

**For Immediate Release:
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NEW YEAR'S BABIES! RARE "RIBBITTING" FROGLETS HATCHED

Thursday, January 7, 2010, Toronto, Ontario: With a total of 32 new fingers and 40 new toes, the eight new Eyelash leaf froglets, are the Toronto Zoo's first babies of 2010. Hatched in the Zoo's Australasia Pavilion on January 6, 2010, each new froglet is a tiny replica of the adult, less than a centimetre in size, (the size of a dime!) This a unique trait which belongs to very few amphibian species, whereas most eggs hatch into a tadpole stage, the Eyelash leaf frog's are hatched directly from their egg as a fully formed froglet. Although caring for eight new bundles of joy all at once might seem daunting to most, with each froglet having eight fingers and 10 toes, our celebrity Mom is doing well after tending her nest.

"Our Animal Care staff is thrilled with this New Year's birth and confirms that our babies and Mom are doing well. Australasia Pavilion staff has provided the perfect conditions for this wonderful hatching and our Nutrition staff is equally excited to meet the challenge of providing food that will fit into their tiny mouths," says Bob Johnson, Curator of Reptiles and Amphibians, Toronto Zoo.

What makes the Eyelash leaf frog such a welcome addition to the Zoo's collection, aside from their recognizable beauty, is their inherent nature which differs from that of most amphibians. The Eyelash leaf frog has, what could be described best as, a maternal instinct. Unlike most amphibians who abandon their eggs once laid, this particular species of frog will remain with the nest of eggs to protect them until hatched – a fairly rare occurrence with amphibians.

The Eyelash leaf frog, as its name suggests, resembles the colours and pattern of leaves on the forest floor and is found only on the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific. The female lays her eggs in a shallow depression in the forest floor. After covering the eggs with leaf litter, she will remain in the area until the eggs hatch. The eggs are pea sized and the developing frog is visible through the clear gel covering of the eggs.

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Current Zoo Hours and Admission Prices

Zoo Hours to March 12th - 9:30am to 4:30pm. Last admissions one hour before closing. General Admission 13-64 incl. is \$21, Children 3 and under are free, Children 4-12 are \$13 and Seniors 65+ are \$15. Parking is FREE to February 28th. **Event schedule subject to change without notice.** The Zoo is located at Meadowvale Road and Hwy. 401, Exit 389 east and west bound. For general information, call (416) 392-5929. The Toronto Zoo is open year round (except December 25th).