

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums Calls on Public to Help Raise Emergency Funds to Save the Critically Endangered Vaquita**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA—April 4, 2017** – The [Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums](http://www.ammpa.org) (AMMPA) announced today it is launching a fundraising campaign to support work to save the vaquita porpoise from imminent extinction. With fewer than 30 remaining, the vaquita is the world’s most endangered marine mammal. All funds raised will support the Vaquita Conservation, Protection and Recovery (CPR) initiative, an international effort being led by the Mexican government and coordinated by the National Marine Mammal Foundation (NMMF), an Alliance research member.

Despite heroic measures by the Mexican government to protect vaquita, which live in the northern part of the Gulf of California, the porpoises are continuing to die at an alarming rate as they become caught in illegal gillnets used to catch the endangered totoaba fish. The Mexican government has determined that emergency action is needed to temporarily remove some of the remaining animals from their threatening environment and create a temporary protected environment for them in the northern Gulf of California. The conservation action plan will be implemented with field recovery operations planned for October as efforts continue to end the illegal fishing and remove gillnets from the region. Implementation of the ambitious plan is estimated to cost more than \$3 million in 2017, with additional ongoing funding needed in 2018. A number of Alliance member institutions have provided initial contributions to the Vaquita CPR initiative, including the Chicago Zoological Society/Brookfield Zoo, Delphinus, Disney’s Animal Programs at The Seas, Dolphin Connection, Dolphin Discovery, Dolphin Quest, Gulfarium Marine Adventure Park, the National Marine Mammal Foundation, Ocean Park, SeaWorld, Vancouver Aquarium, and the Virginia Aquarium & Science Center. Members are also contributing their expertise and knowledge in marine mammal care and rescue to assist the VaquitaCPR effort.

“An extraordinary effort is required to save the vaquita, and the public can play an important role by joining us in donating to this urgent effort,” said Alliance President and CEO Kathleen Dezio.

Those interested in contributing to this work can visit [www.AMMPA.org/vaquita](http://www.AMMPA.org/vaquita) to make a donation. All funds will go directly to the Vaquita CPR initiative.

“We are grateful for Alliance members’ support in raising essential funds and contributing expertise to help save the critically endangered species,” said Dr. Cynthia Smith, NMMF executive director.

### **About AMMPA**

The Alliance is the international trade association and accrediting body for zoos, aquariums, and marine parks that exhibit marine mammals. Its mission is to support the highest standards of care for marine mammals and to contribute to their conservation in the wild through public education, scientific research, and rescue and rehabilitation work. Its member institutions in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean collectively possess the largest body of marine mammal experience and expertise in the world.

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*An international organization dedicated to conservation through public display, education, and research.*

