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**THE LIVING DESERT ZOO AND GARDENS ACCEPTED INTO
THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

PALM DESERT/INDIAN WELLS, CA – (June 12, 2019) – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is proud to announce it was recently accepted into the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Living Desert is one of only 9 accredited zoos and aquariums in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to have been accepted.

The IUCN is the world's leading body on determining the conservation status of species, crafting legislation to support their conservation, and bringing together the leaders of conservation to care for the planet. The IUCN determines the status of species such as vulnerable, threatened, endangered or critically endangered.

"Being a part of the IUCN allows us to voice our opinion on major resolutions that often are the inspiration for wildlife laws in many countries around the world," said The Living Desert's Director of Conservation Dr. James Danoff-Burg. "This gives us the opportunity to be an even bigger leader in global conservation projects."

Dr. Danoff-Burg also has been accepted as part of the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, a global expert network formed by the IUCN to provide credible technical advice on sustainable use and livelihoods to conservation projects globally.

"Conservation has been at the core of The Living Desert since it was founded in 1970. Acceptance into the IUCN and their programs is a true honor and testament to the hard work and dedication of staff throughout the years," said Allen Monroe, President/CEO of The Living Desert. "I'm very proud of them and appreciative of our dedicated members and donors who help make it possible."

According to Danoff-Burg, the application process included summarizing the zoo and garden's many efforts on the grounds and in the wild. As a leader in conservation, The Living Desert actively participates in 33 field conservation projects in 11 countries around the world. In addition, The Living Desert is a part of many AZA Species Survival Programs (SSP) that are dedicated to the conservation of endangered wildlife, including the more than 50 SSP species that are represented at the zoo. The Living Desert actively participates in the Saving Animals From Extinction (SAFE) program for the cheetah and giraffe programs, and leads the vaquita SAFE initiative on behalf of AZA member institutions.

For more information about The Living Desert call (760) 346-5694 or visit LivingDesert.org.

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 attraction in the Palm Springs area for nearly 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. ###