

Births and Hatchings

HUYGHE

The calf died after more than four months because it was weaned too early. On 4 January 1953, an okapi foetus was aborted at Antwerp Zoo. Three other okapis, of which none survived, were born at Antwerp through 1958. The first okapi born in captivity that reached maturity was born on 6 June 1957 at Paris-Vincennes. There have been 24 okapis reared at Antwerp since 1959.

Sources: Steven Vansteenkiste, Bruno Van Puijenbroeck

FRANKFURT - GERMANY

A female *aardvark* (*Orycteropus afer*) was born on 21 September 1998 after a gestation period of approximately seven months. She weighed 1.3 kg at birth and her weight was 9 kg after about two months. The mother has given birth to 10 offspring, seven of which were either miscarriages or failed to survive. Only three have been reared since 1991. This year's young is the first to be mother-reared without problems. The first aardvarks were born in the zoos of San Diego (USA) and Frankfurt in 1962. Both of the young died after a few days. The first young was raised at Amsterdam Zoo (The Netherlands) in 1966.

Sources: press release 19 November 1998, Bart Hiddinga

BELFAST - UNITED KINGDOM

A king penguin (*Aptenodytes p. patagonica*) hatched in 1998 at Belfast. King penguins breed only sporadically in European zoos. This breeding success is all the more significant as the chick was parent-reared. Belfast Zoo also continued its success in breeding Moluccan cockatoos (*Cacatua moluccensis*). Perhaps the most significant recent breeding success at Belfast Zoo is the birth of a male clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*). With just 30 animals in the Clouded Leopard EEP, and no other breedings in Europe in 1998, this is a most significant success, especially as the cub is being mother-reared. A notable arrival in 1998 was that of 2.2 purple-faced langurs (*Semnopithecus vetulus*) from Colombo Zoo (Sri Lanka). The zoo's experience with the management and breeding of other langur species suggests that they will do well at Belfast.

Sources: Mark Challis, John Stronge

PLANCKENDAEL - BELGIUM

A male Indian rhino (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) was born in September 1998 and is being mother-reared. This is the eighth Indian rhino birth at Planckendael and the fourth offspring of mother Johanna, who was born at Planckendael herself. Johanna's first two young were still-births while her third (1995) and fourth (1998) survived.

West African crowned cranes (*Balearica p. pavonina*) have been kept at Planckendael since a male arrived in 1988. A female joined him in 1993. The pair was initially housed together with saddle-billed storks and marabou storks in a mixed exhibit. The cranes

were moved to an aviary behind the scenes equipped with a pond and hillocks in April 1997. Three eggs were laid in September 1997, two of which were fertile. One was left with the parents which incubated the egg, but with intervals off the nest too long to be successful. The embryo died on 29 September 1997. The other egg lost a lot of weight during artificial incubation yet signs of life inside the eggshell were noticed 25 September and on 1 October, the chick entered the air chamber. When staff opened the egg on 2 October, the chick was dead however. A chicken egg was put in the parents nest to give them brooding experience, and they successfully incubated that egg.

The cranes built a beautiful nest on the ground in 1998. The first egg was laid on 3 July, followed by a second egg on 5 July. The second egg hatched after natural incubation on 31 August 1998. The young was parent-reared and left the nest for the first time on 2 September. A long period of heavy rain started a few days later, and although the rain seemed to be never ending, the parents always managed to keep their chick dry and they raised it successfully. The first egg was artificially incubated and hatched on 3 September. This chick was hand-reared, as it might have been attacked by the parents if put with them.

Source: Marleen Huyghe

BUDAPEST - HUNGARY

Budapest Zoo is delighted to announce the birth of 0.0.1 two-toed sloth (*Choloepus didactylus*) on 21 September 1998. The four-year-old mother takes excellent care of her baby which is doing very well. This is the first successful breeding of the species in the 132 years of Budapest Zoo's history. Two-toed sloths are currently kept in 25 European zoos; 12 of these zoos have bred the species during the last five years.

Source: Melinda Terényi

Two-toed sloth with young at Budapest



Photo: Zoltan Bagari

5821