

# Births and Hatchings

## POZNAN - POLAND

A healthy female **white rhinoceros** (*Ceratotherium s. simum*) was born on 18 November 1999 at Poznan Zoo. Both parents are also captive-born. The father 'Dino', born in December 1993 at Usti nad Labem Zoo (Czech Republic), was imported in June 1995. No female was available in Europe at that time, and we did not want to keep a young potential breeder alone too long. Fortunately it was possible to import the female 'Diuna', born in May 1987 at the Pretoria-Lichtenburg Semi-Reserve, via Pretoria Zoo (South Africa) in 1997. There were no problems with acclimatisation of this female nor with her introduction to the male after the obligatory quarantine period.

Well aware of the difficulties in breeding white rhinos, especially when kept in pairs and in the second captive-generation, hopes were not high regarding reproduction. Mating attempts were observed during Spring and Summer 1998, and it was decided not to separate the animals during the night. Enlargement of the udder and increased aggression of the female towards the male were noted in early 1999. Faecal samples were sent to Professor Schwarzenberger (Vienna Veterinary University, Austria) and much to our surprise a pregnancy was confirmed. As the actual mating date was unknown, we expected the birth date around the end of October. The male was thus just over 4.5 years of age when siring his first offspring.

The birth took place in the early hours of 18 November and lasted about 15 minutes. As the mother is quite aggressive, the initial rearing was observed via a close circuit camera, and only one keeper had access to the stable. Constant observation and video recording provided many data to be analysed in the future. The calf was on her feet and suckled for the first time one hour after delivery. She has developed well and is a welcome addition to the aging white rhino EEP population.

Source: Radoslaw Ratajszczak

## WALSRODE - GERMANY

The Parc Zoologique de Tsimbazaza in Antananarive (Madagascar) and Birdpark Walsrode signed an agreement of cooperation in 1997 working towards the development of a bird department at Tsimbazaza Zoo, and the establishment of endemic Malagasy bird species at both Tsimbazaza Zoo and Birdpark Walsrode. Juliën Ramanampamonjy, curator of birds at Tsimbazaza Zoo, spent three weeks in 1998 at Walsrode for training in bird husbandry in the tropical house and hand-rearing section.

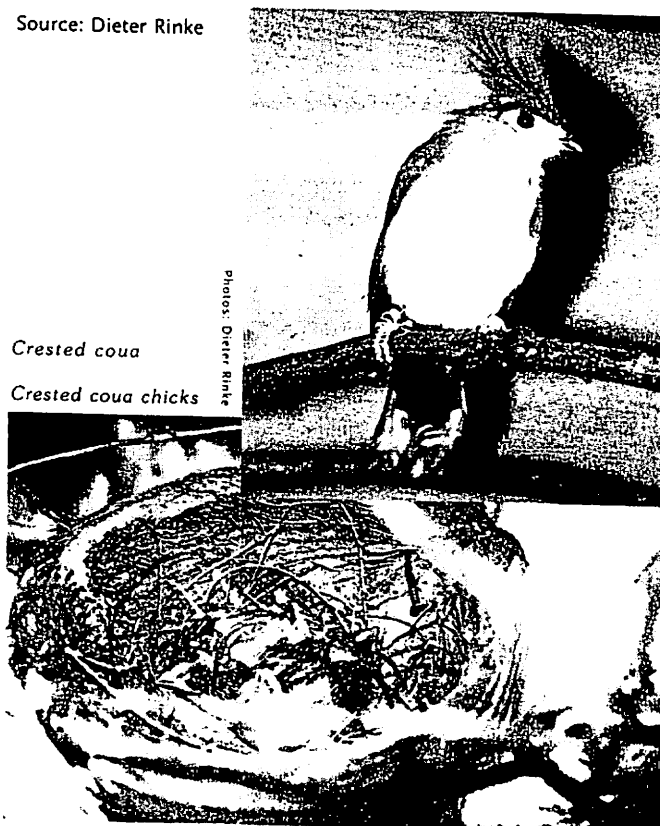
Nestlings of three Malagasy bird species were collected from nests in the deciduous forests of western Madagascar and

transferred to Tsimbazaza Zoo in November 1998 and December 1999. Despite many difficulties in obtaining proper food and materials, as well as transportation problems, most of the nestlings arrived in good condition at Tsimbazaza. Small groups of Madagascar crested ibises (*Lophotibis cristata*), sickle-billed vangas (*Falcoella palliata*) and crested couas (*Coua cristata*) were shipped to Walsrode, where they have acclimatised very well.

The first pair of **crested couas**, collected as nestlings in Madagascar, built a nest in a halved coconut shell in April 2000. The birds were observed incubating two eggs on 20 April, and on 10 May the nest contained two chicks, approximately one and three days of age. A third, unhatched egg was also found. A three-egg clutch is unusual for this species: the normal clutch size is two eggs. The two young developed well and fledged, half-feathered, on 23 May.

While the field work was being conducted in western Madagascar, the aviaries at Tsimbazaza Zoo were reconstructed in order to improve breeding conditions for native birds. However, the major focus in our future cooperation will be on training staff and establishing continuous provisioning of suitable foods. The first breeding of a Madagascan endemic softbill at Tsimbazaza Zoo indicates that the establishment of Madagascan endemic bird species in captivity might be successful.

Source: Dieter Rinke



Crested coua

Crested coua chicks

Photos: Dieter Rinke