

Media Invited: Celebrate the Legendary Year of the Dragon Zoo highlights Komodo Dragons to Mark the Lunar New Year

WHAT: Prepare for some fire-breathing fun as we usher in the Lunar New year—the Year of the Dragon! The media is invited to a special photo opportunity with the largest lizard species in the world, the Komodo dragon, on **February 9**. Some smaller reptile species will also be available for an up-close encounter.



Lunar New Year is celebrated across the globe, but especially in East Asia, where traditions and interpretations are as unique as the many cultures that mark this special date. This year's Lunar New Year begins February 10.

In the Chinese Zodiac, the dragon represents power, good luck and health. People born in a dragon year are said to be confident, generous and ambitious.

Woodland Park Zoo is home to two Komodo dragons—6-year-old Nakal and 11-year-old Berani. The large lizards live in the zoo's Adaptations Building—which is currently undergoing a major refresh to bring in new species of reptiles and amphibians. The new exhibit is scheduled to open in late September 2024.

In celebration of the Lunar New Year, and to honor the cultures that celebrate, this press release is also available in traditional Chinese, Vietnamese and Japanese upon request.

WHEN: **Friday, February 9, 9:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.**

WHERE: Meet PR staff at the **West Entrance** at Phinney Ave. N. between N. 55th & N. 56th Sts. Park in the Penguin Lot at N. 55th St. & Phinney Ave. N. or Otter Lot off N. 59th St. & Phinney Ave. N.

More about Komodo dragons:

- *They're exclusive.* An endangered species, Komodo dragons are restricted to four islands within Komodo National Park in southeastern Indonesia—Komodo, Rinca, Gili Montang, Gili Dasami—and the island of Flores. Their adaptability to survive as the top predator on only five islands and their hunting prowess have evoked both wonder and awe from throughout the world.

- *They're big.* Komodo dragons are the largest and heaviest lizards in the world. Adult males can reach lengths of 9 feet, females 8 feet. The largest ever measured was 10 feet, 2½ inches. They can weigh more than 200 pounds, but typical weights for adults are 100-150 pounds. But even dragons start small—hatchlings are only about 15 inches long.
- *They're powerful predators.* A Komodo dragon can eat up to 80 percent of its body weight in food at one meal, dining on deer, horses, water buffalo, pigs, rats and other animals. A large dragon can kill a deer twice its weight or a water buffalo three times its weight. They often scavenge carcasses and can sense a dead carcass from about 5 miles away. Komodos have large, serrated teeth (like a shark's) that they use to grip prey and rip open its flesh.
- *They're rare.* Scientists estimate that only about 3,000 to 4,000 remain in their natural range. Komodo dragons continue to be threatened by forest clearing, arson and trapping of prey species, such as the Timor deer.

Woodland Park Zoo supports the [Komodo Dragon Survival Program in Indonesia](#).

To support the care of the animals and the sustainable building upgrades that will help Komodo dragons thrive in their new home, please make a gift to the Forests for All campaign today at www.zoo.org/forestsforall/donate

For more information about Woodland Park Zoo, visit www.zoo.org and follow the zoo on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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