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Anti-abortion marchers brave cold to save lives

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Newport's pregnant shark ray is a first

By Cindy Schroeder
cschroeder@nky.com

NEWPORT — Newport Aquarium's Sweet Pea is expecting as many as six pups, marking the first time a shark ray has become pregnant while in captivity.

The event is so rare that the official announcement of the prehistoric-looking creature's pregnancy was made on Saturday's "Today" show on NBC-TV.

"We are thrilled with this development," said Mark Dvornak, general curator at the Newport Aquarium and the shark ray breeding program lead biologist. "The pregnancy is a testament to the hard work and dedication our husbandry and veterinary teams have given these many years to better understand these remarkable animals."

Sweet Pea, the first shark ray to go on display in the Western Hemisphere, arrived at the Newport Aquarium in 2005 as an adolescent. Two years later, the addition of a rare male shark ray named Scooter resulted in the establishment of the institution's Shark Ray Breeding Program.

Dvornak said Newport Aquarium is considered a leader in the husbandry of shark rays and is often consulted by staff at aquariums and zoos throughout the world. He added little is known about the creature typically found in tropical waters such as the Indian Ocean, the western Pacific and the Red Sea. Because of their wide heads and fins, shark rays appear

See SWEET PEA, Page B2

Alexandria man faces 20 counts of animal cruelty following raid [Page B3]



The dogs taken from an Alexandria property were locked in outdoor kennels and covered in feces. PROVIDED

18 DOGS RESCUED FROM PUPPY MILL

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Officers raid puppy mill, rescue 18 dogs

Animals covered in feces;
2 injured cats also taken

By Adam Kiefaber
akiefaber@cincinnati.com

Sheriff's deputies checking out a tip of a suspected puppy mill were stunned to find shivering, wet dogs locked in outdoor kennels, standing in caked feces 2 inches deep and pooling urine.

Campbell County Sheriff Jeff Kidwell said the visit Friday afternoon to Dennis Kramer's Alexandria home was supposed to be one just to ask questions, but, when the officers were faced with the dogs in their deplorable conditions, they rescued 18 dogs and two cats.

"When we got there we were just going to do a knock and talk, but ... the smell was so bad that it would just knock you down," Kidwell said. "We then saw the kennels, and these dogs were covered in their own feces and urine."

Kramer, 55, was arrested and faces 20 counts of animal cruelty because of the conditions of the animals outside his Persimmon Grove Pike home. He is expected to be arraigned Tuesday at the Campbell County Courthouse.

Kidwell said his office had received a tip about what was going on at Kramer's residence. Investigators then used satellite images and saw that the residence had outside kennels.

"We were looking for physical evidence that some animal breeding was going on," Kidwell said. "After some interviews, we gathered enough information that we could tell that there was definitely enough smoke to check it out."

The conditions the dogs were withstanding had caused some of their paws to bleed.

"It was terrible," Kidwell said. "I don't think you are ever ready to see that. I don't know how these dogs have



ABOVE: "The smell was so bad that it would just knock you down," Sheriff Jeff Kidwell said of the puppy mill.

LEFT: Some of the 18 dogs that were rescued from Dennis Kramer's Alexandria property. He faces 20 counts of animal cruelty. PROVIDED PHOTOS

HORRID CONDITIONS

See photos at Cincinnati.com of how the animals were treated at the suspected puppy mill.

survived."

The two cats deputies rescued were also suffering, Kidwell said. One was missing an eye and the other had a severely injured leg.

The animals taken from the scene were transported to the Campbell County and Kenton County animal shelters.

Officers left other cats, as well as three litters of puppies with their moms, on the property. The puppies were left because they were inside a heated barn, Kidwell said.

Each count of animal cruelty Kramer faces carries a maximum penalty of up to a year in jail and a \$500 fine.

Kidwell, who said he's a dog lover, also added that he is committed to investigating leads about puppy mills, animal fighting or other cruelty to animals.

"I'm that glad we were able to rescue these animals from their suffering," the sheriff said. ■



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