

CINCINNATI ZOO MAKES HISTORY WITH SECOND RHINO CALF

On 30 July, Sumatran rhino Emi delivered a healthy female calf in her indoor stall at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, designating her the first of her species in history to produce two calves in captivity. Dr. Terri Roth, Vice President of Animal Sciences at the Zoo, has noted that the birth is proof that the Zoo has discovered the science of successful breeding of Sumatran rhinos in captivity, and that the first birth was not a one time wonder.

Mother and baby are in good health, and Zoo guests were able to get their first glimpse of the pair the very next day, via the monitors in the public exhibit at the Zoo's Center for Conservation & Research

of Endangered Wildlife (CREW), and through "Rhino Cam," a Web-controllable video camera accessible on www.cincinnati-zoo.org.

In September of 2001, Emi gave birth to a healthy 72.6 pound calf named Andalas. This was the first time in 112 years that a Sumatran rhinoceros successfully reproduced in captivity. Emi had a history of early pregnancy loss before carrying her first full-term calf. During that pregnancy, Emi was prescribed a daily dose of oral progesterone. None was administered throughout this pregnancy. This exciting second birth comes at a critical time in the conservation of Sumatran rhinos. Today, less than 300 survive in the wild and only eight are located in captivity. Emi and the Cincinnati Zoo's male, Ipuh, are two of only four Sumatran rhinos in the United States and are on loan from the Indonesian government. They are the only successfully captive breeding pair in the world. Andalas currently resides at the Los Angeles Zoo and a fourth rhino, an older female, resides at the Bronx Zoo.

Sumatran rhinos are a flagship species for the Cincinnati Zoo's signature conservation programs. Considered one of the most endangered mammals on earth, the Sumatran rhino has suffered a 50% population loss over the last 15 years over due to poaching and habitat destruction.

WESTERN POND TURTLES RELEASED IN WASHINGTON

The Oregon Zoo and Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo released more than 125 endangered western pond turtles in the

Columbia River Gorge east of Vancouver, Washington on 28 July. The re-introduction of the western pond turtles is part of a collaborative effort among the Oregon Zoo, the Woodland Park Zoo, the Washington

Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bonneville Power Administration. As part of the Western Pond Turtle Recovery Project, conservation scientists at these organizations "head-start" newly hatched turtles gathered from wild sites, nurturing them at both zoos for about 10 months. Once they reach a suitable size of about 70 grams, they are returned to their homes and monitored for safety.

The Oregon Zoo released turtles gathered in early September of last year. This year, there are more turtles to release than ever before, due mainly to the high rate of success in the field. These young turtles have grown large enough to avoid being eaten by non-native bullfrogs and largemouth bass, threats that have decimated the species.

Just one decade ago, western pond turtles were on the verge of completely dying out in Washington, with only 150 turtles left in the wild. Today, researchers estimate between 950 and 1,000 turtles in

Washington. Habitat degradation and disease were, and still are, problems, but the biggest threat to fragile baby turtles is the bullfrog. Found east of the Rockies, this non-indigenous frog has thrived throughout the west, driving pond turtles and a host of other small, vulnerable aquatic species to the brink of extinction.

To help restore these rare turtles to their natural habitat, recovery workers take to the field each year, where they count, trap and fit transmitters on adult female western pond turtles. The female turtles are monitored every two hours during the nesting season in order to determine where they nest. The nests, which the female digs in the ground and then covers after depositing her eggs, are protected with wire "exclosure" cages that help prevent predators from eating the eggs. The eggs are then allowed to incubate naturally, and the hatchlings are collected in the fall.

Unlike wild turtles, zoo turtles are fed throughout the winter, so by their summer release, the 10-month-olds are approximately as big as three-year-old turtles. Some of the juvenile turtles are equipped with radio transmitters before release so biologists can learn more about post-release dispersal, habitat use during active and hibernation periods, and, ultimately, their survival rate. Scientists tracking the released turtles estimate that 95 percent of the turtles released back to the Columbia River Gorge have survived.

HISTORIC OTTER BIRTH AND AVIAN BREEDING SUCCESS AT PHILADELPHIA ZOO

On 30 March, a giant river otter at the Philadelphia Zoo gave birth to two pups. One smaller pup survived five days while the other, a male, continues to thrive. The sire was born in Hagenbeck's Tierpark Zoo in 1992, and arrived in Philadelphia in 1996, along with his brother. In 2002, the Philadelphia Zoo exchanged one of the brothers for a female born at the Brasilia Zoo in 2000. The dam and pup are on loan from the Brazilian government. Both dam and sire have shown competent parental behavior and the pup is now eating and swimming on its own. This success follows a birth in January 2004, which resulted in one stillborn pup and another



COURTESY OF OREGON ZOO