

# California aquarium welcomes birth of baby sea otter

December 22 2015

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In this Dec. 20, 2015 photo released by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a Sea Otter holds its newborn pup in Monterey Bay Aquarium Tide Pool in Monterey, Calif. The aquarium posted news of the birth online this weekend, along with adorable photos of the fuzzy brown pup playing with mom. (Tyson V. Rininger/Monterey Bay Aquarium via AP)

There's another reason to rejoice this holiday season: the birth of a wild sea otter at a California aquarium.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium posted news of the birth online this weekend, along with adorable photos of the fuzzy brown pup playing with mom.

For several days, the adult otter had been taking shelter in the aquarium's open-ocean tide pool, perhaps seeking respite from the weekend's wintry storms. Staffers were worried because healthy otters don't visit the pool that often.

The mystery was solved Sunday, when staff members came to work to see a newborn on the sea otter's belly, umbilical cord still attached.

"It was like, 'Wow,'" aquarium spokesman Hank Armstrong said Tuesday. "It was pretty cool."

Mom has been grooming her baby, fluffing the pup's thick pelt to keep the newborn warm and able to float.

Armstrong said the mother has left the protected pool area once or twice, always with the pup.

"Usually, if she has to dive for clams or abalone or whatever, she'll leave the pup floating on the surface," he said.

Sea otters were once hunted to near extinction, the aquarium said. The otter population has bounced back to steady levels in the Monterey Bay area, with roughly 3,000 animals.



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