

# NEWS FROM...



**FOR: IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**RE: "MARDI THE WHITE ALLIGATOR" STAYS AT THE PALM BEACH ZOO THROUGH END OF OCTOBER**

**DATE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2007**

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Friday, September 14, 2007, West Palm Beach – Due to popular demand, Mardi the white alligator will be staying at the Palm Beach Zoo through the end of October. Mardi, who has been at the Zoo since June, has been a great hit with visitors and the Zoo is pleased to host him for an additional month. Mardi, who is already in a perfect “white chocolate” costume, is all ready for “Boo at the Zoo”, the popular Halloween celebration which takes place October 26 - 28. Mardi was brought to Palm Beach County courtesy of the FPL Sunshine Energy Program. Mardi is a rare, snow white, blue-eyed alligator,

nine feet in length and weighing over 230 pounds. Mardi gets his name from “Mardi Gras”, the party that New Orleans is known for. He, like all white alligators, is from Louisiana.

All known white alligators are male. Eastern mythology holds the white beasts to be symbols of extraordinary good luck. No one knows for certain why these alligators were born white. In fact they are not, as most people assume, albinos. Their eyes are brilliantly blue rather than the characteristic red of albino animals. Since their lack of skin pigmentation deprives them of natural camouflage, their ability to survive in the wild is severely limited. One theory is that many white alligators may have been born throughout the centuries but were too vulnerable to enemies within their environment, and to the sun, to survive.

The white alligators that are now exhibited in zoos and aquariums throughout the country were rescued by workers from The Louisiana Land and Exploration Company who spotted the unusual babies minutes after they hatched and brought them to be raised at the Aquarium of the Americas and the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans.

The Palm Beach Zoo is a non profit zoological organization located at Dreher Park in West Palm Beach. Its mission is to provide an open-air classroom of living creatures to foster awareness, appreciation and respect for the natural world. The zoo is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Arts Council, and

the National Endowment for the Arts. Support for the zoo is also provided by the Palm Beach County Cultural Council.

Palm Beach Zoo is located at 1301 Summit Boulevard, just east of I-95 between Southern and Forest Hill Boulevard. Admission: Regular \$12.95, Seniors 60+ \$9.95, Children 3-12 \$8.95, under 3 years and Zoo Members are free. The zoo is open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.) For more information visit [www.palmbeachzoo.org](http://www.palmbeachzoo.org).

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**Palm Beach Zoo • 1301 Summit Boulevard, West Palm Beach FL, 33405-3098  
(561) 547-WILD • [www.palmbeachzoo.org](http://www.palmbeachzoo.org)**