

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release | June 13, 2022
Media contact: Gigi Allianic, Craig Newberry
woodlandparkzoo@zoo.org

Media download link for photos:

<https://zoo.resourcespace.com/?c=3658&k=8f13859878>

Three new adult gorillas have joined the zoo ***New arrivals will form a new family group left vacant by death of Vip***

SEATTLE—Woodland Park Zoo's western lowland gorilla population has just gotten bigger—not by the birth of a gorilla, but the recent arrivals of two adult females and one adult male!

The females, 26-year-old Olympia and 22-year-old Jamani (juh-MAW-nee), arrived from North Carolina Zoo. The silverback, 21-year-old Nadaya (nuh-DIE-yuh), arrived from Saint Louis Zoo. Adult male gorillas are known as silverbacks, which in the wild and in zoos play a critical role by providing stability, protecting, leading and maintaining peace in their family group.

The plan is for the new adults to form a family unit with Jumoke (joo-MOH-kee), a 37-year-old female gorilla who was born at Woodland Park Zoo and has had three offspring. Jumoke has been living alone since she lost her male companion, Vip, who died last year due to age-related medical issues. Another gorilla family with youngsters lives separately from Jumoke.

It will be at least a few weeks before gorilla fans will be able to visit the new gorillas. The gorillas will first need to clear quarantine, which is a part of the zoo's excellent animal care program. After quarantine they'll be introduced to the outdoor public habitat where they will discover all the nooks and crannies plus gorilla comforts of their new home.

"Bringing in a new gorilla is always exciting, but three gorillas moving here at the same time opens up even more possibilities and a new chapter for us at Woodland Park Zoo," said Martin Ramirez, mammal curator at Woodland Park Zoo. "Since Vip's death last year, we had been consulting with the Gorilla Species Survival Plan to find gorillas who were of compatible age and personality to become companions for Jumoke. We have high hopes that Olympia, Jamani, and Nadaya will successfully socialize with Jumoke and provide companionship, stability and a natural grouping."

The Gorilla Species Survival Plan has also made a breeding recommendation for Nadaya to breed with Jamani and Olympia in the future. [Species Survival Plans](#) are cooperative programs across accredited zoos to help ensure healthy, genetically diverse, self-sustaining populations of select species or subspecies. Overseen by the [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#), Species Survival Plans are led by experts in husbandry, nutrition, veterinary care, behavior and genetics.

"Though we will all miss Nadaya, especially the Primate Care Team that has worked with him for so many years, we could not be happier about his arrival at his new home. Nadaya is an amazing gorilla, and we are excited he will have the opportunity to have a family of his own. This move is really about the long-term success of this critically endangered species, but we also know it is the start of a new, exciting chapter for Nadaya," said Heidi Hellmuth, Curator of Primates, Saint Louis Zoo.

While zoo visitors can't see the new gorillas yet, a lot is happening behind the scenes in the off-view gorilla dens. Introductions between new gorillas take time and patience. Under the guidance of the zoo's animal health team, the three new gorillas and Jumoke were given immediate visual access to each other known as "howdy" introductions, which help the gorillas become acquainted with each other to ease their transition while being physically separated by safety barriers.



Earlier last week, the three new gorillas and Jumoke were physically introduced to each other and are now together. So far Jumoke is interested in her new companions and she and Olympia are very interested in Nadaya. "There were some small scuffles among the girls, which is normal gorilla behavior and nothing of concern, but there has also been content grunting," explained Ramirez. "With all animal introductions, we allow our animals to move at their own comfortable pace, with safety a top priority. Our gorilla staff, who have considerable experience in gorilla introductions, are methodically managing the introductions which include closely monitoring the behavior of each gorilla. We're following their social and behavioral cues."

The other gorilla group at Woodland Park Zoo is Kwame; Nadiri and her baby Zuna; Uzumma and her son Kitoko; and Yola and Akenji.

Who's who: new gorillas

Nadaya: According to the Primate Care Team at Saint Louis Zoo, he generally appears to be a serious gorilla, but is very playful with his younger brother and sometimes staff. He tends to shake or tear into enrichment, such as treats or other items, to get to them as quickly as possible instead of figuring out how to use tools or manipulate devices. He is easily startled and does an adorable little quick shake when this happens but then goes back to whatever he was doing. Nadaya currently has no offspring. Favorite food: fresh browse (branches, leaves, twigs, other vegetation), romaine and iceberg lettuces, bananas, applesauce, grapes and peanuts.

Olympia: Named Olympia because she was born at Zoo Atlanta a month before Atlanta hosted the summer Olympics; she moved to North Carolina Zoo in 2011. North Carolina Zoo gorilla care staff say she has a very dominant personality and enjoys instigating squabbles but can have a playful side. She loves to hoard food and enrichment. Enjoys tool use enrichment, but is definitely a "work smarter, not harder" gorilla. Olympia has one offspring, a son. Favorite food: browse (branches, leaves, twigs, other vegetation).

Jamani: While living at North Carolina Zoo, she loves all food and will take food right from her son's mouth. Is subordinate and oftentimes prefers to spend time alone. Loves trading anything to gorilla keepers in exchange for fruit. Doesn't like cold, rainy weather and chases the sunshine in the outdoor habitat where she lived. Jamani has a Jekyll and Hyde personality; she's sweet when it's just her and gorilla keepers are giving her food. However, when others are around and competing for food, she is very serious. Is a great tool user and will use sticks to fish for applesauce out of PVC pipes or cheerios out of puzzle feeders. Jamani has one offspring, a son.

Help gorillas in their natural range

Every visit to Woodland Park Zoo supports conservation of animals in the wild. Part of every ticket and membership goes to saving wildlife, including protecting western lowland gorillas in the Republic of Congo. Deep in this rain forest the Mondika Gorilla Project is actively working to protect gorillas and collect data about the importance of the region's forest so that it can become permanently protected as part of a national park.

Join the zoo by recycling old cell phones and other used handheld electronics through [ECO-CELL](#) to help preserve gorilla habitat. Funds generated from ECO-CELL support the zoo's work, [Mondika Gorilla Project](#) and [Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund](#), to help save gorillas.

Become a Digital ZooParent in honor of the new gorillas

[Digital ZooParent](#) adoptions are the perfect way to pay tribute to Zuna. ZooParent adoptions help Woodland Park Zoo provide exceptional care for all its amazing animals and support wildlife conservation efforts in the Pacific Northwest and around the world.

Gorillas: the largest ape in the world

- Gorillas in the wild typically live in groups of 5 to 10, composed of a dominant silverback (adult male), several adult females, adolescents, juveniles and babies. Sometimes groups can consist of two to more than 50 family members.

- Gorillas belong to the family of great apes: gorilla, chimpanzee, bonobo and orangutan. Apes are found in Africa and Asia only.
- Gorillas are muscular and very powerful. Adult males weigh between 350 and 600 pounds. Adult females weigh between 150 and 300 pounds.
- Gorillas are primarily vegetarian. They eat leaves, other vegetation and fruits. Occasionally they'll even snack on termites and ants!
- The estimated population of western lowland gorillas in the wild is about 300,000.

Woodland Park Zoo offers a safe, outdoor experience for all. Summer zoo hours: 9:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to become a zoo member, visit www.zoo.org or call 206.548.2500. Follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

###