

# San Diego Zoo 'smiling hippo' named Otis is dead at age 45

November 16 2021

---



In this photo provided by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance is Otis, a 45-year-old male river hippopotamus at the San Diego Zoo on Jan. 14, 2021, who has died. Nicknamed the "smiling hippo," Otis had been under care for degenerative joint and spinal disease and a decision to euthanize him was made last weekend when his condition declined dramatically, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance said in tweet Monday, Nov. 15, 2021. Credit: Ken Bohn/San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance via AP

A 45-year-old male river hippopotamus named Otis and nicknamed the "smiling hippo" has died at the San Diego Zoo.

Otis had been under care for degenerative joint and spinal disease and a decision to euthanize him was made last weekend when his condition declined dramatically, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance said in [tweet](#) Monday.

[Otis got his nickname in 2010](#) because of viral photo taken by a zoo visitor that captured him with his teeth displayed in what looked like a giant grin, [The San Diego Union-Tribune](#) reported.

The 4,500-pound (2,041-kilogram) hippo was born in the wild in East Africa and went to the Los Angeles Zoo before being transferred to San Diego in 2009 to mate with a female named Funani, the newspaper said.

"Otis will be greatly missed by wildlife care staff, veterinarians, volunteers, and guests," the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance said.



In this photo provided by the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance is Otis, a 45-year-old male river hippopotamus at the San Diego Zoo on July 2, 2021, who has died. Nicknamed the "smiling hippo," Otis had been under care for degenerative joint and spinal disease and a decision to euthanize him was made last weekend when his condition declined dramatically, the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance said in tweet Monday, Nov. 15, 2021. Credit: Ken Bohn/San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance via AP

© 2021 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: San Diego Zoo 'smiling hippo' named Otis is dead at age 45 (2021, November 16) retrieved 14 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-san-diego-zoo-hippo-otis.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.