

# SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS IN CONSERVATION

## Columbus Zoo Returns Snakes To Wild

On 21 September, The Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo released 17 eastern plain garter snakes into the wild at Killdeer Plains in Wyandot County as part of a captive breeding program.

Students from Westerville North High School worked in tandem with the three conservation groups to gather and analyze scientific data on the species for use in the captive breeding program. The goal of the program is to collect information on the species, enhance and manage the snake's native habitat, and breed the species in captivity for release into the wild. "We want to give the species a head start by allowing them to give birth in a safe environment," says Reptiles Head Keeper Dan Badgley.

Only one-third of the 51 snakes born this year were released into the wild. The other two-thirds will remain in the program for future release. An encoded wire, implanted into the snakes body, will allow researchers to track the recovery effort.

Eastern plains garter snakes were discovered in Ohio in the early 1950's. Due to human settlement, and the loss of 1,500 square miles of tall grass prairie habitat, the snake has remained on Ohio's endangered species list since 1974.

## Significant Births At Zoo Atlanta

Three significant births occurred at Zoo Atlanta's reptile department one pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*), two Mexican box turtles (*Terrapene carolina mexicana*), and two black tree monitors (*Varanus beccarii*). Each of these represented the first successful reproduction for their species at the zoo.



PHOTOS BY MIKE FOSTI/ZOOATLANTA



## Black Rhino Born At Cleveland Metroparks

A black rhino (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) was born at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo for the first time on Thursday, 31 August. The female calf is the product of 7-year-old Inge, an African black rhino from the Addo Elephant National Park in South Africa, and the zoo's bachelor rhino, 8-year-old Spike.

Captive breeding efforts were managed by analyzing blood samples from Inge to determine estrus levels. Records were also kept on both rhinos behavior so physiological data, such as hormone and progesterone levels, could be correlated with behavioral cues.

Inge and Spike were introduced in the spring of 1999, resulting in two separate breeding episodes that led to the recent birth.

Inge and her baby can be viewed on "Rhino Cam" on the zoo's Web site at [www.clemetzoo.com](http://www.clemetzoo.com).



CASEY BATULE/CLEVELAND METROPARKS

## Rare Hatchings At Gladys Porter Zoo

Twenty-five endangered Philippine crocodiles hatched at the Gladys Porter Zoo between 9 and 15 September. This group represents the largest clutch to be hatched at the zoo since reproductive trials commenced in 1989. To date, the parents of these hatchlings are the only reproductive pair outside the Philippines.

As part of an ongoing cooperative project, a Memorandum of Agreement will soon take effect between the Philippine Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Gladys Porter Zoo. Once finalized, it will allow the distribution of the new hatchlings to other North American facilities interested in participating in the conservation effort.

Eleven Central American bushmasters (*Lachesis stenophrys*) hatched between 7 and 10 September. Gladys Porter previously produced one healthy offspring from this same species in 1994.

## A Phoenix Zoo First

On 27 August, the birth of a Chilean flamingo chick made history at the Phoenix Zoo. Four more eggs are expected to hatch within the next few weeks if they prove viable.

Curator Anita Cramm and her staff attempted to provide the flamingos with nesting material to initiate breeding. The staff hauled dirt, clay, and leaves into the flamingo exhibit, which contains 32 birds. Additionally, even ratios of male and female birds, upgraded diets, and landscaping improvements may have also contributed to the success.

## Siberian Tiger Cubs At Calgary Zoo

Four Siberian tigers were born at the Calgary Zoo in April. The three females, Tsamara, Marilei, Katja, and male Fedoreh are the offspring of Kita and Khasam (a wild-caught rescue tiger from Russia). The zoo, in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund, recently staged



LARRY MILLER/CALGARY ZOO