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BIRTHS AND HATCHINGS

Sharjah UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

SOURCE
PAUL VERCAEMEN

On 8 May Arabia's Wildlife Centre in Sharjah welcomed the arrival of the first Arabian tahr (*Hemitragus jayakari*) to be born at the centre. This was also a first for an EAZA member institution.

This birth is the result of breeding loan arrangements between the Oman Mammal Breeding Centre in Muscat, Oman, the Endangered Wildlife Breeding and Conservation Centre in Al Ain and Arabia's Wildlife Centre in Sharjah. Only Sharjah is a public facility and ISIS registered, while both other collections are private. Arabian tahr are only kept at these three collections. There are currently five Arabian tahr in Sharjah and the total population in captivity is less than one hundred. The estimated wild population of less than two thousand animals is threatened by unrestricted development in the mountains and the removal of live youngsters for illegal trade.

Both tahr parents arrived in 2006 in Sharjah. The six-year-old female is an experienced breeder while it is the first offspring for the four-year-old father. Arabian tahr are solitary and sometimes fiercely territorial, which poses challenges to successful maintenance and husbandry in captivity. The male and female were introduced to each other at the end of November 2006. No actual mating was observed but they were seen lying close together for several days in mid-December.



The female was crate trained and caught for ultrasound examination in February 2007. Pregnancy was established, and the pair was immediately separated again. The birth of the male young approximately 175 days later confirmed that mating occurred around mid-December. The young weighed 1.7 kg at day one and was seen nibbling on browse for the first time at ten days. Due to the arrival of summer, with temperatures ranging from 40°C to 48°C, mother and young spend most of their time in the shaded areas that were specially made for them.

Whipsnade UNITED KINGDOM

SOURCE
LESLEY DICKIE

ZSL Whipsnade Zoo welcomed not one, but two baby 'giants' at the beginning of 2007: an Asian one-horned rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) and an Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*).

The female Asian one-horned rhino calf 'Asha', made a rapid entrance on New Year's Eve at two o'clock in the afternoon, providing an extra-special celebration for the staff. Asha, meaning 'hope' in Nepali, is being parent-reared by her 11-year-old mother 'Behan' and is growing rapidly, weighing in at 255 kg by the end of April 2007. Behan, a first-time mother, arrived at Whipsnade Zoo in 1998 from Chitwan after being donated by the Department of National Parks, Nepal. 'Jaffna', the 13-year-old father, is on loan from Basel Zoo and arrived in 2004. Asian one-horned rhinos were first exhibited at Whipsnade Zoo in 1935 and there have been nine births in total, the first in 1957. Of those nine, two calves survived only

one day and one was a still birth. The last birth at the zoo was in 1993, making the arrival of Asha very special.

Following hot on the heels of Asha, 'Leelee', a female Asian elephant calf, was born on 19 January 2007 in the evening and weighed 122 kg at birth. Although it took her five hours to find her mother's milk, she quickly made up for lost time, and by June weighed in at 293 kg. This is the second calf for 24-year-old mother 'Kaylee' and 15-year-old father 'Emmet'. Kaylee arrived at Whipsnade in 1989 from Burma. Emmet was born at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse (USA) in 1991 and arrived at Whipsnade in 1997. The elephant keepers have noted that Leelee is an active and bright calf who began taking daily walks around the zoo with four other members of the elephant herd only a few days after birth. In total there are six elephants in the zoo herd, including two year 'Euan', who quickly became a playmate for Leelee.

