



3930 West Land Park Drive
Sacramento, CA 95822-1123
sac zoo.org

Media Release

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Brand new on exhibit: meerkats!



For the first time in the Sacramento Zoo’s history, we welcome a vivacious clan of meerkats! Brand new to the zoo, this all-female clan originated from the Brevard Zoo in Melbourne, Florida is now on exhibit in Small Wonders next to Padme the aardvark.

What’s a meerkat? The “kat” isn’t a “cat” but rather a small carnivore belonging to the mongoose (herpestidae) family native to Africa. These gregarious animals are often seen in groups called “clans”, mobs or gangs. These dynamic social groups provide safety, companionship and survival for the species.

Meerkat clans spend much of their lives in underground burrows in large family groups of up to 40 individuals. Members of the family groups do not have to be related to belong to the same clan; however, the five new residents at the Sacramento Zoo are all related females.

In the wild, meerkat burrows are complex and expansive and include various chambers and exit points. They are generally deep enough to allow for a consistent temperature regardless of the conditions at the surface. Being diurnal, meerkats emerge from their burrows once the sun is up to warm themselves, groom and forage for food.



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This species is specially adapted to life in the Kalahari Desert of southern Africa, making them exceptionally well-suited for the hot Sacramento days and cool nights, as well as the relatively temperate climate of the region in winter.

Meerkats have an excellent sense of smell, making it easy for them to find the small insects that comprise the majority of their diet.

Much of the construction work to augment the new meerkat habitat and former fennec fox exhibit was completed by the Sacramento Zoo's in-house facilities team. With some training by Cemrock Landscapes Inc., the crew constructed a new termite mound as the focal point of the exhibit. Rock, vines, plants and substrate was all carefully planned and evaluated for the best needs of the clan. Meerkats are a gregarious and outgoing species and a full-front glass panel allows the animals to get up-close-and-personal with guests.

The five new members of the zoo's newest clan join us from Brevard Zoo in Melbourne, Florida. These individuals are as unique and complex as their burrows and these engaging animals are sure to be a zoo-fan favorite. Get ready for some fun!

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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 sac zoo.org.