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Keeping Orang-utans
in a Naturalistic
Island Enclosure

Some Hornbill
Breeding Successes
of 2001

Encouraging Children
to Observe Animals
in Zoos



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Cover Illustration: Social interaction between orang-utans in their naturalistic island enclosure, Bukit Merah Lake, Malaysia (see the article by Govindasamy Agoramoorthy, below).

JOHN HAGENBECK'S RHINOCEROS

BY KEES ROOKMAAKER, HENRI CARPENTIER
AND HERMAN REICHENBACH

When S.S. Flower visited the zoological garden of Madras in 1913, he saw a female Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) which had been in the collection for the past 14 years (Flower, 1914). No other traces of this animal have been found until now – hardly surprisingly, because the history of Indian animal collections still has many lacunae, only slowly being filled (Walker, 2001). Formed as the nucleus of the People's Park in Madras in 1855, the zoo in that large south Indian city (now officially known as Chennai) must have been thriving and popular for a while, rich enough to show a rhinoceros as well as an orang-utan. Further evidence about the rhinoceros has turned up in another unexpected source through the development by one of the present authors (H.C.) of a database devoted to rhinos called CARINO. It was found in a book about the life of John Hagenbeck written by Wilhelm Munnecke, which is one of a number of popular stories about the people who went to exotic places to catch animals for the firm of Hagenbeck in Hamburg. These books, rarely consulted by zoo historians, were listed and studied by Nigel Rothfels (1994). Munnecke's book of 1931 reads easily, but unfortunately it is tantalizingly devoid of detail.

John Hagenbeck (1866–1940) was the half-brother of the famous Carl Hagenbeck. John (pronounced 'yone') was just 20 years old when he first visited Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1886, and he settled there in 1891. He started to catch animals and soon was able not only to expand the business, but also to buy a number of tea plantations. In the First World War all his property was repossessed and he had to flee to Germany, returning to Colombo a few years later. In the late 1920s he founded what are now the National Zoological Gardens of Sri Lanka. Like his younger brother Gustav, John was also among the most successful of European entrepreneurs staging ethnographic shows featuring exotic 'natives' from South and South-East Asia during the first three decades of the last century (Dittrich and Rieke-Müller, 1998). He died in an internment camp shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War.

John Hagenbeck was active in the animal trade in Ceylon and India, and for some years he had a more or less permanent station on Sumatra. Munnecke writes about this only in very general terms, but apparently Hagenbeck's compound was located in the vicinity of Padang on Sumatra's west coast. In his book *Kreuz und quer durch die indische Welt* ('Here and there through the world of the Indies'), first published in 1922, Hagenbeck states that he has worked in Sumatra for the past 25 years, i.e. from 1898 onwards. Munnecke (1931: 70–73), without indications of time or place, tells how John Hagenbeck came across tracks of a rhinoceros in the jungle. He followed the animal with his local helpers and discovered that it was a mother with a young calf. In an unguarded moment the mother was shot, and Achmed, a local helper, immediately ran to it to secure the valuable horn (there is no mention of a second horn). First, however, the calf had to be retrieved, and a few hours later she was found standing next to the

mother's carcass. She was kept in Hagenbeck's camp, and after three months he sold her, well nourished and perfectly tame, to the Zoological Gardens of Madras for a considerable sum of money (Munnecke, 1931: 73). The date of her arrival in Madras, calculated from Flower's remark as 1899 (cf. Rookmaaker, 1998), is not substantiated in this account, but it is within the possible range.

It is often difficult from available written evidence to state with certainty if a rhinoceros caught or seen in South-East Asian forests belonged to the Sumatran or the Javan species, because historically their ranges overlapped. The animals cannot be confused when they are observed carefully, but most people lucky enough ever to see a rhinoceros in the wild in those regions only catch glimpses lasting a minute or less. The presence or absence of the posterior horn in written accounts is generally inconclusive, because in the Sumatran rhinoceros this horn is often too small to be observed easily. Munnecke mentioned one horn only, so the animal could have been a Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*). There is no photograph in his book, nor any comment on the species question by Hagenbeck himself. We assume that Flower correctly identified the animal in the Madras Zoo and that it was in fact the same specimen. To avoid speculation without further evidence, we suggest that the Sumatran rhinoceros seen by Flower in 1913 in the zoological garden of Madras was caught by John Hagenbeck in the jungles near Padang on Sumatra in 1899, when it was less than one year old.

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