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AFRICAN WILD DOGS, BEATRIX AND KIRAKA, WELCOME SECOND LITTER OF PUPPIES AT THE LIVING DESERT ZOO AND GARDENS

The first birth of 2020 brings 11 puppies to the Zoo

PALM DESERT/INDIAN WELLS, CA -- (January 28, 2020) The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is excited to announce the healthy birth of 11 endangered African wild dog puppies to second-time parents, Beatrix and Kiraka (ker-ah-kuh). In the comfort of a private, underground birthing den, the puppies were born in the afternoon and evening of Saturday, January 18, 2020.

"We are absolutely thrilled to share the news of these African wild dog puppies as the first birth of the new decade," said Allen Monroe, President and CEO of The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens. "Beatrix appears to be relaxed and comfortable with her new arrivals, and things are progressing as expected."

African wild dogs, also known as painted dogs, have a very complex pack and social structure, and it is recommended by the Species Survival Plan (SSP) to maintain a hands-off approach, which allows the critical bonding and development to happen as naturally as possible.

"The animal care and veterinary teams have been and will continue to closely monitor Beatrix and the puppies through den cameras which allow the family to have plenty of space, comfort, and security," said RoxAnna Breitigan, Director of Animal Care at The Living Desert. "We are so excited to share this wonderful news, and we will continue to give the family unit the opportunity to grow and bond without unnecessary intervention."

Beatrix and Kiraka's first litter of six puppies, born on April 24, 2019, are now learning how to be good members of the pack. African wild dog pack and social structures are multi-generational and led by the alpha female. Kiraka is teaching his six 9-month old pups how to support Beatrix and their new siblings which includes helping to protect, feed, and raise the puppies.

African wild dogs can have litters of 2 to 20 puppies. They are born with their eyes closed and will remain in the den until about five weeks old. Once the puppies are about four weeks old and the family unit is progressing normally, the well-baby exams will be scheduled. At this exam, the veterinary team will evaluate the pups' health and wellbeing, as well as determine their sex.

Currently listed as endangered by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), African wild dog populations number fewer than 5,000 individuals. As one of the most endangered African carnivores, African wild dog populations are struggling and in decline due to human-wildlife conflict, habitat destruction and canine diseases, like distemper and rabies. The Living Desert supports specific African wild dog conservation projects that work to bolster wild populations.

These births came from specific recommendations of the African wild dog Species Survival Plan (SSP). The SSP is a cooperative breeding program through the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), which enables a healthy, genetically diverse, and self-sustaining populations of species in human care.

For continued Pupdates, video, and photos, visit online at www.LivingDesert.org/Pupdate

About the Living Desert:

The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit, accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, ensuring the highest standards of all aspects of animal care, education, conservation, public service, and operations. The Zoo is active in conservation research, habitat protection, breeding programs and education initiatives around the world, as well as in its own community. The Zoo has been a top destination in the Palm Springs area for 50 years. The Living Desert is located at 47900 Portola Ave, Palm Desert, CA 92260. For more information: (760) 346-5694 or visit livingdesert.org.

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EDITORS NOTE:

PHOTOS ATTACHED

VIDEO AVAILABLE: <https://youtu.be/T0iESLtDTRc>
<https://www.livingdesert.org/pupdate>