

# SURVIVAL...

## Southern and Northern White Rhinos

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TWO OF THE PRINCIPAL AIMS of the modern zoological garden are the captive propagation of wildlife forms endangered in their natural environment and the formation of self-sustaining breeding groups. These objectives have been pointed out repeatedly in ZOOOOZ articles rather than the amassing of species and specimens. When conditions are such that an animal cannot be adequately protected in the wild state, the cooperation of numerous conservation agencies, governmental bodies, and zoological gardens is imperative to successfully undertake such projects.

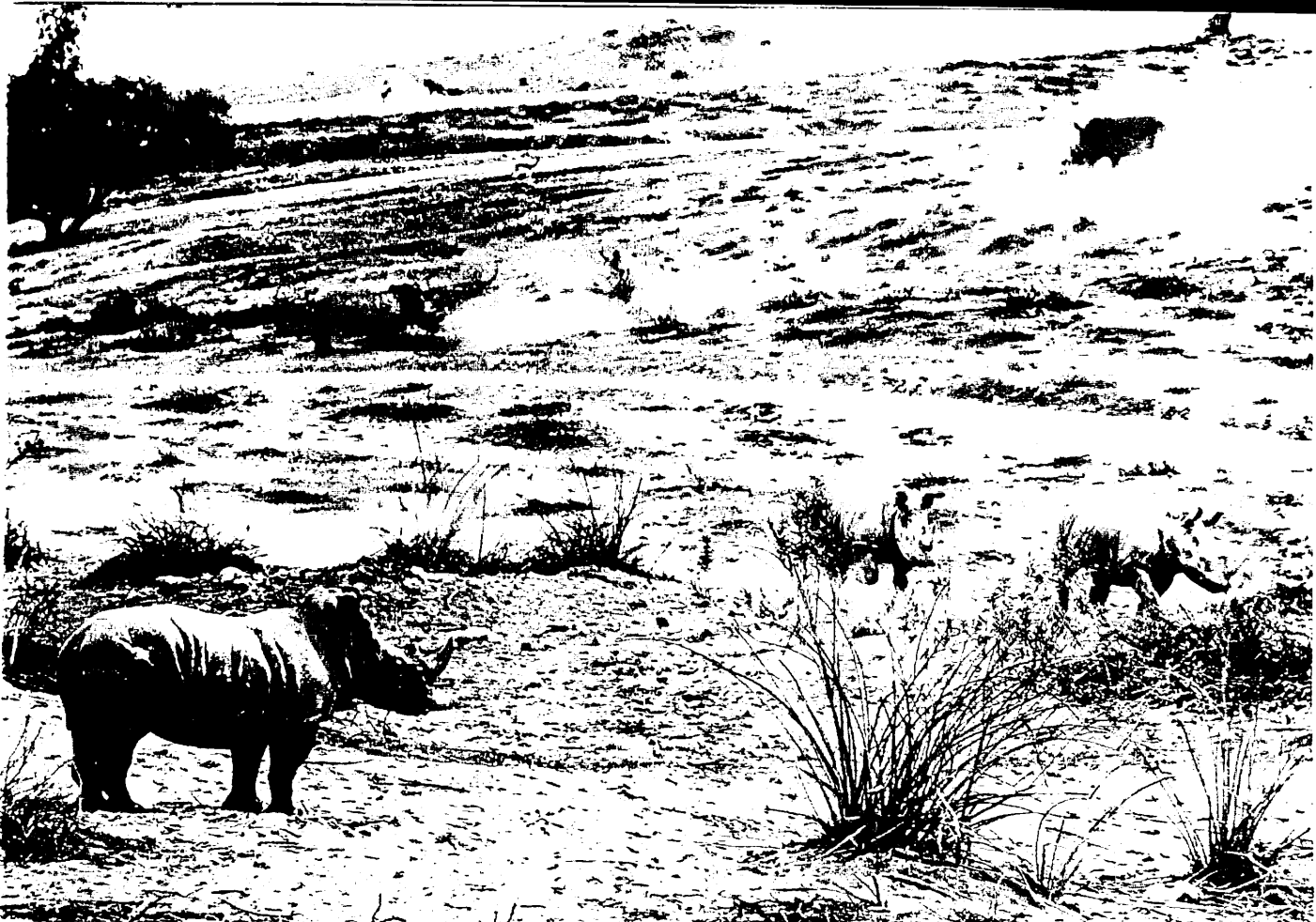
In the May, 1971, issue of ZOOOOZ, we were able to follow the return of the Southern White Rhinoceros, *Ceratotherium simum simum* (Burchell, 1817) from the verge of extinction through the efforts of the Natal Parks Board to a point where it is now no longer on the list of endangered animals. While this population of the White Rhinoceros is now considered secure, the northern subspecies, *Ceratotherium simum cottoni* (Lydekker, 1908), is in danger of total annihilation.

The Northern White Rhinoceros was first described in 1908 by the famous English zoologist, Richard Lydekker, from a specimen taken in the Sudan. In its external appearance, it differs little from the southern form except that the skull has a flatter dorsal outline and the teeth are somewhat smaller. The skulls of both subspecies are of equal proportions, as are body sizes. Nevertheless, the two populations have been isolated for so long by thousands of miles of the African continent that the distinction seems warranted. At the time of its description, the northern subspecies ranged throughout the southern Sudan on the west bank of the Nile as far west as Bahr el Ghazal Province and bordering the Central African Republic, Zaire (Congo), and Uganda. During the 1920's, when the southern form seemed to be only one step from extinction, the northern population appeared to be secure. As African nations gained their independence, and political unrest shattered the calm of the continent, the future of this population was gravely threatened. Some pressure had already been put upon the animals for the sake of their horns as early as 1931, but the decisive point came with Congolese independence and subsequent civil war. In 1963, the Congo population alone was estimated to be approximately 1,000 animals. By 1966 this had been



Lucy, above, is one of four Northern White Rhinoceroses at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. She cooperated in a pose showing the flatter dorsal outline of her skull when compared with that of the Southern White Rhinoceros, depicted here by Uhtandi and her 125-pound male calf born October 11, 1972. The Zulu name of "Zibulo," meaning "first fruits of man or beast," was chosen because the rhino birth symbolizes what the Park is all about. The baby was nicknamed "Ian." It was Ian Player, chief conservator, Natal Parks Game & Fish Preservation Board, who arranged for the translocation of 20 Southern White Rhinos from Africa to San Diego.





The Southern White Rhino calf's sire, Mandhla, *left*, was exhibited at the Zoo from 1962 until he was moved to the Park in 1971. While housed at the Zoo for nine years, Mandhla had shown no interest in his female companion; but at the Park he began courting most of the female rhinos in the 90-acre South African exhibit area. Shown with him here are a number of the herd of 20 translocated from Africa through the efforts of Ian Player.

reduced to about 100 as a result of the chaos arising from the disintegration of law and order, and the occupation of the Garamba National Park by rebel forces. By May of that year, the northern, western and eastern portions of the park were devoid of rhinos. It is almost certain that in the same period of time, the White Rhinoceros disappeared from the Central African Republic. In the Sudan, the rhino also has been a victim of political unrest, and while protected in Uganda in the Murchison Falls National Park, recent political disturbances in that country may have a disastrous effect on the remnant population. Only the future will tell if the rhino can survive in Uganda. The present estimate for the Sudan, Zaire, and Uganda is a mere 70, a rather black picture for the future survival of the subspecies.

The first white rhinos to be exported from Africa were a pair of the northern subspecies from the Sudan received at the Antwerp Zoological Garden on May 7, 1950. Today, only the female of this pair survives, and the total captive population numbers eight.

With the opening of the San Diego Wild Animal Park, the National Zoological Garden, Washington, D.C., inquired whether the Zoological Society of San Diego would be willing to accept the Washington pair of the

Northern White Rhinoceros on breeding loan in the hope that the animals would reproduce in the 125 acres set aside for East African animals. Negotiations with Washington were completed without difficulty and the rhinos arrived in San Diego on April 22, 1972. They had been part of the National Zoo's collection since September 4, 1956, and were named "Bill" and "Lucy," after the longtime director of that zoo, William Mann, and his wife.

Shortly thereafter, the St. Louis Zoological Society was approached in the hope that it would be willing to allow its pair, that had arrived in St. Louis July 8, 1957, to join Bill and Lucy at the Wild Animal Park. Despite the great exhibit value of these animals, the St. Louis Zoological Society agreed that all four Northern White Rhinoceroses in the Western Hemisphere should be united at the San Diego Wild Animal Park. "Dinka" and "Joyce" duly arrived in San Diego on August 7, 1972. It is to the credit and foresight of both the National Zoological Garden and the St. Louis Zoological Society that an unselfish effort has been made to establish a potential captive breeding group of these severely endangered animals.

Hopes are high that these efforts will prove rewarding as the first calf was born October 11, 1972, to a female of the herd of Southern White Rhinos that arrived at the Park on February 17, 1971. This calf, a male, is the third captively conceived, the first birth occurring in Pretoria, South Africa, in 1969; the second, in San Antonio, Texas, last August. The young rhino is named "Zibulo," Zulu for "first fruits of man or beast."