## Alaskan highlight

The visitors then arrive at the highlight of Alaska World: the sea lion basin which is 120 m long and 4 m deep. It contains nine million litres of fresh water. A small salt water basin serves as an off-exhibit enclosure for separating animals if needed, for example for health reasons. Visitors to the sea lion exhibit can walk through a glass tunnel which offers spectacular underwater views. We now keep 15 (5.9.1) Californian sea lions, but will increase the numbers to thirty individuals in the future through breeding. The glass tunnel leads into the 'Burrow Cave' with underwater windows featuring the sea lion and the polar bear basins. The 1.2 polar bears are kept in three separate enclosures of at least 3,400 m².

## Experience Alaska!

Visitors leaving the polar region will be offered an extraordinary event. Our 'Alaska Simulator' is an animation film shown on a moving platform. It simulates a trip on an ice floe which breaks from the pack-ice, drifting over the ocean to the rainforest coast of Alaska. A second door opens and the visitor is back in the forest part of the zoo, facing the 3.1 timber wolves, and in the next exhibit on the route the Canadian otters. The path then leads the visitors along other viewing points for the elk and lynx enclosures and back to the Tlingit Alaska gate where they started. The visitors are absolutely fascinated with this new part of the zoo and promise to visit us another time as soon as possible to see Africa and Asia. The whole transformation of the zoo will be completed in March 2008. ●

PHOTOS SCHÖNBRUNNER TIERGARTEN



# Indian rhinos settle in well in Vienna

Regina Pfistermüller, Schönbrunner Tiergarten, Vienna, Austria

**It has been 16 years since the last rhinoceros, it was a black rhino called 'Toni', died of old age in the Schönbrunner Tiergarten (Vienna). Now these ancient mammals have returned, inhabiting a large, new and modern enclosure in the centre of this old zoo.**

## New arrivals

'Jange' (male) and 'Sundari' (female) are the names of the pair of Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) from Nepal that arrived in Vienna on 11 March 2006. Both are wild-born and both of their mothers were killed by poachers when they were only a few months of age. They were hand-raised by staff members of Chitwan National Park in the south of Nepal. All efforts to reintroduce them in the wild failed. Therefore they remained at the orphanage of the park even though they were already three and nine years old.

# NEW ENCLOSURES



## Transport to Vienna

Through mediation of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation it was possible to transfer Jange and Sundari to Austria, a transfer which was well planned by a number of experts in animal transport. To ensure that the transport would run smoothly and would not be disturbed by extreme animal rights activists, three routes were carefully prepared. Apparently Munich and Whipsnade had delays due to such actions when they received rhinos from Nepal. On short notice it was then decided to take a direct flight route from Kathmandu to Bratislava. From there the rhino crates were loaded onto a truck and driven to Vienna. The transport was accompanied by the Nepalese keeper Nanda Ram Acharya, veterinarian Bal Krishna Giri, Helmut Ulzer, Peter Heindl and veterinarian Thomas Voracek from Vienna, and Peter Linhart as the transport expert. The unloading of the animals at their new home was stress free. Both animals left their crates calmly and started feeding on bamboo immediately. The accompanying persons seemed to be more exhausted by the long flight than the animals!



## Settling in

Both animals seemed to settle well in their new home. At first, Jange and Sundari were quarantined within the inside enclosure of the rhino park. The new rhino house was constructed according to the husbandry guidelines, established by the Indian rhino EEP, featuring all elements that are necessary for successful husbandry, and the animals' well-being. Sealed rubber flooring on all 400 m$^2$ covers the indoor floor to protect the rhinos' feet. Heated pools with showers, wallows and brushes allow for many behaviours to occur. The house consists of two enclosures (219 m$^2$

and 130 m$^2$) and one smaller holding area. Mechanically operated doors separate those from each other and from the outside enclosure. The inside enclosure is heated by means of floor heating as well as conventional radiators along the walls. Large skylights enable daylight to enter. A food preparation area, hay storage and a trash room can also be found inside the house. The animals' main meals consist of straw mixed with hay, bamboo left over from the giant pandas, twigs, horse pellets to supplement vitamins and minerals, and small amounts of vegetables and apples. Olive oil is fed for essential fatty acids.



## Spacious outside areas

Now that the quarantine period is over and the weather is finally getting better, Jange and Sundari are allowed into the spacious outside enclosure. On a total of around 6,000 m$^2$ three divisions are established, two of which have pools and mud wallows, contain trees and rocks for body rubbing, and feature different kinds of substrate, like grass, soil, and deep, loose sand. One of these is reserved for rhinos only, but can be connected with the centre enclosure, which in addition to the rhinos also allows access to Asian hoofstock, like Nilgai, Axis deer and blackbuck. This mixed exhibit enclosure is separated from an area that is reserved for Asian hoofstock only by vertical poles with a maximum width of 46 cm, shutting the rhinos out.

## Valuable genes

Wild-born Jange and Sundari are now part of the European breeding programme (EEP) for this species and hopefully through time will pass on their valuable genes to the next generations. Until that time they are serving as ambassadors for their wild relatives, making this endangered species and their problems known in Austria, enabling us to financially support field projects in Nepal in cooperation with the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation and also to pass on knowledge to our Nepalese colleagues through training courses on husbandry management and in the conservation field. ●