

# ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM

DEDICATED TO PROFESSIONAL ANIMAL CARE.

Volume II, Number 1

January 1975

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NEW INDIAN RHINO AT L.A.      *by Mike Dee, Los Angeles Zoo*

The Los Angeles Zoo has just purchased a female Indian rhino from the Gladys Porter Zoo in Brownsville, Texas. Her name is "Rhonda" and she was born in Basel, Switzerland in 1968. She will be on exhibit in the Eurasian Section of the zoo with another female and a male. "Rhonda" will be temporarily housed in the African rhino barn until new quarters can be added on to the Indian rhino exhibit at the zoo. Once completed, the Indian Rhino exhibit should be able to accomodate seven or eight rhinos. We hope to be able to breed these rare and endangered animals once the refurbishing is done.

AAZK HEAD RESIGNS

Richard G. Sweeney, Executive Secretary of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, has announced his resignation effective 31 December 1974. Sweeney is a keeper at the San Diego Zoo and has held the Executive Secretary position for more than seven years.

NEW AAZK EXECUTIVE NAMED

Rick Steenberg, a keeper at Como Zoo in St. Paul, Minnesota and a member of AAZK's Board of Directors, has been designated as the new Executive Secretary. Steenberg's appointment has been confirmed by the Board of Directors.

H.R. 16458.....DEAD

H.R. 16458, the bill to establish accreditation standards and procedures for zoos, died when the 93rd Congress adjourned shortly before Christmas. The bill was introduced by Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, and subsequently was referred to a House subcommittee, where it received no action. Even though H.R. 16458 was not acted upon, new accreditation legislation is expected to be introduced during the upcoming 94th Congress.

IN THE INTEREST OF CONSERVATION      *by Rick Steenberg, St. Paul's Como Zoo*

Toby, the Galapagos tortoise who's been wandering around giving kids rides at St. Paul's Como Zoo for the past fifteen years, has finally found a new vocation. Or is it avocation? At any rate, he recently boarded a Northwest Orient jet and flew off into the sunset to land at Honolulu, Hawaii. There he'll spend his time lolling amongst palm trees and girl tortoises. Hopefully, Toby will make his own contribution to the salvation of his species.

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FROM THE AKF STAFF

Due to the important news and notices in this issue we have decided to send out one more complimentary copy. All AAZK members should receive this issue and should take note of the item concerning an AKF - AAZK agreement. We would like to thank all those who have subscribed and we look forward to a happy and successful year ahead.

ARTICLES PRINTED IN THE AKF MAY NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE AKF STAFF.

Articles for publication in AKF should be sent to: AKF Editorial Staff, Topeka Zoological Park, 635 Gage Boulevard, Topeka, Kansas 66606.

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JULY 1975

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## RARE PRIMATE BIRTH at San Antonio, Texas

The San Antonio Zoo has recorded a birth as rare as the animal itself. The zoo's pair of Golden Lion Marmosets produced what is believed to be the first third generation captive born youngster of the species.

The twins, one male and one female, were born on 31 March 1975. The male baby was killed on April 7 in what appeared to be a fight between the parents over custody of the young. The female baby is being raised by both parents. (San Antonio's News from the Zoo, May-June 1975)

## MORE FALCONS FOR COLORADO

In an effort to restore falcon stocks in Colorado, the state's wildlife division last spring placed 14 young prairie falcons in the nests of wild falcons, which successfully reared them. Two young peregrines were also successfully released. (Oryx, April 1975)

## NEW BOOK

"Breeding Endangered Species in Captivity", edited by R.D. Martin, March 1975, approx. 450 pp. Published by Academic Press, 111 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003. \$33.75.

## FROM THE AKF STAFF

Many thanks to Jerry K. Houghlan of Hill's Division, Riviana Foods (ZU/PREEM) for his help in maintaining the computer mailing list. AAZK and AKF appreciate Jerry's support and encouragement.

Copies of "Research in Zoos & Aquariums", the proceedings of the Symposium of the Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, are available at \$7.25 per copy, postage prepaid. Order from the National Academy of Sciences, 2102 Constitution Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20418.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

51st National Conference of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums (AAZPA), Calgary, Alberta, Canada - September 14-18, 1975.

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Another way the keeper helps the veterinarian as well as his charges is by watchfulness over the captive environment. Foreign objects such as nails, wire, polaroid film and glass can lead to the demise of the healthiest of animals. Enclosures should always be inspected as often as possible. Strange plants should be investigated. Some very pretty plants, such as the ginko tree, are highly poisonous.

Keepers should also be aware of their potential role as a spreader of disease, especially hoof stock and primate keepers. Boots should be cleaned as a keeper goes from lot to lot to prevent carrying parasites from herd to herd. Also, primates are very susceptible to many human diseases. The dedicated primate keeper who comes to work in spite of his cold is doing his charges a great disservice.

Thus it is apparent that it is the keeper who is mainly responsible for the health and welfare of his or her charges. The veterinarian merely serves as an advisor and hopefully the ultimate miracle worker if something goes wrong. Cooperation between the keeper and veterinarian is essential for a good health-care delivery system.

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#### KEEPERS AS EDUCATORS? - CONSERVATIONISTS?

*Gay Kuester, Brookfield, Zoo, Chicago, IL*

Recently I returned from a photographic safari to Kenya, East Africa with a new respect for other cultures, the good old U.S.A. and ..... zoos and keepers. It hit home daily that zoos and wildlife parks are THE only hope for survival of the remaining wild animals. Progress, or so-called civilization, is encroaching so rapidly that the extent of undisturbed habitat is decreasing daily. I wish the people who cry out against zoos, and who insist that animals be left in their wild state could see the bewildered look of topi, warthog and buffalo as they approach cautiously and sniff and test the new airstrip on the Mara which has destroyed some 20 acres of their grazing land. Yessir, now you can fly right in without a bit of discomfort to see the "wild" animals who surround the airstrip and literally watch you land.

I wish I could agree with Grzimek who said "Serengeti Shall Not Die", but the situation is a matter of economics. When a poacher is paid more for killing one elephant than he would normally earn in a year, it makes it well worth his while to risk getting caught. Besides, the number of game scouts assigned to a game reserve is never enough. While at Samburu we found the animals spooky, and difficult to approach. Later that day we heard that poachers had been caught near the lodge with 300 elephant tusks, 30 giraffe tails, rhino horns and many other "choice" items. 10,000 zebra perished within the last 5 years presumably from the drought; however, authorities feel at least 5,000 of these were killed by poachers. I was also appalled to find that you can still obtain a permit to hunt leopard. Tsavo and Amboseli are thick with elephants, many of whom are starving due to habitat destruction; trees are being felled, burned and made into charcoal -- a lucrative export.

If, as a keeper, you have had endangered animals on your run reproduce, your responsibility for that animal's well being has done more to help his survival than has his native country.

Your contact with the public reaches as many people as prime time TV. Your job is as much public relations, salesman, conservationist and educator as it is keeper. If you can reach some of the 112 million people who visit zoos annually, it is a start.

Land that is unfit for animals will eventually be unfit for human habitation as well. If, by your attitude and concern, you can convey the necessity of your zoo's existence and stress the preservation of animals and their habitat you will have well earned your title of keeper and can be very proud to be one.

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## FORMER AAZK EXECUTIVE SECRETARY BECOMES ZOO DIRECTOR

Richard G. Sweeney, founder and former Executive Secretary of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, has been named Director of the Beardsley Zoological Gardens in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

## BRONX ZOO      New York Zoological Park

Two Mongolian wild horses (Equus przewalski), also called Przewalski's Horse, have been born at the Bronx Zoo. The foals, a male born on 2 June to Roxy, and a female born 2 July to Rockann, are the first Mongolian wild horses to be bred at the Bronx Zoo in 46 years. The herd male, Bertland, is the father of both foals. The present herd was established in 1968 with the arrival of the male, Bertland and the two females, Roxy and Rockann. A second male, Charlie Khan and two additional females, Peggy Genghis and Sultana, were added to the group last October. The foals remain nameless.

There are only about 230 specimens living in the world's zoos, and the species is probably extinct in the wild.

## DETROIT ZOO      Randy McGill, Detroit Zoological Park

On 7 June, the Detroit Zoo had an unexpected birth...a Snow Leopard (Felis uncia) was born. There was no indication the male and female had even discovered each other since arriving in late 1969. They were imported from Russia.

The kitten was removed immediately when its mother failed to show any interest in it. Dr. James Savoy, Zoo Director, and Ester Steinbruegge, veterinary assistant, are raising the baby. The kitten is gaining an average of one ounce per day. This is the first birth of its kind at the Detroit Zoo.

(Nutrition column cont'd)

Q. You often use the term "dry matter" in answering questions. Why is it so important?

A. The term dry matter is important because it is assumed water is always available and costs nothing. To cite an example we are all familiar with, consider a can of dog food from the grocery store. As a rule, it is 75% water and 25% nutrients. It is the 25% that you are after when you buy the can of food, and it is also what the dog needs. When comparing the canned food to a dry dog food, you must remember that the dry food contains over three times the nutrients for the same weight. Said another way, the animal that is fed one can of food gets .25 lb. of nutrients while the animal fed an equal weight of dry food receives

.9 lb. of nutrients. If one were to remove all the water from a tiger's 10 lbs. ration of meat, he would receive about 2 lbs. of nutrients, the exact amount he receives anyway with the water not removed. So the reason we use the term dry matter is to facilitate comparing one situation to another. The polar bear being fed 20 lbs. of fish gets the same dry matter as another bear getting 5 lbs of a commercial biscuit. Only when you have reduced rations to a dry matter basis can a meaningful comparison be made concerning the nutrient quality of a diet.

(send questions for Dr. Patton to AKF Editors, 635 Gage Blvd., Topeka, KS 66606)

## C O N S E R V A T I O N

### ALLIGATOR TO BE REMOVED FROM ENDANGERED LIST IN SOME AREAS

America's largest reptile has made a comeback and is no longer thought to be threatened with extinction throughout its range.

The American alligator (Alligator mississippiensis) is doing so well, in fact, that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing three separate actions in the Federal Register (July 8, 1975) that will affect different populations of the reptile throughout the Southeast. (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

### THE 1975 WHOOPING CRANE PAGEANT

The final results are yet to be tallied, but the high points of this spring's bio-drama include:

- (1) Frantic and finally successful attempts to scatter nine migrating whoopers off a Nebraska marsh boiling with infectious avian cholera.
  - (2) The hot-house hatching and death 15 days later of a fragile whooper chick named "Down".
  - (3) The tryout of a bold new foster parent concept involving snatching whooper eggs from nests in Canada and slipping them under sandhill cranes in Idaho; nine of the 14 eggs hatched.
  - (4) The natural hatching of 11 of 15 whooper eggs in the wilds of northwest Canada.
- (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

### LAST CHANCE FOR RARE RHINO

The Sumatran rhinoceros has a chance of survival only in northern Sumatra's Gunung Leuser reserve according to a WWF-supported survey. Between 30 and 50 rhinos survive in the reserve. Although traces of the rhino were found in other areas, mounting pressures for development make it unlikely that these can survive.  
(World Wildlife Fund)

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DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER AKF IS 20 AUGUST 1975  
THE VIEWS OF THE AUTHORS MAY NOT REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE AKF EDITORIAL STAFF

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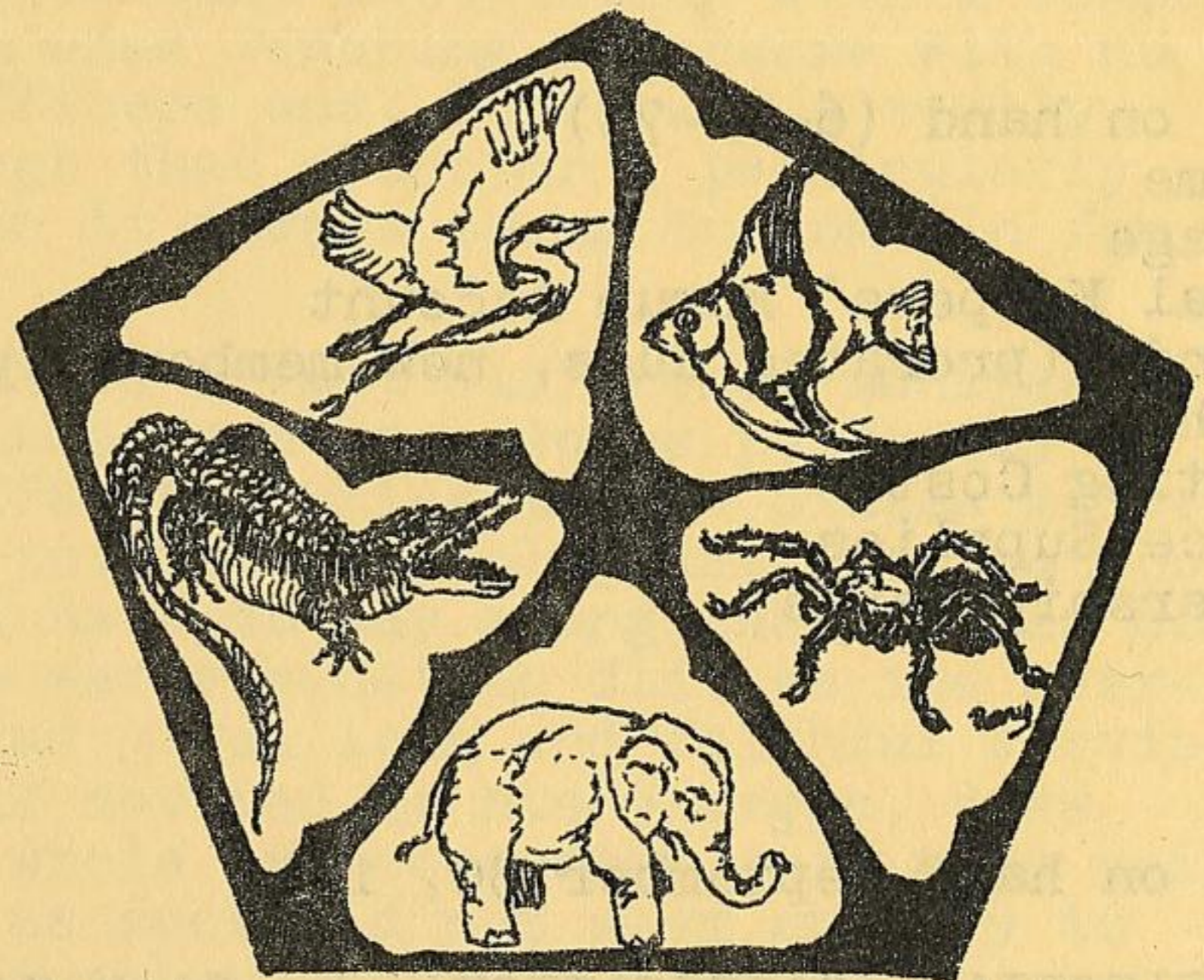
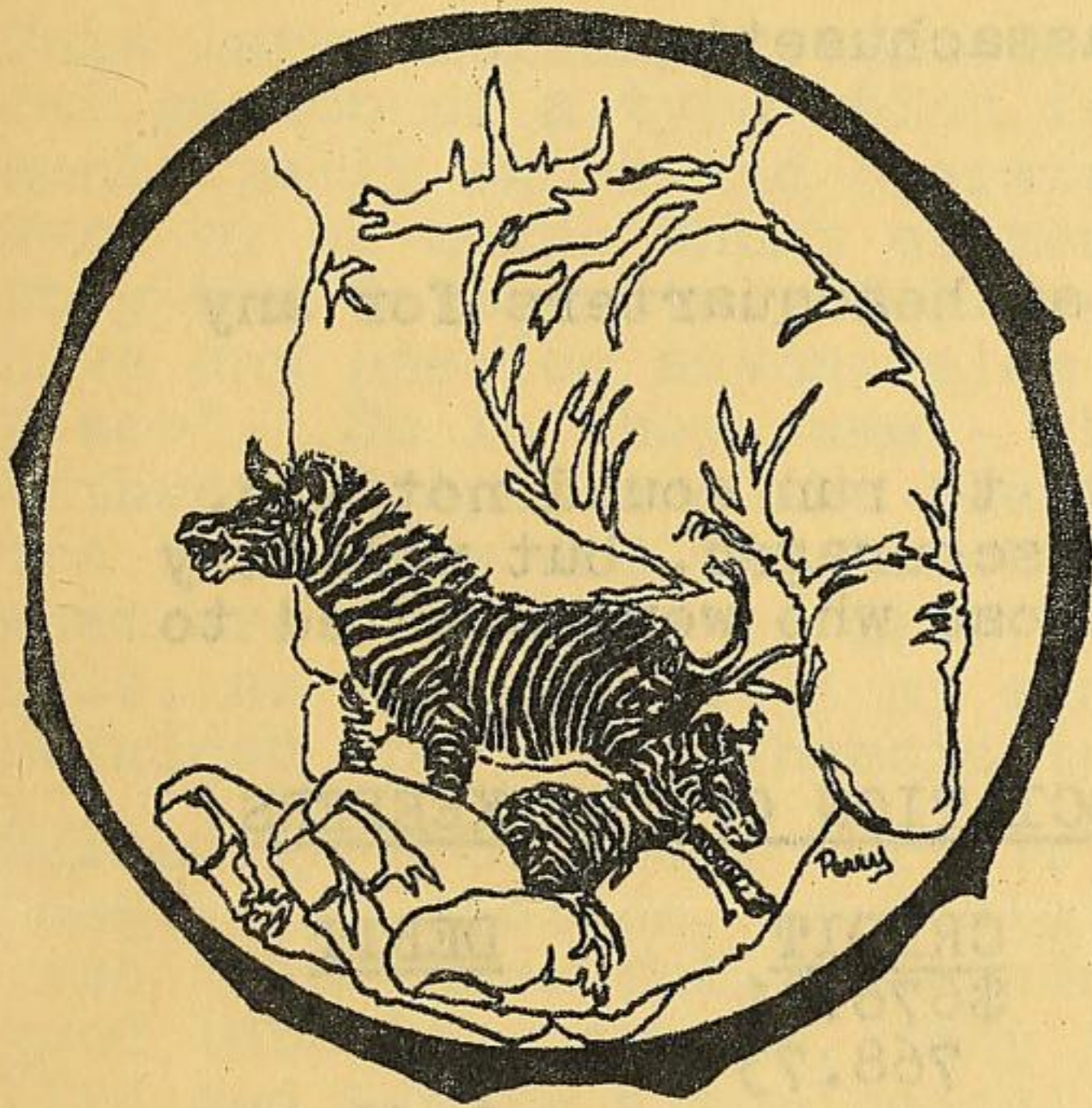
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## *First Anniversary Issue*

november 1974 - november 1975



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Most zoological gardens, with the exceptions of London, Bristol and Edinburgh have high incidences of staff wastage and turnover, for reasons which are not immediately clear. One possible explanation could be the rather unfortunate fact that wild animal husbandry is rather inclined to attract "characters", weirdies, oddbods - call them what you will - and the lack of real staff training schemes does not help matters either. London offers a good one, but the whole emphasis is on the husbandry side and nothing else, which is rather on a par with training hospital staff in the finer points of caring for the needs and day to day comfort of the patients without touching upon matters medical.

This is a small country very well endowed with zoological gardens, and anyone coming here with the intention of visiting as many of them as possible could spend a most interesting and enjoyable fortnight or so. Why not try Whipsnade with its five hundred acres and which breeds Cheetas as though they were domestic Rabbits, although you might find too heavy an emphasis on ungulates there, or the magnificent bird garden at Grendon Underwood less than an hour's drive away, where all the Cranes, with the exception of the Whooping, are represented? (Again, its amazing what you can do when you are a millionaire!) You could try the Cotswold Wildlife Park, where the mammal collection ranges from White Rhinos to Common Pandas, and although the guide book to the Cricket St. Thomas Wildlife Park contains an almost unbelievable number of errors the well kept collection there is well worth visiting. If any readers who are contemplating a visit here need any help they have only to contact me in advance (the Editor has my address) and I shall be delighted to assist them in any way possible.

#### THE SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE ON BREEDING ENDANGERED SPECIES IN CAPTIVITY

The Zoological Society of London and the Fauna Preservation Society are sponsoring this second conference in the series to be held at the London Zoo, July 6-8, 1976. The proceedings will be published in a special section of Volume 17 of the International Zoo Yearbook. The conference aims to establish clear scientific patterns of the basic principles involved in encouraging endangered species to breed in zoos and wildlife parks. More information may be obtained from the Conference Secretary, Dr. Michael Brambell, The Zoological Society of London, Regents Park, London, NW1 4RY, England.

#### ZOOMOBILE by Karl Scheibengraber, Milwaukee County Zoo

Three "Zoomobile" tour guides at the Milwaukee County Zoo have been accepted as associate members by the local chapter of AAZK. The guides, whose names are Karl Scheibengraber, Neil Browning and Mary Tiernan, are using their memberships to foster the transfer of information to the zoo-going public. Participation in the excellent educational programs sponsored by the Milwaukee Chapter (field trips to other zoos, lectures by animal experts, etc.) has already lent an extra air of expertise and authority to their thirty minute zoo presentations. The direct AAZK "link" between zoo keepers and zoo guides is yielding additional benefits in terms of feedback between various zoo departments and all those concerned with disseminating information to the public. By recruiting from the Zoomobile staff, the Milwaukee Chapter hopes to generate a nation-wide trend of awareness and association between individuals who deliver lectures and running commentaries at large metropolitan zoos.