

## A NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF

## SIBERIAN TIGERS

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The Royal Rotterdam Zoo specialized in tiger breeding years ago. More than 160 tiger cubs have been raised in 16 years and maybe this is enough to say something on this subject. Our Zoo started breeding Bengal tigers. Afterwards Sumatran tigers, all of them jungleborn, were used to build up a breeding group of this rare race. Since 1956 Siberian tigers have been kept and bred. As the keeping and breeding of 3 different races of tigers takes too much space, we decided to stop keeping the Bengal race. So at the moment we have a breeding group of 2-3 Sumatrans and 2-3 Siberian tigers. Of course no interbreeding of these races has ever been practised..

The first pair of Siberian tigers was imported from the Zoo Centre, Moscow. The exact place of origin is not known to us. However, there cannot be any doubt about their pure blood. From the offspring one female was kept in our breeding group. A male, originating from Leipzig Zoo, has been exchanged for a Rotterdam born male. This exchange has given good results, both in Rotterdam and in Leipzig. A young female, born in the Zoo at Prague, was obtained in 1965. This animal is still somewhat young to breed but will be used soon. The male from Leipzig was born there. The parents were jungle born and originated from the neighbourhood of Charbin. The female from Prague is Zoo-born. Her parents were jungle-born and originated from the neighbourhood of Chabarovsk. In this way we have succeeded in building up an excellent, pure-bred and thriving breeding stock. Out of 33 cubs, born in Rotterdam from this group, we raised 28. None of these has been hand raised. In our experience hand raised carnivores often prove to be the bad mothers. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule.

The paper by Mr R. E. Baudy puts forward some methods with which, I think, we should be extremely careful. I do not know from which source the information came that only a few dozens of this Siberian race survive in the wild. According to Dr Veselovski (Berlin, 1965) the number of Siberian tigers in the wild should be estimated at between 50-90. I think that the way in which Mr Baudy came to this judgement of the Siberian tigers in the U.S.A. Zoos is rather dangerous. What should be done is to establish an international studbook of this endangered race, in which only those animals, which can be considered pure-bred, according to their origin, should be filed. A committee of specialists should be asked to do the judging. The same method has been used in the establishment of the international studbook of the European Bison and Przewalski horse. But going round Zoos and judging animals, without knowing anything of their origin will get us nowhere! In the meantime I saw that even Mr Baudy considered some Siberian tigers, bred in Rotterdam and now living in U.S.A., to be among the best he saw!

Are Siberian tigers water-loving animals? Ours have access to a large moat and can swim as much as they want. Both males do so regularly. None of the females will enter the moat any farther than a few inches.

None of our carnivore houses is ever heated, except that of the clouded leopards, which according to our experience cannot stand cold. In our system the animals live in cages of wire netting or on terraces. The night quarters are wooden boxes.

large enough for the animal to lie up snugly. The walls of these boxes are double, the space between the walls filled up with glasswool. In winter a thick bed of straw is given. The heat of the animal is sufficient to maintain the temperature of this box. In winter all our carnivores develop a heavy coat and no ailments of the respiratory organs ever occur. Pregnant females are absolutely isolated from the public and from other animals.

The food is varied greatly. Beef, sometimes some horsemeat, mutton and often pork, rabbits, young goats and Guinea pigs, these last three freshly killed, are given. Siberian tigers should be in good condition but never grow fat! No race of tiger is so extremely susceptible to overfeeding as Siberians.

Some other records of carnivores in our Zoo, born and raised during the last 8 years: 7 Ocelot, 7 Serval, 16 Siberian Lynxes, 17 Caracal Lynxes, 9 Jaguars, 7 Black leopards and 16 Spotted leopards.

## PROGENY AT PEKING ZOO

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Latest news of Peking Zoo's activities during 1965 deals with breeding successes. During the year the zoo bred a total of 1,882 specimens, representing 331 different species.

The 44 mammal species include Snub-nosed Monkey, Tibetan Lynx, Giant Panda (they have now bred three of these mammals altogether), Black Wolf, Wapiti, White-lipped Deer, Kiang, Black Rhino, and Banteng. (X)

The zoo bred 22 species of birds, among them White-eared and Blue-eared Pheasants, Manchurian Crane, and Cassowary.

(Animals)

## VALUABLE NEWCOMERS AT THE WEST BERLIN ZOO

The 25th of May, 1965, was a memorable day at the Berlin Zoo: as a generous donation of the firm MÖBEL-HÜBNER two nice female African Elephants arrived, both about two years old and standing little more than 4 feet at the shoulder. Named "BUMI" and "YALA" they at once became the favourites of the more than 66,000 Berliners who visited their Zoo during Whitsuntide. The Zoo's Elephant herd is consisting now of 1,4 African and 0,3 Indian Elephants. After the death of the more than 50 years old Ceylonese cow "JENNY" in November 1965 MÖBEL-HÜBNER at once had promised replacement to the Zoo.

In the same transport furthermore a young pair of South-African Ostriches and two Secretary Birds arrived for the Berlin Zoo.

Not quite as conspicuous but not less interesting was another gift:

for the second time the Tiergrotten Bremerhaven presented a beautifully coloured adult male King Eider to the Berlin Zoo. This species breeding on the arctic coasts of the Sowjet Union and North America and on Spitzbergen and Greenland is only seldom kept in captivity. The first specimen is now living since more than a year at the Berlin Zoo and we hope that the newcomer which is still in display plumage will settle down as well.

(Dr. Heinz-Georg Klös)