



For Immediate Release

Contact: Zoo's Public Relations (402) 980-9285

Diane Kohout (402) 738-2015

Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium Proudly Announces Historic Birth of Endangered Indian Rhino Calf

Omaha, Neb. (September 4, 2019) – Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is proud to announce the birth of an Indian rhinoceros calf. The rhino was born on Friday, August 30. The calf is the first rhinoceros born in Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium's 120-year history.

Dennis Pate, Zoo Director and CEO, said, "This is one of the most important births for the Zoo in recent history. It counts when it comes to sustaining this species in zoos, it counts as a backup to vulnerable wild populations, and it counts in drawing people to include animals as part of our heritage."

Guests can find the rhino calf's parents, Hellary and Jontu at Asian Highlands. Hellary is 11 years old and has lived at the Zoo since 2012. Jontu is also 11 years old and arrived at the Zoo in 2008. Both parents weigh about 4,200 pounds. This is the first birth for Hellary.

The calf, believed to be male, is bonding with mom in a private area where animal care staff is closely observing the pair to ensure he is nursing. Mom and calf are not currently available for viewing. We hope to have them outside in the near future. They are also "baby-proofing" the habitat for the calf. He weighed approximately 120 pounds at birth and currently weighs 140 pounds.

The calf does not have a name at this time. He will be named at the Zoo's biennial fundraiser, Zoofari, on September 13.

Dr. Monica Stoops, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium lead reproduction scientist explains the difficulty in bringing a rhino calf into the world, "There was a steep learning curve to find the right timing for sparks to fly between these first-time rhino parents. Animal care staff were dedicated to trying different introduction techniques to ensure this new rhino breeding pair succeeded." Dr. Stoops confirmed Hellary's pregnancy by hormone analysis with staff veterinarians tracking fetal growth by ultrasound. The calf was born after a gestation period of about 16 months.

Indian rhinos are listed as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List. There are only an estimated 3,500-3,600 Indian rhino left in the world. This calf is the 82nd Indian rhino living in the United States.

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Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is assisting Indian rhinoceros world-wide by supporting the International Rhino Foundation (IRF) Indian Rhino Vision 2020. The project aims to reestablish breeding populations through careful relocation of rhinos from overcrowded parks to newly protected habitats where the rhinos can establish new breeding herds. Protection in the wild is critical as many rhinos are poached for their horns. The Executive Director of the IRF, Dr. Susie Ellis, will be at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium on October 16 to present as part of the Nancy Armitage Wildlife Lecture Series. More information regarding this lecture is available at www.omahazoofoundation.org

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Consistently ranked as one of the world's top five zoos, Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium is an independent not-for-profit organization accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). The Zoo is recognized nationally for its conservation, animal care and exhibit design. As a leader in conservation, the Zoo's Center for Conservation and Research focuses on areas to benefit animal husbandry and species conservation including conservation genetics, conservation medicine, rare plant conservation, reproductive sciences and comparative nutrition. More information is available at www.omahazoo.com