

Rare Rhino birth at Perth Zoo.

Photo: Courtesy of Perth Zoo

Western Australia's first male rhinoceros calf was born at Perth Zoo on May 28.

Ten-year-old mother 'Sabie' gave birth to the southern white rhinoceros calf after a trouble-free, 16-month-long pregnancy. The yet-to-be-named calf stood for the first time within an hour of being born and is now spending most of his time suckling and sleeping but is quickly gaining weight and strength.

Staying close to his two-tonne mother as he made his first public appearance in the Zoo's African Savannah, he is only the second rhinoceros born in Western Australia – his sister 'Tamu' being conceived at Perth Zoo in December 2002.

Registering a healthy 76kg at his first weigh-in, Perth Zoo keeper Kerry Crosbie said she was extremely pleased with both mother and calf's progress.

Keepers have already initiated visual introductions between the calf and other members of the Zoo's Southern White Rhinoceros herd.

"Tamu appears keen to get to know the calf better and the older unrelated female, Katala, is also very interested," Ms Crosbie said.

"However, it has been the father, 'Memphis', who has been the most excited with the arrival of his latest offspring, calling out in excitement to the calf and sleeping at the gate like a proud father," she said.

'Memphis' was able to see the birth and interact with the calf through a safety barrier immediately after the birth.

Perth Zoo is part of an Australasian breeding program designed to secure a genetically diverse population of the Southern White Rhinoceros.

The Southern White Rhinoceros is officially listed as conservation dependent and without active conservation programs the species could become endangered in five years or less.



Perth Zoo's new Southern White Rhinoceros calf



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