

# Port Lympne Rhino and Hoofstock Report

by Jimmy Shave

It seems appropriate to start this report with news of our male Sumatran rhino, Torgamba, with whom we have spent a good deal of time during the past year. We are delighted to say that he has come through his first full winter extremely well, and has settled into a very good daily routine. His appetite has increased tremendously over the past twelve months, and he is consuming vast quantities of fruit and branches, and eating lucerne 'ad lib' in contrast to his early days at the zoo when he had to be hand fed. He has settled well into his temporary quarters at Combe Farm; these have been extended to give him the use of a spacious grass paddock, which he really enjoys on warmer days. His only slight problem has been with sore feet, which we are continuing to treat. Regular oiling has helped to keep his skin supple and in good condition.

With the completion of their new shed, our black rhino have been divided into two groups, the old shed now only housing the three adults, Baringo, Naivasha and Rukwa, while the new shed is occupied by their offspring Basha, Kingo and Arusha. Kingo and Arusha initially became somewhat anxious when separated from their mothers, but have made the transition well. They are now developing their own independent characters, and have settled happily into their individual quarters. Having separated the calves, we were then able to reintroduce Baringo, the breeding bull, to the adult females, and we hope that he has successfully mated with them. A new metal fence has been constructed around the Cape buffalo paddock, enabling us to allow rhino and buffalo to graze and wallow in the same area, and so far they appear to harmonise well together, with the exception of the odd sparring session!

During another harsh winter at Port Lympne, with snow covering the ground, we had the unexpected pleasure of our Brazilian tapir Octavia giving birth to a female. The baby survived the winter well, and is developing an extremely gentle nature, reminiscent of her father, the late Omar. Within the past year we have acquired four more Brazilian tapirs. One

adult male came to replace Omar (who died in the spring of 1986) and is now living with Octavia and her baby, while in May we were pleased to accept the gift of a family of two more males and a female.

Our herds of Przewalski's horses wintered well. The group of ten fillies spent the winter in a barn at Chilham and returned to Port Lympne for the summer, where in May of this year they were joined by a new stallion, Bolton, from America. Bolton has taken well to his new surroundings and we look forward to seeing his progeny next year. The herds generally have had a successful year, with four foals so far, two males and two females. During the past year one of our original mares, Shilka, sadly died.

The water buffalo herd also spent the winter at Chilham, but are now back in their large paddock at Port Lympne. They are in exceptionally good condition, as we have been able to let them have the run of the spare horse field annexed to their paddock to allow them extra grazing. They have so far provided us this year with one calf, bringing their numbers to 15. Two young pairs have been exported to West Germany.

Our Cape buffalo and American bison herds are breeding so successfully that we have been enabled to sell 2.1 buffalo and 0.3 bison to other zoos. Births so far this year are two of each species.

In March this year our oldest female sable antelope gave birth to a female. Previous experience with this animal suggested that we should supplement the baby's food with powdered milk while keeping it with its mother. Despite this precaution, however, the animal unfortunately died after eleven days.

Both axis and barasingha deer have done well throughout the year and increased in numbers, the barasingha herd providing us with three fawns so far this year.

All in all, this has been a very good year for the Rhino and Hoofstock Section in general, and a particularly rewarding one for us with the happy and successful settling in of Torgamba in his new surroundings.

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