

### RARE EASTERN BLACK RHINO BORN AT GREAT PLAINS ZOO

A female Eastern black rhinoceros was born 6 July at the Great Plains Zoo. The calf was 103 pounds at birth. Both the mother and calf are doing well, with the calf walking and nursing on its own.

Eastern black rhinos are listed on the endangered species list by CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora). There are less than 3,500 black rhinos remaining in the wild, including both the Eastern and Southern populations.



© Great Plains Zoo

During the last century, the black rhino has suffered the most dramatic decline in total numbers of the

rhino species. Between 1970 and 1992, its population has decreased by 96 percent.

At present, there are only 69 Eastern black rhinos in the SSP program, with 39 males and 30 females. The baby will remain at the Great Plains Zoo for approximately two years before being assigned to another AZA accredited institution for breeding.

The Great Plains Zoo is now home to three Eastern black rhinos. The male, Jubba, is nine years old and the adult female, Imapara, is eight years old. This is the first offspring for both rhinos. Black rhinos have a gestation period of 15 months, and generally only have one calf per pregnancy. A rhino calf nurses for 18 to 24 months and its horn erupts after one year. When fully grown, the rhino is the third largest land animal – weighing up to 1.5 tons.

### WILDLIFE WORLD ZOO'S BABY LEOPARD THRIVING AFTER OPEN-HEART SURGERY

Since the day he was born, the odds have not been favorable for Odin, a 16-week old African leopard suffering from a heart defect that limited blood flow to his lungs. Left untreated, the condition known as pulmonic stenosis, would most likely have been fatal by the time he reached adulthood. Unfortunately, treatment options particularly in felines are almost non-existent.

Wildlife World Zoo veterinarian Dr. Sharmie Johnson sought the advice of colleagues and specialists, who suggested a procedure that while successful in dogs, had

rarely been attempted in domestic felines, much less wild leopards. The procedure, known as a valvuloplasty, involved patching a graft over the affected portion of Odin's heart. Once in place, the graft enabled a two to three fold increase in the amount of blood pumped into his lungs. The impact on Odin's behavior was almost immediate.

The two-hour surgery was conducted by Dennis Caywood, DVM of Grover Heights, Minn., and assisted by Steve Gilson, DVM of Phoenix, Ariz. The procedure is about 85 to 90 percent effective in dogs according to Dr. Caywood. This was the first time Dr. Caywood has performed a valvuloplasty on a leopard.

The veterinarians agree that despite the original odds against him, Odin's prognosis is now good. Odin has done so well that he has been moved from the Zoo's medical complex to an indoor nursery exhibit where he can be viewed by Zoo visitors. Eventually, as Odin matures, he will be relocated to a larger, outdoor exhibit complete with tree-like structures he can climb.

### CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO HEAD STARTS ENDANGERED SNAKES

One of Ohio's endangered reptiles, the Eastern plains garter snake (*Thamnophis radix radix*), recently received a population boost. Thirteen juvenile snakes, born and raised at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, were released on



© Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

14 June into the Killdeer Plains Wildlife Area near Marion, Ohio. These snakes, along with eleven others from the Columbus Zoo, will bolster the only known wild colony of this species

in the state.

The Zoo houses a captive breeding colony of Eastern plains garter snakes. Snakes born at the Zoo are raised for about a year before release. Juvenile "head started" snakes have a better chance of survival after release into the wild than newborn snakes since, at only six-inches long, the newborns make a tempting target for predators.

The Zoo's head started snakes have been implanted with transponders and will be tracked and studied throughout their lives by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Eastern plains garter snakes are an endangered species in Ohio due primarily to habitat loss.

### RARE SIAMANG BORN AT FORT WAYNE CHILDREN'S ZOO

An endangered siamang, a tree-dwelling ape native to Indonesia and Malaysia, was born at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo on 27 June.

The baby, a male, was born to siamangs



© Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Penny, age 26, and Gus, age 27. Named Tucker by zookeepers, the baby weighed an estimated six ounces at birth. He will eventually grow to about 30 pounds as an adult and be covered in jet-black fur.

This baby is important to the captive siamang population as it is from a bloodline that is not well represented.

Only two other siamangs were born in North American zoos in 2004 and 2005 – one each at the San Diego Zoo and the Columbus Zoo.

An important goal of the SSP program is to maintain genetic diversity within the captive population. To achieve that goal, geneticists look at mean kinship, which measures the degree to which animals are related to one another. Managed breeding programs like the SSP reduce the possibility of inbreeding, which can increase the likelihood of genetic disorders.

Tucker is Penny's fourth baby, although the last time she gave birth was almost 20 years ago. Since then, she had received contraceptive implants to prevent a pregnancy.

For the first few months of his life, baby Tucker will cling to his mother's belly or back as she forages for food in the family's vine-draped enclosure along the Treetops Trail in the Zoo's *Indonesian Rain Forest* exhibit. They eat fruits, vegetables, and leaves, much as they would in the wild. Siamangs have long, slender arms, which they use to swing from branch to branch. To reinforce family bonds, Gus and Penny sing loud, whooping duets each morning.

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