

A note on the birth of a White rhinoceros

Diceros simus

at Pretoria Zoo

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On 8 June 1967 the first White rhinoceros *Diceros (Ceratotherium) simus simus* was born at Pretoria Zoo.

The rhinoceroses (one male and two females) are kept in a 12-acre enclosure surrounded by a moat 1.8 m deep. The enclosure is grassed with Kikuyu grass, which provides ample grazing in the rainy season. Acacia trees supply shade and there is a muddy pool for the rhinos to wallow in. The rhinos are fed on grass, lucerne hay and a concentrate mash with 14 per cent protein content.

The female rhinoceros had probably already mated before she arrived at the zoo on 17 April 1966, together with a fully grown male. Both rhinos had been captured in the Umfolozi Game Reserve on 16 April 1966. No sexual behaviour or signs of oestrus were observed either before or after capture. Exactly 15 months and three weeks after the pair of rhinos had arrived at the zoo a male

calf was born. The gestation period for the species is thought to be 16 months, so the pair must have mated very soon before or after capture.

The male was not separated from the female after the birth of the calf. The female kept the male and the female rhinos away from the calf by snorting and making short charges. The calf suckled soon after birth. Its sex could be determined visually as the male genitalia were well developed. It had large feet and well developed toes. The skin was wrinkled and light grey in colour. At about the age of one month the folds had disappeared completely.

At the time of the birth the weather was very cold (the day temperature being approximately 7.5°C) and we were worried as the female refused to enter the sleeping den. However, she chose a place in the enclosure which was well protected from the wind and lay in a position such that her body sheltered the calf.

Some observations on the rearing of an okapi calf

Okapia johnstoni

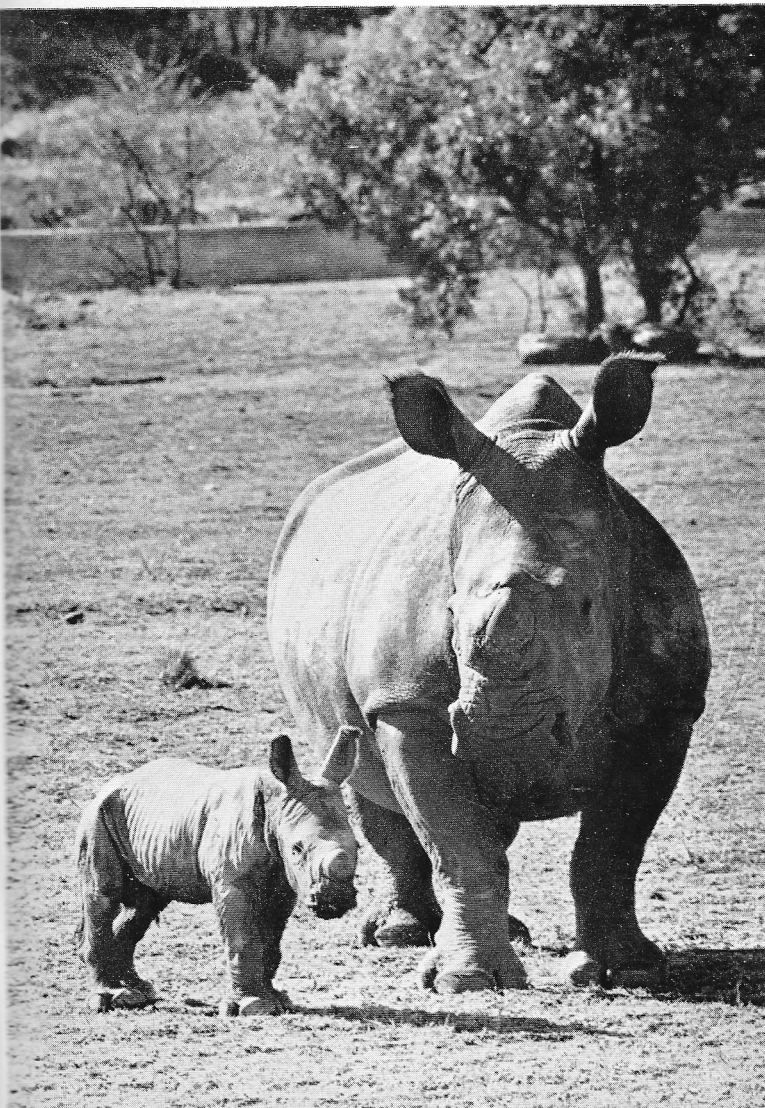
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INTRODUCTION

Deaths of okapis *Okapia johnstoni* associated with rectal lesions have been reported by several authors. Zwart and Peters (1966) recorded the deaths of two okapis from the same parents. The first showed symptoms of pain and experienced difficulty in defaecating at six weeks of age. The symptoms subsided but when the animal died of a renal abscess at three months of age, gross rectal and colonic lesions were found at post-mortem

examination. The second okapi calf showed similar symptoms at six weeks of age but survived for six months. Post-mortem examination again revealed severe pathological changes in the terminal large bowel. These authors also observed the mother inserting her tongue into the rectum of a third calf which was therefore separated from its mother except at feeding times. The calf survived. They suggested a possible



38. On 8 June 1967 a male White rhinoceros *Diceros simus* was born at Pretoria Zoo, 15 months and three weeks after the female had arrived with a fully grown male at the zoo (see p. 134). Since the gestation period for the species is thought to be 16 months, the female must have mated very soon before or after capture. At birth the young rhino's skin was wrinkled and light grey in colour : at the age of about one month the skin folds disappeared. At Pretoria the one male and two female White rhinos are kept in a 12-acre enclosure, shaded with acacia trees and provided with a mud wallow.
National Zoological Gardens of South Africa

39. Part of Skeikh Qassim Bin Hamad Al-Thani's herd of 24 Arabian oryx *Oryx leucoryx* at Dohar in Qatar, Arabian Gulf. The oryxes are kept on the Sheikh's private farm and are breeding regularly. Sheikh Qassim is keenly interested in the conservation of the Arabian oryx and is Chairman of the Survival Service Commission's Arabian Oryx Group. Since the species is thought to number only a few hundred in the wild it is essential that the continued existence of the species should be safeguarded by careful breeding in captivity. The existence of the World Herd of 16 animals at Phoenix Zoo, USA, is well known ; it is exciting to find that a large, healthy breeding group has also been established in Arabia.
Sheikh Qassim Bin Hamad Al-Thani

