

ANIMAL KEEPERS' FORUM



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**The Journal of the American
Association of Zoo Keepers, Inc.
FEBRUARY 1998**

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RHINO TRACKS

by

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&

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At the 1997 National AAZK

Conference in Houston, TX, a rhino workshop was held. The participants



decided that improving communication between rhino keepers would be very beneficial for all involved with these unique animals. It was decided that a regular column would be developed specifically for rhinos and their keepers. The species that will be the main focus are the three predominant species kept in captivity: white, black and Indian rhinoceros. In order to manage the information collected, three volunteers were recruited to be Information Coordinators for each species.

Workshop participants were encouraged to suggest husbandry questions that would be best addressed by keepers. Addressing these questions will be the starting point for this column. Each column will discuss a specific topic and propose questions for the next topic. Information from responding keepers will be sent to the Information Coordinator for their species, who will then communicate with us.

The following is a list of topics that were proposed by the delegates at the workshop:

Gestation information
Pregnancy information
Labor and delivery information
Neonate information
Calf health and development
Illnesses
Social groupings and management

Introductions
Shipment
Behavioral conditioning
Enrichment
Diet and browse
Breeding behavior
Social & solitary behavior

The following is a list of the **Information Coordinators** and their addresses:

Black Rhino:

Kristin LaHue
Riverbanks Zoo
500 Wildlife Pkwy
Columbia, SC 29210

White Rhino:

Patty Shoemaker
Houston Zoo
1513 N. MacGregor
Houston, TX 77030

Indian Rhino:

Natalie Mashburn
Fort Worth Zoo
1989 Colonial Pkwy
Ft. Worth, TX 76110

As a result of a series of recent fatal illnesses, an emergency conference on Hemorrhagic Diathesis Syndrome in black rhinos was held in Fort Worth, TX, January 10-11, 1998. In keeping with this collaborative effort to understand and better cope with illnesses and health problems typical of rhinos, the first topic that we would like to address in this column is RHINO ILLNESSES.

Please respond to the following questions and please add any further information about experiences you have had with illnesses in your rhinos. Be sure to include the age and sex of the animals that you discuss. Please respond separately for different species. If you have been fortunate enough to have had little or no health problems PLEASE RESPOND, this information is also very valuable. We understand the time constraints of zookeepers, so we plan to give you all plenty of time to dig out your records, bother your vets, and answer all these questions. Please get your information to the Species Information Coordinators by **31 March 1998**. But feel free to respond ASAP so that we can begin organizing the information.

Rhino Illnesses/ Health Problems

1. Have rhinos at your institution encountered any of the following illnesses?:

Hemolytic Anemia____ Salmonella____
Hemorrhagic Diathesis Syndrome____ Leptospirosis____
Tuberculosis____
Gastrointestinal Torsion & Impaction____ Fungal Pneumonia____
Encephalomyocarditis infection____ Skin Conditions____
Oral &/or Skin Ulcers____ Creosote Toxicosis____
Tissue Accumulation of Iron____

2. Please provide the following information for each of the above illnesses that pertain to your institution, and any other condition/illness that has occurred within your collection.

- Was the onset of symptoms sudden or progressive?
- What was the progression of symptoms?
- What, if any specific cause (or causes) of the condition were identified?
- What measures were taken to treat the condition? Were they effective?
- What measures were taken to prevent the spread of the disease? Were they effective?
- Were you able to use behavioral conditioning for diagnosis, treatment, or management?
- Was there a full recovery, partial recovery, or was the illness fatal?
- Is the condition chronic, re-occurring, and/or on-going?

3. What, if any, preventative measures are taken to avoid illnesses (e.g. vaccinations, nutritional supplements, skin care, etc.)?

4. What, if any, routine screening measures are taken to evaluate health status (e.g. blood samples, rectal temperatures, fecal cultures, etc.)?