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# El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens Now Home to a Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros

**EL PASO, Texas**—The City of El Paso is excited to announce that a Rhinoceros is now part of the family at the El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens.

The zoo is welcoming a 7-year-old greater one-horned rhino named Taj from the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle, Washington. Taj traveled in a custom-made crate inside a climate-controlled truck driven by an expert who specializes in moving rhinos. A Woodland Park Zoo curator and a rhino keeper followed behind along the 1,700-mile road trip.

The move was recommended by the Species Survival Plan for greater one-horned rhinos. The Association of Zoos & Aquariums' Species Survival Plans are conservation breeding programs across accredited zoos to help ensure healthy, self-sustaining populations of threatened and endangered species.

"The El Paso Zoo is very excited to have Taj in our family and what this means for the future of the Zoo in breeding and conserving these magnificent animals. All Rhinos are in great jeopardy in the wild and we are very fortunate to get Taj as he is highly ranked in the breeding priority list. Eventually we will be bringing in a few females to join Taj and hopefully then adding new Rhinos to the population," said El Paso Zoo and Botanical Gardens Director Joe Montisano.

Taj will not be immediately available for public viewing until he gets acclimated to his surroundings and animal care specialists. During the transition, zoo experts will begin introducing him to his exhibit next to the Asian elephant Savannah. After a medical exam, and settling in, Taj will share the exhibit in Asia with Savannah, but they will not have contact together.

Taj means "crown" or "jewel" in Hindi, pronounced like Taj Mahal. He just turned 7 in November and weighs a mighty 4,670 pounds. He was born in 2016 at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

Also known as the Indian Rhino, the greater one-horned is second in size only to African white rhinos. These incredible animals have a single horn that is about 8 to 25 inches long, and a gray-brown hide with skin folds giving them an armor-plated appearance. Once found across the entire northern part of the Indian subcontinent, the population rapidly declined to fewer than 200 in the 20th century due to sport hunting, human conflict, poaching for their horns (which are used in non-traditional medicine), and habitat loss.

## About El Paso Zoo

The El Paso Zoo is a 35-acre facility that houses animals representing over 220 species, including critically endangered species. Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the El Paso Zoo celebrates the value of animals and natural resources and creates opportunities for people to rediscover their connection to nature. To learn more, visit <http://www.elpasozoo.org/>

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**MEDIA:** A picture of Taj the Rhino is attached to the email.



Promoting **Transparent & Consistent Communication**  
Among All Members of the Community

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