



3930 West Land Park Drive
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Media Release

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Lemur Matriarch Dies at the Sacramento Zoo



The Sacramento Zoo is heartbroken to announce the death of Ravenala, the zoo's black and white ruffed lemur matriarch. At 18 she was an older lemur, with the species median life expectancy being 18.6 years old.

Zookeepers found Ravenala deceased the morning of September 1 when completing their early morning rounds. At this time no immediate cause of death is known but she appears to have passed away in her sleep. The death was unexpected and she did not exhibit any unusual signs over the prior week. A full necropsy (animal autopsy) will be performed at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

"Ravenala was nothing short of amazing. I had the privilege of watching her grow her family for 13 years. She was a gentle and patient mother, while being a fierce protector of her family and territory," said Lead Primate Zookeeper Janine Steele. "She most definitely had people she tolerated and strong feelings towards people she didn't care for. I feel honored and grateful to have been one of the lucky ones she tolerated. Ravenala was one of those extra special individuals that will stay with me forever."

Ravenala was a strong matriarch and much-loved resident of the Sacramento Zoo who has left a long-lasting legacy that spans the zoos across the country. She moved to the Sacramento Zoo in 2004 from the St. Louis Zoo. She and her mate, Jacque, had six litters totaling 18 offspring, eight of which currently reside at the Sacramento Zoo. Ravenala had a lot of spunk and was a force to be reckoned with as females are indeed the backbone of lemur societies. Ravenala endeared herself to many by demanded nothing short of the best. Her passing is a great loss that is felt deeply by zoo staff.



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During the coming days and weeks zoo staff and veterinarians will be closely monitoring the family group. Ruffed lemurs are female dominant and the loss of the female family leader will cause a shift in the group social dynamics. The three youngest lemurs born to Ravenala and Jacque earlier this year are doing well. They have already transitioned to solid foods and are living with their large multi-generational family group.

Black and white ruffed lemurs, a Critically Endangered species, are native only to the island of Madagascar off the southeastern coast of Africa. To help preserve black and white ruffed lemurs as well as other vanishing species, the Sacramento Zoo participates in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) black and white ruffed lemur Species Survival Plans® (SSP) to cooperatively manage this species in accredited institutions.

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Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to more than 500 native, rare and endangered animals and is one of more than 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Located near the corner of Land Park Drive and Sutterville Road in William Land Park, the zoo is wholly managed by the non-profit Sacramento Zoological Society. This Sacramento treasure inspires conservation awareness through education and recreation. Daily admission is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., zoo grounds are open until 5 p.m. General admission is \$14.95; children ages 2-11 are \$9.95 and one and under are admitted free. Parking is free throughout the park or ride Regional Transit bus #6. For information, call 916-808-5888 or visit saczoo.org.