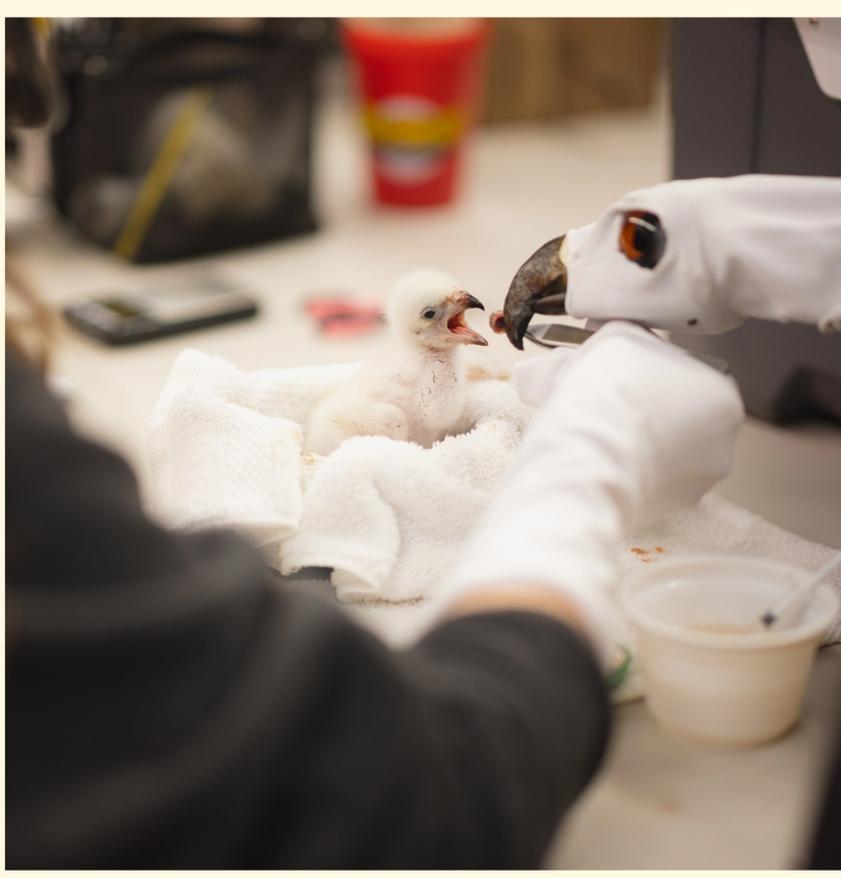




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THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026

The Eagle Has Landed! Meet Our First African Fish Eagle Chick

The Fort Worth Zoo proudly announces the first-ever hatching of an African fish eagle chick in the Zoo's 117-year history. Notoriously difficult to breed and hatch in professional care, this milestone places the Zoo among an exceptionally small number of institutions to achieve success with this species in recent years – the only Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) accredited institution with a successful hatching in the last several years. This chick is a significant conservation achievement and a testament to the Zoo's expertise in raptor care and reproduction.

Hatching at 76.5 grams, or about the size and weight of a tennis ball, this chick has grown rapidly in the last six weeks, nearly reaching its full size of 25 to 30 inches tall, weighing 5 to 8 pounds (though it'll be a few more weeks before this chick develops its full mature white and brown plumage). This successful hatching is the direct result of years of dedicated work by the Zoo's animal care and veterinary teams. From carefully managed pairings and nest building to egg laying, incubation and hatching, each step requires precision, patience and expertise. With first-time parents, keepers made the important decision to hand-rear the chick, providing around-the-clock feeding, monitoring and support to ensure healthy growth and development during these critical early stages. So that the bird did not imprint on Zoo staff, reflective shields and protective clothing were worn and the presence of an adult eagle puppet was used when feeding the chick, so that the chick associated food with the "bird."

For now, the chick is housed in a protected space within its parents' habitat. Zookeepers are still feeding and caring for the chick as it grows big enough to fledge the nest. In the wild, fish eagle chicks begin to fly around 70 to 75 days old and will remain close to their parents' territory for two to three months before finding their own territory and living on their own.

Establishing a sustainable population of African fish eagles in North American zoos is a critical goal, as the species remains rare in professional care. The Fort Worth Zoo is one of only five institutions on the continent to house this iconic African raptor, making each successful hatch an important step toward long-term population stability.

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