

## FIRST ATTEMPT MADE AT MOUNTAIN GORILLA REINTRODUCTION

A coordinated effort by the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International (DFGFI), Morris Animal Foundation's Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project (MGVP), the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) and the Rwandan National Park Service (ORTPN) to reintroduce a young female rescued mountain gorilla to the wild on 11 December 2002, was not successful, but further attempts will be made in 2003, report scientists from DFGFI.

The mountain gorilla female, who is approximately 2.5 years old, was confiscated by Rwandan authorities from three local men in October 2002. Since then, the "orphaned" gorilla has been in the care of experts from several conservation organizations. Her rescue follows a number of poaching incidents this year, resulting in the deaths of at least six mountain gorillas. In the reintroduction attempt, the orphaned gorilla was introduced to one of the gorilla groups habituated for visits by tourists in Rwanda's Parc National des Volcans. Her original family group is most likely one of the unhabituated groups of mountain gorillas, and unfortunately but not unexpectedly, she was rejected by the new group, suffering injuries from bites inflicted by one of the group's gorillas. Mountain gorilla groups, led by adult male silverbacks, are not accustomed to accepting "outside" individuals.

Though reintroduction of a young ape to a different social group will be challenging and complicated, the preservation of even one female could have a significant impact on this dwindling species. The Morris Animal Foundation staff is currently supplying state-of-the-art care to the female to aid her recovery. The issue of the gorilla's human contact during temporary captivity is not believed to be a reason for the failure of this reintroduction.

## BIRTHS AT LAKE SUPERIOR ZOO

Lake Superior Zoo welcomed its first Angolan colobus infant on 6 December. This is the first offspring for new father Ross

of the Gladys Porter Zoo, and mother Kelly from the San Diego Zoo. The birth was SSP recommended; both parents have adjusted well and are caring for the infant. All species of colobus monkeys are endangered in their central African homeland due to habitat destruction, human encroachment and hunting for bushmeat.

## RED WOLF FOSTERING DEEMED SUCCESSFUL

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recently announced initial success in an attempt to foster captive-born red wolf pups into the wild. 1.1 captive-born pups, each donated in May by the North Carolina Zoological Park, were placed into a wild wolf den and were successfully adopted by an adult female who was already raising 2.0 wild-born pups. Throughout the summer, biologists monitored the pack from a distance using radio telemetry. Recently, all four pups of this litter were captured and found to be in excellent health. Each of the four pups were large enough to be fitted with radio telemetry collars and were also given vaccinations against parvo-virus, distemper and rabies. The four were released back to their family group.

This success marks new potential for fostering as an effective tool in red wolf recovery. Though red wolves have previously been released back into the wild successfully, they have thus far been young adults, often coming from island propagation sites in South Carolina and Florida. This is the first time that very young pups have been captive-bred and successfully placed in the wild. Fostering ultimately enhances the genetic diversity of the wild red wolf population, and release at a young age allows for a better chance of survival due to the fostered wolves being raised by a wild mother.

## SAN DIEGO ANNOUNCES RHINO AND PIG BIRTHS

The San Diego Wild Animal Park announced the 23 December 2002 birth of an Indian rhinoceros calf, the 39th of this species to be born at the Park. There are approximately 2,000 Indian rhinoceros left in the wild, while the Park is home to 15 of the 55 captive specimens in the United States. Mother and calf are in an isolated maternity boma, separate from the other rhinos to give mother and calf the opportunity to bond. Guests can view the pair from the Park's Wgasa Bush Line Railway as visitors pass the *Asian Plains* exhibit.

The San Diego Zoo was also proud to announce the birth of two Visayan warty pigs in mid-December. Visayan warty pigs, one of the world's most endangered large mammals, are endemic to the Philippines, and are extinct on four of the six islands on which they are believed to have originally inhabited. The species principle threat is the expanding human population and the associated effects of deforestation and hunting. Due to the Visayan warty pig's rapid decline, San Diego Zoo became the first zoological society to establish a captive breeding group outside the Philippines in order to ensure the species' survival. The Zoo is also assisting in the collection of biological data for this still relatively unstudied species. The Zoo's two new baby pigs, originally held in separate pens, joined the Zoo's larger social group soon after birth. 16 Visayan warty pigs have been born at the Zoo since the inception of the breeding plan in early 2002.



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Conservation continued, p. 42