

For immediate release
Issued 6 December 2016



Horniman corals' survival rate is over 1,000 times greater than in the wild

The Horniman Museum and Gardens is celebrating the first birthday of its captive-spawned corals with the news that, one year on, their survival rate is well over 1,000 times greater than in the wild.

In December 2015, the Horniman Museum and Gardens became the first UK institution to cross-fertilise captive-spawned corals, through its [Project Coral](#) research programme.

With 130,000 eggs released during the spawning event, scientists carried out cross fertilisation to create thousands of free-floating larvae – coral 'babies' – of which around 180 are now growing well, behind the scenes at the Horniman's Aquarium.

This 0.14% survival rate (from egg to growing coral) is well over 1,000 times greater than that of wild spawned corals of the same species – scientists estimate that only one in a million eggs released during wild spawning events will survive to become an adult coral.¹

Jamie Craggs, Aquarium Curator at the Horniman Museum and Gardens, says, 'We're pleased that our baby corals are doing well but we have a lot more work to do towards safeguarding the future of coral reefs. The threats to this incredibly rich and important habitat, and in particular the condition of the Great Barrier Reef, have been making headlines in the past year. While there is certainly great cause for concern, the success so far of our research – and work by many others around the world – is cause for some ocean optimism, that we can save coral reefs before it's too late.'

The high survival rate of the captive-spawned corals – similar to the rates seen in other institutions working on reef restoration – is great news for Project Coral, which is working to develop protocols to predictably spawn corals in captivity. In time these protocols will open up many avenues of further research for the Horniman and other institutions around the world, in order to investigate, counter and repair the impact of climate change on coral reef health and reproduction.

More

¹ *Horniman Aquarium lab survival rate: 180 of 130,000 eggs = 0.14%*
Wild survival rate: 0.0001% (based on an estimated 1 in 1,000,000 eggs surviving to become an adult coral)

A few of the growing corals are now on display to the public in the Horniman Aquarium, in a show-tank dedicated to the Project Coral research being conducted behind the scenes. The rest are housed in the research lab, allowing Project Coral researchers to investigate growth rates of juvenile corals in captivity.

Ends

Horniman Press Office - Tel: 020 8291 8166 - press@horniman.ac.uk

Notes to Editors:

- **The Horniman Museum and Gardens** opened in 1901 as a gift to the people in perpetuity from tea trader and philanthropist Frederick John Horniman, to 'bring the world to Forest Hill'. Today the Horniman has a collection of 350,000 objects, specimens and artefacts from around the world. Its galleries include natural history, music and an acclaimed aquarium. Indoor exhibits link to the award-winning display gardens – from food and dye gardens to an interactive sound garden and an animal walk – set among 16 acres of beautiful, green space offering spectacular views across London.
- **Please note:** The anthropology galleries (African Worlds and Centenary Gallery) are now closed until spring 2018 while we develop a new World Gallery and studio space. To find out more visit horniman.ac.uk/worldgallery
- The Horniman Museum and Gardens is core-funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and since 1990 has been governed by an independent charitable trust, registered charity no. 802725. The Horniman Museum and Gardens also receives funding from Arts Council England as one of its Major partner museums.
- **Opening times and admission.** The Horniman Museum is open daily 10.30am-5.30pm, except 24 - 26 December, when it is closed. The Gardens open at 7.15am Monday to Saturday and 8.00am on Sunday and Bank Holidays, and close at sunset. Entry to the Museum and Gardens is free but charges apply for the Aquarium and some special exhibitions and events. Horniman Members go free – horniman.ac.uk/members.
- **Access.** The Museum and the Gardens are both wheelchair and pushchair friendly with accessible toilets. Limited on-site parking is available for Blue Badge holders.
- **Travel.** The Horniman is situated at 100 London Road, Forest Hill, London SE23 3PQ on the South Circular Road (A205). It can be reached easily by train to Forest Hill station (London Overground/Southern, travel time approx. 15-20 minutes from east/central London or East Croydon) and by local buses (176, 185, 197, 356, P4).