

14 RHINOS

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for American Zoos in 1963

By Richard J. Reynolds

During 1963 no less than 14 rhinos of three species arrived at various zoos in the United States. There were three Great Indian Rhinos, *Rhinoceros unicornis*, a male for San Diego Zoo and two females for the National Zoo, Washington, D. C. The San Diego male, "Lasai," is a product of the famous breeding group in Basel, Switzerland, having been born there on August 31, 1962. He arrived in San Diego on October 12, 1963. The two females at the National Zoo, an adult female "Deepali" and her baby, "Rajkumari," were a gift of the Indian government. The youngster was born on April 10, 1963, at Gauhati, India, after its mother had been captured. They were flown from India to the United States aboard a U. S. Air Force C-130 cargo airplane as a part of a large shipment of birds and animals for the National Zoo, including a Golden Cat. The travel arrangements were made by President Johnson and Air Force Chief of Staff, General Curtis LeMay.

This flying "ark" arrived at Andrews Air Force Base, near Washington, on December 16, 1963; and the rhinos were uncrated at the zoo late that night. The National Zoo was particularly thrilled to receive a proven breeder which it planned to mate with its "Tarun" who had been leading a bachelor's life since his arrival in 1960. Alas, the adult female deteriorated rapidly from acute enteritis and died on December 28, 1963, after only twelve days at the zoo. The baby female is reportedly doing well.

Six of the rhinos arriving in the United States last year belong to the species *Ceratotherium simum simum*, the Southern White Rhinoceros. One pair arrived at the Phoenix Zoo, Tempe, Arizona, on July 28, 1963, another pair went to the Lincoln Park Zoo, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on August 16, 1963, and the third pair arrived at the San Francisco Zoological Garden on November 27, 1963. All were made available by the white rhino "cropping" program conducted since 1962 in the Umfolozi Game Reserve by the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board.

Finally, there were five African Black Rhinos, *Diceros bicornis*, acquired by American zoos. There was a pair for Roeding Park Zoo, Fresno, California, and a pair for Oklahoma City Zoo. The fifth animal, a male, was born on April 14, 1963, at the Highland Park Zoo, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is the second Black Rhino

born at that zoo, the 7th in the United States, and, as far as the writer can determine, the 22nd in the world.

The Fresno animals were actually imported in 1962. Obtained from Ruhe-Hannover, they arrived at Los Angeles in November of that year, but their quarters at Roeding Parke were not completed so they were sent to Louis Goebel's Jungleland at Thousand Oaks, California. They were received by the Fresno Zoo on July 9, 1963.

Unfortunately, the female died on November 9th after four months at the zoo.

The Black rhinos at Oklahoma City were both born in American zoos. The male came from Detroit where he was born on April 19, 1962, and the female from Cincinnati where he was born on July 27, 1961. Both arrived at the Lincoln Park Zoo on June 28, 1963.

With the receipt of its White Rhinos later in the summer, Oklahoma City became the only American Zoo to acquire more than one species in 1963.

In April, 1963, the writer received information that a pair of Black Rhinos were then at the Zoological Gardens of Houston, Texas; and knowing that this zoo had, for some time, been planning to acquire rhinos, concluded that they arrived in early 1963 or late 1962. However, on January 15, 1964, the writer was advised by John E. Werler, manager of the Houston Zoo, that no rhinos of any kind had ever been exhibited in that zoo. Your writer feels compelled to mention this situation because he erroneously listed rhinos at Houston in a 1963 paper published in the current edition of the INTERNATIONAL ZOO YEARBOOK (Reynolds, Richard J., "The Black Rhinoceros in Captivity," INTERNATIONAL ZOO YEARBOOK, Vol. IV, 1962, The Zoological Society of London, p. 112). Be that as it may, the 14 rhinos in three species which did arrive in 1963 probably represent the largest number and variety ever acquired by American zoos in one year.

REFERENCES: Associated Press Wirephoto, San Francisco, *The Atlanta Constitution*, 29 November, 1963, p. 16; Jones, Marvin, Arlington, Virginia, 18 and 31 December, 1963; Merrill, N. Jane, Arizona Zoological Society, Phoenix, 22 August, 1963; Miles, Kay, Fresno Zoological Society, 13 December, 1962, and 6 January, 1964; Pournelle, George H., "Rhinoceros... a vanishing mammal," *Zoonoz*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 12, December, 1963, p. 14; Sherwood, John, "Rare Rhino At Zoo — Deepali Is Star Among Newcomers," *The Evening Star*, Washington, D. C. 17 December, 1963, p. B-2; Thomas, Dr. Warren D., Lincoln Park Zoo, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; 25 October, 1963, and 6 January, 1964; Werler, John E., Houston Zoological Gardens, 15 January, 1964; Hays, Howard R., Pittsburgh, 18 May, 1963.