



## **PRESS RELEASE FROM THE ALASKA SEALIFE CENTER**

For additional information or to arrange interviews, contact:  
Alaska SeaLife Center Vice President of Marketing & Philanthropy, Lexie Mizeras  
Cell (907) 362-2272

### **Alaska SeaLife Center Receives Accreditation from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA)**

Seward, AK – September 16, 2011 – The Alaska SeaLife Center (ASLC) this week was granted accreditation by AZA’s independent Accreditation Commission.

“By meeting the high accreditation standards of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Alaska SeaLife Center has demonstrated its national leadership among zoos and aquariums,” said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. “Only the best of the best rise to this level, and we congratulate the professionals at ASLC for their hard work.”

To be accredited, the Alaska SeaLife Center underwent a thorough two year process to ensure it meets ever-rising standards, which include animal care, veterinary programs, conservation, education, and safety. AZA requires zoos and aquariums to successfully complete this rigorous accreditation process every five years in order to be members of the Association. Less than 5% of the nation’s 6,000 zoos and aquaria currently have this gold standard certification.

“The Alaska SeaLife Center is a great place for people to connect with the natural world and each other,” Maddy added. “Members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, including ASLC, support their communities with affordable family recreation and science-based education programs.”

The accreditation process includes a detailed application and a meticulous on-site inspection by a team of trained zoo and aquarium professionals. The inspecting team observes all aspects of the institution’s operation in areas such as animal care; keeper training; safety for visitors, staff, and animals; educational programs; conservation efforts; veterinary programs; financial stability; risk management; visitor services; and other areas. The inspection team prepares an extensive written report for AZA’s independent Accreditation Commission. Finally, top officials are interviewed at a formal Commission hearing, after which accreditation is granted, tabled, or denied.

Alaska SeaLife Center CEO, Dr. Ian Dutton was in Atlanta this week to attend the AZA accreditation hearing and is delighted that the Center has received this level of formal recognition. “AZA accreditation means three things to the Center. Firstly it helps us ensure that we are meeting industry benchmarks and so enables our government, industry and community partners to be sure that that we are capable of providing the best in animal care and public education. Secondly, it provides our staff and volunteers with access to the knowledge and training in this sector. Thirdly it opens up a whole new array of funding and partnership possibilities – many zoos and aquaria now look to the SeaLife Center as their primary Arctic marine life partner.” Dutton paid credit to ASLC staff and Board members who have worked so hard to ensure we meet AZA and maintain standards. “Like all nonprofits, our staff and volunteers are our greatest asset, and this accreditation is a wonderful recognition of their professionalism.”

### **About AZA**

Founded in 1924, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. Look for the AZA logo whenever you visit a zoo or aquarium as your assurance that you are supporting an institution dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great experience for you, and a better future for all living things. AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and your link to helping animals in their native habitats. For more information, please visit [www.aza.org](http://www.aza.org).

### **About ASLC**

The Alaska SeaLife Center is a private non-profit research institution and visitor attraction established in 1998. The mission of the Center is to generate and share scientific knowledge to promote understanding and stewardship of Alaska's marine ecosystems. For more information please reference the Alaska SeaLife Center website at [www.alaskasealife.org](http://www.alaskasealife.org).

Photo:



Brett Long, Husbandry Director, Lisa Hartman, Husbandry Manager and Dr. Ian Dutton, ASLC CEO pose for a photo after the announcement that the ASLC had received AZA accreditation.

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