

# NEWS RELEASE



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## **NEW AT THE VIRGINIA ZOO: PRAIRIE DOG PUPS!**

Norfolk, Va. – The Virginia Zoo is delighted to announce the debut of this spring’s prairie dog pups.

The pups were likely born six weeks ago, but only emerged from their burrows Sunday. Visitors can see the pups now at the prairie dog habitat in the Zoo’s North American exhibit, just outside of the barnyard.

“The children are particularly thrilled,” said Greg Bockheim, the Zoo’s executive director, “but everybody loves prairie dog pups.”

Prairie dogs are burrowing rodents from the North American grasslands, primarily west of the Mississippi River. Black-tailed prairie dogs are resident at the Virginia Zoo, but there are four other species: white-tailed, Gunnison's, Utah and Mexican prairie dogs. Ranging from 12 to 16 inches long and weighing 1 to 3 pounds, prairie dogs are herbivores, eating a variety of vegetables and fruits. They are named for their warning call, which is similar to a dog's bark.

*As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility, the Virginia Zoo exhibits more than 400 animals on 53 beautifully landscaped acres. For more than a century, the Virginia Zoo has demonstrated a commitment to education and conservation, and offered a fun-filled day for visitors of any age. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and located at 3500 Granby Street in Norfolk. Daily admission prices are \$11.00 for adults, \$10.00 for seniors (age 62 and over), and \$9.00 for children ages 2-11. Visit [www.virginiazoo.org](http://www.virginiazoo.org) or call (757) 441-2374 for more information.*

## PRAIRIE DOG PUPS



A prairie dog pup nuzzles up to an adult at the Virginia Zoo, Sunday, May 29, 2011 (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson).

## PRAIRIE DOG PUPS



Prairie dog pups at the Virginia Zoo Sunday, May 29, 2011. The pups emerged from their burrows Sunday, but were likely born six weeks ago (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson).



A prairie dog pup stands to get a better view Sunday, May 29, 2011, while foraging with two other pups near a burrow entrance at the prairie dog habitat in the Virginia Zoo's North American exhibit (Virginia Zoo photo by Winfield Danielson).

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