



THE VOTES ARE IN: MEET PEPPER!

Public names Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium's sea lion pup "Pepper"

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TACOMA, Wash.-- Meet Pepper, a one-month-old sea lion pup at Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium. Adoring fans voted online for her name, chosen from a slate of four names offered by keepers at the Tacoma zoo.

Out of more than 10,500 votes, Pepper was a clear winner, with 31% of the vote, and the runner-ups were Rosa (26%), Nori (23%), and Marnie (20%).

Why Pepper? Keepers say that despite fighting off a respiratory infection shortly after birth, she was strong and feisty during her first two health checks.

Since her birth, the pup has been nursing, growing, moving, vocalizing, and getting accustomed to her care team behind the scenes. Her mom, Eloise, has been giving her swimming lessons.

"Pepper is very observant of Eloise, watching her go in and out of the water and staying nearby during the lessons," said Curator Jen DeGroot.

For now, Pepper will remain behind the scenes and continue to bond with her mom. She will nurse for up to one year before adding new foods to her diet, such as herring, capelin, and squid. She is the first sea lion pup born at Point Defiance Zoo in its 119-year history.

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