

Discover a special new way to get up close and personal with some of Sac Zoo's most iconic animals



(Sacramento, CA) -- February 26, 2020 -- Watch animal keepers at the Sacramento Zoo perform daily training sessions with the African lions right at their exhibit.

This positive-reinforcement training, previously conducted behind-the-scenes, is done to encourage natural behaviors that allow zookeepers to perform voluntary health checks on the lions and build trust. Now, thanks to a recent habitat renovation, zoo visitors can get closer than ever to these big cats and even watch daily keeper training sessions.

Training sessions take place most days at 11:15 a.m. at the lion exhibit. Please note that these are voluntary training sessions for the lions, and they may decide not to participate on some days.

###

African lions have been a part of the zoo experience in Sacramento for generations. Until 2019, lions lived in an exhibit that was built by the City of Sacramento in 1961. In 2018, zoo staff made the difficult decision to relocate the zoo's last tiger to the San Francisco Zoo, making it possible for Sacramento Zoo staff to double the living space for the zoo's lions.

Kamau and Cleo, the zoo's African lion pair, have lived at the Sacramento Zoo for several years. Both cats were born at other AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) institutions. At ages 14 and 13, they are an older, non-breeding pair of lions that serve as ambassadors for their species. Since 1961 when the zoo's lion grotto was built, the population of lions in Africa has declined by more than 70 percent. Lions in the wild face challenges such as habitat loss, poaching and poisoning from farmers where lions encounter livestock. In recent years, the Sacramento Zoo has committed to assist wild lions by supporting CLAWS

(Conservancy Communities Living Among Wildlife Sustainably) through its Quarters for Conservation program.

Open since 1927, the Sacramento Zoo is home to nearly 500 native, rare and endangered animals and is one of more than 200 accredited institutions of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The Sacramento Zoo, managed by the nonprofit Sacramento Zoological Society, inspires conservation awareness and action through education and recreation. Daily admission is from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., zoo grounds are open until 5 p.m. General admission is \$17.50; children ages 2- 11 are \$12.50 and children one and under are admitted free. For information, call 916-808-5888 or visit saczoo.org.

Media contact: Laurel Vincent // Desk: 916-808-7443 // Cell: 530-513-0495