit, educational destination utilizing nature in the of rehabilitation, conservation, recreation, and research.

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