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Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (NPC)

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## Media Statement

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For immediate release

### **Record-breaking R228k visitors flock to the Zoo to mark the 120<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ) the entity responsible for the oversight of green spaces, including parks, cemeteries, nature reserves, and the Johannesburg Zoo, is elated to announce their appreciation for the overwhelming support and attendance of over 228K visitors to mark the Zoo's 120th birthday celebration in March.

The event was a resounding success, with the heavily discounted entry fee of R20, enabling accessibility to all residents, including indigent communities and schools, who were able to rediscover the wonders of the Johannesburg Zoo and partake in the month-long, family and eco-oriented activations.

Founded in 1904 on land donated by the visionary Hermann Eckstein Family, the Joburg Zoo has grown from modest beginnings originally showcasing five specimens in confined enclosures to 120 years later, presenting over 2100 specimens in sprawling spaces with dedicated curators, leading global conservation programmes and fostering much-needed connections between people and wildlife.

In the spirit of celebration and eco-education, the Zoo offered all March-born guests complimentary admission; hosted a senior citizens day; amplified the bi-monthly Zoo Trot; marked *Earth Hour* with an overnight snooze in the zoo; celebrated the Zoo Birthday with music and kiddies activities, introduced 120 entrepreneurs to micro

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Peter Kgame, Yongama Zigebe, Ayanda Hlatshwayo, Winnie Ntsongwana,  
Lucky Fani, John Madela, Yongama Nyalambisa  
Thanduxolo Mendrew (Managing Director), Floyd Rikhotso (Chief Financial Officer),  
Ayanda Shongwe (Company Secretary)

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opportunities to promote their products and closed-off the month with the Arts Alive supported 'Jazz in the Lights' concert, on the lawns of the Zoo.

Throughout March, the Joburg Zoo hosted a series of educational exhibitions under the 'Reverse the Red' theme. This initiative provided an inclusive opportunity for visitors of all backgrounds to engage with and learn about various animal species, particularly those that pose no danger to humans. The exhibitions were part of the zoo's efforts to support the global 'Reverse the Red' movement, which aims to conserve and protect endangered and threatened species.

The month-long event to mark this incredible milestone justly commenced with an in-house briefing and cake-cutting ceremony that honoured past and present employees for their exceptional commitment and diligence.

"These dedicated individuals are the backbone of our operations, consistently going above and beyond to safeguard the welfare of the animals we care for and worked tirelessly to welcome the record-breaking 228 000 visitors we hosted," stated the Managing Director of JCPZ, Mr Thanduxolo Mendrew.

In response to the anticipation of a surge in visitor numbers, JCPZ implemented measures to enhance guest experience. The Zoo adjusted its operational hours to open at 07:00 to allow for staff to maintain a clean and welcoming environment and placed additional ticketing points to expedite the purchasing of entrance tickets, to address spiraling long queuing.

To accommodate the increased foot traffic, the Zoo proactively supplemented its ablution facilities, with mobile units and secured additional safe parking spaces at the nearby military museum to address the increase in demand. These initiatives were pivotal in managing the influx of visitors throughout March, reflecting the Zoo's commitment to providing a pleasant and orderly experience for all guests.

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The Joburg Zoo prides itself on being a family-oriented sanctuary that offers a serene atmosphere for relaxation and stress relief, fostering a deeper connection with nature. In this spirit, the Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ) extends its profound appreciation to all who participated in the ground-breaking March celebrations, commemorating 120 years of the Zoo's existence which marked a historic milestone, recording the highest visitor turnout in the Zoo's history.

“The overwhelming support of residents, service providers, employees, and the media has inspired JCPZ to provide a safe space for our children and families. In this regard preparations to host the annual *Mother's Day Tribute* in May have commenced in earnest, to ensure that the Zoo continues to offer its visitors and residents the best outdoor experience in Gauteng,” stated Mendrew.

Ends.

Issued on behalf of Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo

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**EDITORS NOTES:** The Joburg Zoo is a 55-hectare conservation and education facility located, bequeathed to the City by the Herman Eckstein Family in 1904, located in Saxonwold off Jan Smuts Avenue in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is home to a rare Big-5 experience in the heart of an urban setting with a walk-through aquarium and over 2,100 animals from over 320 species. The zoo is dedicated to the care, enrichment, and medical treatment of animals as prescribed by the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA) and is open to the public 365 days a year, including public holidays, with a wide variety of educational programs, tours, and events for visitors of all ages. Entrance to the Zoo is R120 for adults, R90 for children and pensioners, and R45 for school groups. For all bookings and donations, the Johannesburg Zoo can be contacted on 011 646-2000.