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**TWO EASTERN BLACK RHINOS SET TO CRASH THE NEIGHBOHOOD THIS FALL**  
**AT THE LIVING DESERT ZOO AND GARDENS**

*Jaali and Nia Will Make Their Home at the Zoo's New Rhino Savanna*

**Palm Desert/Indian Wells** – (May 20, 2021) – The team at The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens is thrilled to announce the names and details about the Coachella Valley's newest neighbors arriving this November – two eastern black rhinos. As the Zoo's new Rhino Savanna nears completion, The Living Desert is eager to share more about the two eastern black rhinos who will make their debut in November.

Jaali (pronounced *Jolly*) a 1 ½ year old eastern black rhino will be arriving from the Potter Park Zoo in Lansing, MI, and almost 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.

"We are so excited to welcome Jaali and Nia to The Living Desert this fall," said Allen Monroe, President/CEO of The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens. "This is the first time The Living Desert will be home to rhinoceros, and the team has been hard at work preparing for their arrival."

Jaali was born December 24, 2019 to mother, Doppsee, and father, Phineus, and his birth marked the first rhino birth at the Potter Park Zoo in its 100-year history. Jaali means "powerful" in Swahili, and according to his animal care team at Potter Park Zoo, he is very curious and loves attention. Nia, meaning "purpose" in Swahili, was born August 20, 2018 to mother, Inge, and father, Forrest. Her animal care team has shared that Nia is very intelligent and eager to learn and participate in her husbandry training.

"We can't wait to introduce Jaali and Nia to their new home at The Living Desert," said RoxAnna Breitigan, Director of Animal Care. "As one of only 25 AZA-accredited facilities to care for eastern black rhinos, we all work together collaboratively to ensure this iconic species doesn't go extinct. These two have been strategically matched, and we have high hopes for their future breeding success here at The Living Desert."

The new Rhino Savanna is an expansive, multi-species habitat that will transport guests right to their own African safari. Designed and built with state-of-the-art features that ensure animal wellbeing and care are the priority including wide-open grasslands, rocky terraces, and a mud wallow and watering hole. The Rhino Savanna will be an engaging environment not only for the animals, but also zoo guests. Joining the black rhinos will be a cast of 11 new species of furry, feathered, and subterranean friends including: springbok, waterbuck, pelicans, naked mole rats, and mongoose.

"The \$17-million four-acre Rhino Savanna is only possible because of the incredible and steadfast support of our members, donors, and the Coachella Valley community," continued Monroe. "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 Rhino Savanna will showcase many of Africa’s iconic species, with the eastern black rhino taking centerstage and highlighting their current plight and the important conservation efforts underway to save the species. Currently listed by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) as Critically Endangered, eastern black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) number fewer than 5,600 individuals across Africa. Native to the savannas and grasslands of southern and eastern Africa, black rhinos are browsers eating from trees and bushes, have distinguishing features including two horns, a prehensile lip, large cone-shaped ears, thick skin, and mature adults can weigh more than 3,000 pounds. Black rhinos’ main threats are humans, and in particular, the current rampant poaching for their horns for ill-perceived medicinal uses.

“As a leader in desert conservation efforts, The Living Desert supports numerous projects to help build black rhino populations in Southern Africa,” noted Dr. James Danoff-Burg, Director of Conservation. “We actively partner with organizations to support innovative anti-poaching efforts, engaging community education and empowerment programs, and combatting illegal wildlife trafficking across both Africa and here at home.”

Stay tuned for more updates as Jaali and Nia get ready to depart for The Living Desert later 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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