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BUFFALO ZOO INDIAN RHINO GIVES BIRTH TO A HEALTHY FEMALE CALF

After a 16-month gestation period, the Buffalo Zoo is celebrating its first-ever Indian rhino birth. Tashi (Ta-She) gave birth on 15 September to a female calf. This marks the first birth for the seven-year old rhino. Hank, a 13-year old bull, is the calf's sire. In the last ten years, less than ten Indian rhino births have been recorded in North America.

The newborn rhino, unnamed, weighed 115 pounds. Due to the solitary nature of the species, young Indian rhinoceroses spend the first couple years with their mother and are then weaned. The male rhinoceros has nothing to do with raising the calf. Tashi and baby are currently off-exhibit until the newborn fully develops the pads on its feet.

Statistically, Indian rhinos have a 60 percent successful birth rate. The Greater Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is found in India and Nepal. Unlike other rhinoceroses, it has a single horn, usually about 21 inches long. Although one of the most endangered animals in both the wild and zoos, the Indian rhino is a conservation success story; thanks to strict protection measures, its population has increased from 600 in 1975 to about 2,400 today. The Indian rhino is part of the AZA's Species Survival Program, in which the Buffalo Zoo participates.

NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE CELEBRATES FIRST AUSTRALIAN FRESHWATER CROCODILE HATCHLING

For the past year, the National Aquarium in Baltimore has been gathering animals for its upcoming Australian exhibit *Animal Planet Australia: Wild Extremes*, set to open in 2005. Their newest, however, was born right at the Aquarium: a Johnston's freshwater crocodile.

After a 91-day incubation period, the baby croc hatched on 25 September. It measured eight inches long, and its sex had not been determined. Eventually the croc will reach about six feet in length.

The Aquarium's Australian crocodiles make up the only viably compatible group in the U.S. This breeding showed that the males and females are reproductively sound and indicates that the population can be successfully managed over time. It also taught staff more about crocodile-egg incubation and juvenile rearing.

At the time of hatching, there were 20 Australian freshwater crocodiles in the U.S. and baby makes 21. The Aquarium owns fourteen of the crocodiles. This crocodile will remain at the Aquarium's off-site animal

holding facility and spend its early life as an ambassador for the Australian exhibit *Animal Planet Australia: Wild Extremes* and crocodile conservation awareness. The animal will likely join the adult crocs in the Australia exhibit in about eight years, when it reaches maturity.

CAPTIVE CHACO TORTOISE HATCHES AT MEMPHIS ZOO

The Memphis Zoo announced its first successful Chaco tortoise hatching since it began maintaining the species in 1985. Zoo officials believe this represents the first reproduction of this tortoise in a U.S. zoo.

On 4 September, one of two eggs laid by the female hatched after an incubation of 344 days. The other egg continues to incubate and appears viable to date. The hatchling first fed on dried dandelion and mulberry leaves, and hibiscus blossoms. Growth has been steady with good shell development.

Successful reproduction of the Chaco tortoise at the Memphis Zoo is attributed to several changes in husbandry practices. Perhaps most importantly, the animals now spend almost six months in an off-exhibit outdoor enclosure. Changes in diet and possibly exposure to low nighttime temperatures likely attributed to the recent hatching. Three weeks after the emergence of the first Chaco tortoise, the female laid a second clutch consisting of three eggs. This gives Zoo officials hope that a productive chapter in this species' history as a Zoo captive has begun.

Four U.S. zoos are currently holding Chaco tortoises, but only two zoos main-



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