

females. She is also very restless, running about the enclosure and making the sharp, squeaking cry typical of the species. As mating was only observed for the first time in 1965 we have been unable to calculate the gestation period exactly but we agree with Leopold (1953) that it must be between 390 and 400 days. The pair of Baird's tapirs at Tuxtla Gutierrez Zoo are kept together until just before the young is due to be born. They are then separated until the young is weaned after about one year. The pair mate almost immediately after they are reunited with each other. The female suckles the young standing, lying down and in a seated position.

#### REFERENCE

LEOPOLD, A. S. (1953): *Wildlife of Mexico. The game birds and mammals*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.

### A NOTE ON BREEDING INDIAN RHINOCEROS

*Rhinoceros unicornis*

#### AT GAUHATI ZOO

by T. Chowdhury

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A FEMALE Indian rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros unicornis*, named 'Deepali' arrived at Gauhati Zoo already pregnant. On 10 April 1963 she gave birth to a female calf, 'Rajkumari'. At birth the baby weighed 73 lb, measured 22 in. at the shoulder and was 26 in. long. Both animals were sent to the National Zoological Park, Washington, on 15 November 1963.

On 10 October 1963 another female Indian rhinoceros, 'Padumi', gave birth to a female calf after a gestation period of 18 months. The calf, 'Japari', weighed 76 lb at birth, measured 23 in at the shoulder and was 26 in. long. 'Japari' was sold on 2 November 1965.

### BREEDING THE INDIAN WILD ASS

*Equus hemionus khur*

#### AT AHMEDABAD ZOO

by Reuben David

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THE Indian wild ass, *Equus hemionus khur*, bears a strong resemblance to the Persian wild ass *E. h. onager*, but whereas the onager is greyish

in colour, the normal colour of the Indian wild ass is a dark sandy colour with a chestnut mane and broad dorsal stripe. The lower parts are white and the area of the rump fawn. The ears are short and upright, a characteristic peculiar to the subspecies. It is estimated that there are between 800 and 900 wild asses left in the Rann of Kutch but the number may well be less as a survey has not been carried out recently. The wild animals often migrate across the border from India into Pakistan, but they are more commonly found on the Indian side where they breed. Despite their very reduced numbers, the wild asses are still shot for sport or for meat by poachers and there is a very real danger that the Indian wild ass will soon become extinct. Because of this situation it is to be hoped that the Government will permit selected zoos to acquire breeding groups in order to build up stocks of the Indian wild ass in captivity.

At present there are very few Indian wild asses in zoos; the Ahmedabad Zoo has 2 males and 3 females, the Maharaja of Baroda has two males and one female in his zoo at Baroda and there is pair at Junagadh Zoo. For the first time for very many years births have been recorded. On 13 August 1964 the Maharaja of Baroda's pair gave birth to a male foal and a filly foal was also born at the Ahmedabad Zoo on 2 March 1965. The prospects of our establishing a captive breeding herd are good.

On 20 September 1960 we received five young Indian wild asses, aged between one-and-a-half and two months. All came from the Little Rann of Kutch. One pair died immediately after their arrival at the zoo and on 3 March 1961 a male died following an operation for abdominal hernia. On 26 October 1961 we were fortunate enough to receive another filly foal, about three months old. This meant we had a good foundation stock of one male and two females.

We have found that great care must be taken with newly-caught young wild asses if they are to adjust to captivity. If trapping operations are not carried out properly the wild ass will often die either during or immediately after capture. In the past, newly-captured foals often refused to eat and died. However, we have evolved a method that works well. We place the newly-captured young animal