

# TOUCAN TALK

A TRIP TO THE ZOO THAT COMES TO YOU!

**CHECK OUR  
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

PAGES 4-5

**RAMBLING RHINOS**

PAGE 7

**HARPY EAGLE  
PROJECT: PANAMA  
A SUCCESS STORY**

PAGE 2



# RAMBLING RHINOS

By Steve Conners

Miami Metrozoo's General Curator

**M**iami Metrozoo participates in the Species Survival Plan (SSP) for both black and Indian rhinos. As a participant in these programs, we agree to follow the recommendations of the SSP propagation group for the betterment of the entire captive population — even if that means sending some very popular animals to other Zoos. Recently, it was recommended that we send Mohan, our older male Indian rhino, to the National Zoo in Washington D. C. and Keesha, our young female black rhino, to the Jacksonville Zoo.

Mohan has been in Miami since 1970! He was captured in Nepal at just under a year old and shortly thereafter arrived at the Crandon Park Zoo. Over the years, his personality has made him popular with both employees and visitors. Most captive rhinos can become quite tame and friendly. Breeding attempts revealed the flip side to his personality. Male and female rhinos commonly spar with each other prior to mating, but usually the result is just a few minor scrapes and bruises and hopefully a pregnancy. Mohan's interactions with our female, Shanti, were dangerously violent, and therefore he has never bred. Yet, as a wild-born animal, his genes are extremely valuable to

the captive population. For this reason, it was decided to place him with a different female in hopes that it would make a difference in his behavior. Mohan has settled into his new home in our nation's capital and has been getting acquainted with his new mate.



Indian rhino

Our success with breeding black rhinos has been much better. We have had eight births over the years and are expecting another next year (black rhino pregnancies can last up to 18 months). Keesha, born in May 1996, is our most recent birth. In order to make her move to Jacksonville relatively stress-free, we are training her to feel comfortable inside her shipping crate. It is secured to her holding cage in such a way as to allow her to go inside to eat and become acclimated to the close quarters. When we feel the time is right, the door will be secured behind her and she will be on her way.

As you know, the status of wild rhino populations grows more precarious every day. This unfortunate fact makes the successful breeding of our captive animals more significant for the rhinoceros' continued survival. It is apparent that the persistent cooperation of Zoos to further the responsible management of rhinos will be an important ingredient in their future existence.



Black rhino