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**THE LIVING DESERT CELEBRATES WORLD RHINO DAY**  
**TOMORROW, SEPTEMBER 22**

*Final preparations are underway as The Living Desert gets ready to unveil the new Rhino Savanna habitat*

**Palm Desert/Indian Wells** – (September 21, 2021) – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is celebrating World Rhino Day with a special announcement – the grand opening of the new Rhino Savanna habitat will be held Friday, November 12, 2021. This state-of-the-art habitat will be home to Jaali and Nia, a pair of African black rhinos, along with 12 other African species.

“We are thrilled to officially announce our Rhino Savanna’s grand opening on November 12. Jaali, Nia, and the rest of the Rhino Savanna animals will soon be ready to greet our wonderful community, members, and guests,” said Allen Monroe, President/CEO of The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens. “Construction is ongoing, with key features being completed weekly.”

World Rhino Day, recognized annually on September 22, celebrates the five species of rhinos and encourages advocacy and awareness of the threats they face. Currently listed as Critically Endangered by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), black rhino numbers are staggeringly low with only 5,600 in Africa. Black rhinos’ main threats are humans, and in particular, the rampant poaching of their horns for ill-perceived medicinal cures.

“Rhino horn is made of nothing more than keratin – the same material that makes up our hair and fingernails. The United States has the dubious honor of being one of the top three consumers of rhino horn,” noted Dr. James Danoff-Burg, Director of Conservation. “Rhinos are iconic symbols of the wildlife trafficking crisis, and this new habitat will help us educate our guests about the plight of the rhino and allow us to continue our efforts protecting the black rhino in Africa.”

The Living Desert participates in several conservation initiatives that support black rhinos in Eastern and Southern Africa. Actively partnering with organizations to support innovative anti-poaching efforts, engage in community education and empowerment programs, and combat illegal wildlife trafficking across both Africa and here at home.

“One such project is the Black Mambas Anti-Poaching Unit, which is a group of unarmed, female-only rangers who have reduced poaching by nearly 86% through the use of patrols, community outreach, and youth environmental education programs,” highlighted Dr. Danoff-Burg.

The new four-acre Rhino Savanna will showcase many of Africa’s iconic species, with the black rhinos taking centerstage. Joining Jaali and Nia will be a variety of

African antelope including klipspringer, springbok, and waterbuck, along with cape vultures, and the most peculiar of species – naked mole rats. Also set to debut is the new Animal Care and Nutrition Center and Crash Café.

Jaali (pronounced *Jolly*), a nearly two-year-old eastern black rhino will be arriving from the Potter Park Zoo in Lansing, MI, and 3-year-old Nia (pronounced *Ny-a*) will come from the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo in Cleveland, OH. Their arrivals are based on the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' (AZA) Species Survival Plan (SSP) breeding recommendations that were set earlier this year.

To learn more about the new Rhino Savanna, visit [LivingDesert.org/Rhino](http://LivingDesert.org/Rhino).

**About The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens:**

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 over 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](http://livingdesert.org).

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