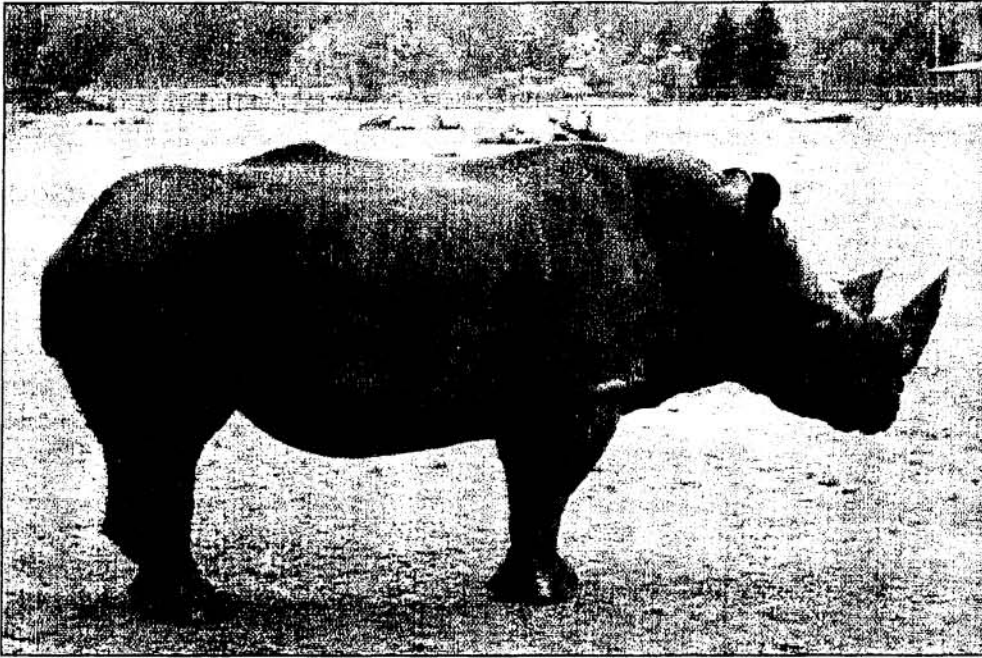


White Oak Rhino Programs

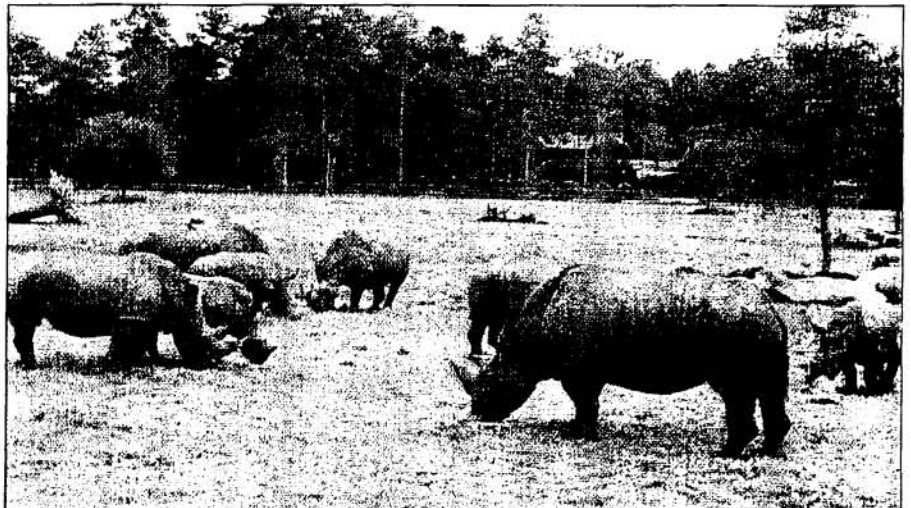
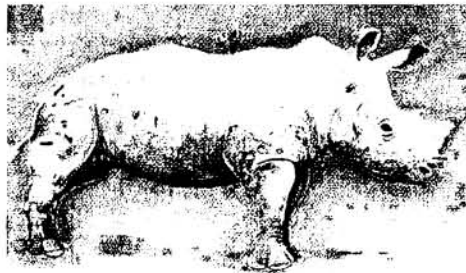
White Oak Receives A New White Rhino



"Ronnie", our new male southern white rhinoceros, investigates his new pasture.

In April of 2003, a 29-year-old male white rhino, named Ronnie, was transferred from the Birmingham Zoo in Alabama to White Oak in accord with a recommendation from the North American-based AZA Rhino Taxon Advisory Group (TAG). Ronnie was wild born in Africa in 1974 and, as such, is considered a founder (an animal that represents genetic lines direct from the wild population). Despite being housed with two females at the Birmingham Zoo since 1976, Ronnie had been unsuccessful in his attempts to breed with either female. To date, Ronnie's genetic heritage remains otherwise unrepresented in the North American population, a matter of some concern to the White Rhino TAG, particularly given Ronnie's advanced age. (White rhinos are known to be reproductive into their mid 30s.)

White Oak Conservation Center has had success in getting two other previously unrepresented white rhinos, both of advanced age, in a reproductive mode. It was decided to see if White Oak could have the same success with Ronnie.



"Ronnie" and his new herd mates enjoy their spacious surroundings.

Ronnie's two former prospective mates were relocated to the San Diego Wild Animal Park, where similar efforts will be made to get them on the list of successful breeders.

There are a significant number of other white rhinos in this country, imports from the 1950s to the 1970s, that have yet to reproduce. The Rhino TAG has recommended that these animals be moved to more natural herd situations, which include three or more females, and, possibly, a second adult male housed nearby, in order to stimulate males to breed. That is precisely the situation that awaited Ronnie on his arrival at White Oak.

The current population of white rhinos at White Oak numbers five males including Ronnie, and seven females. The original male and the five females, from Kruger National Park, South Africa, have produced eight calves since their arrival here in 1998.

Since his arrival, Ronnie has been introduced to the adult females and their calves. This past July, Ronnie was observed actively courting several of the females. This amount of initiative is new to Ronnie, but he is slowly making progress and there is a real possibility that, rather late in life, he may yet make a valuable contribution to the genetic of the next generation of his kind.