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PORCUPINE AT THE PHOENIX ZOO DOING WELL AFTER REMOVAL OF MAMMARY MASS

Indian crested porcupine shows cancer doesn't discriminate

PHOENIX (October 30, 2020) – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and a successful surgery of one of the animal residents at the Arizona Center for Nature Conservation (ACNC)/Phoenix Zoo was a reminder that breast cancer affects animals too.

Recently, the Zoo's 18-year-old Indian crested porcupine and animal ambassador, Kumari, (pronounced Koo-mar-ee), was found to have a large mammary mass. She was anesthetized by the Phoenix Zoo veterinary team, and veterinary surgeon Dr. Steurer and surgical intern Dr. Fung along with their team from Southwest Veterinary Surgical Service removed the mass at the Zoo's Joyce Corrigan Animal Care Center. As the mass was located in a high motion area and the skin of porcupines is known to be very fragile, great care was needed to complete this surgery. "The mass was relatively encapsulated and encompassed two mammary glands," reporter Dr. Steurer. "Although the tissues were very fragile, we feel confident she will heal well."

Born at Little Rock Zoo in Arkansas, she came to the Phoenix Zoo in May of 2002 to be an ambassador animal, interacting with Zoo guests, traveling for local media appearances and participating in the Zoo's various programs and camps. "Kumari is very independent and curious but will never turn her nose up to a tasty treat, which is why she is a wonderful animal to train," says Josh Crabtree, Manager of Animal Ambassador Resources at the Phoenix Zoo. "Her trained behaviors include crating, weighing, stationing, backing up, standing and targeting. But injection training is one of the most valuable behaviors she knows. She voluntarily allowed us to inject a sedative before the operation, which facilitated fully anesthetizing her."

Microscopic evaluation of the mass confirmed that it was a mammary carcinoma. There are rare reports of mammary cancer in porcupines.

Kumari will continue to be monitored on a regular basis. She is recovering well at the Zoo's Animal Care Center and *quill* be back on her feet very soon.

MEDIA MATERIAL: Photos are available via this Dropbox link:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/caupj60xa95j2y3/AADPNFEEMqki5NZ_vH56-VOua?dl=0

Credit: Phoenix Zoo & Southwest Veterinary Surgical Service

About the Arizona Center for Nature Conservation

The Arizona Center for Nature Conservation operates the Phoenix Zoo. The ACNC advances the stewardship and conservation of animals and their habitats while providing experiences that inspire people and motivate them to care for the natural world.

The Phoenix Zoo is the only zoo in the Valley accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and is a non-profit zoological park, serving 1.4 million guests annually. The Zoo is home to more than 3,000 animals, many of which are endangered and threatened species. For information on upcoming events, exhibits and activities at the Phoenix Zoo, visit www.phoenixzoo.org.