

# Koala Club News



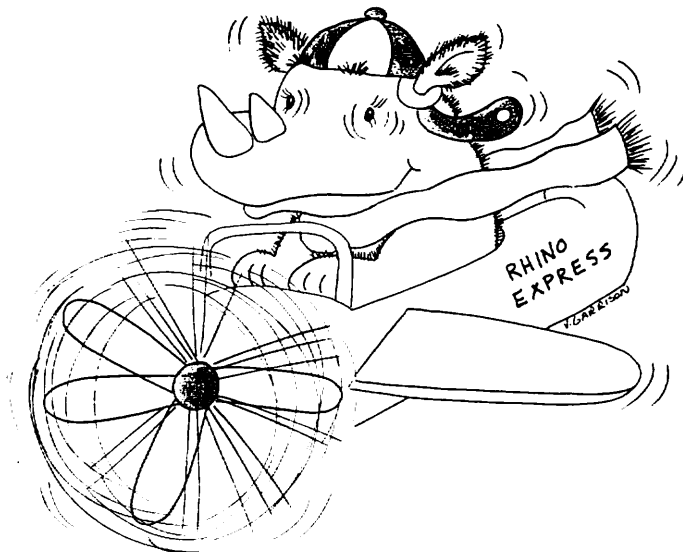
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## A JET SET RED RHINO



By Amy Shima, D.V.M.  
Associate Veterinarian

Rhinoceroses throughout the world are in serious trouble! They are hunted for their horns and their habitats are being destroyed. Because of this, all five species of rhinos are in danger of becoming extinct!

The Sumatran rhino is one of three rhino species that come from Asia. It's also called the hairy or red rhinoceros. That's because it has pink-red skin and lots of thick hair covering its body.

The dense forests of Indonesia and Malaysia are home to the Sumatran rhino. In the forests, the hairy rhinos browse on leaves, twigs, small trees, fruits and grasses for meals. Sometimes, they stand up on their back legs and use their front feet to push down small trees. Then they can reach tender leaves and twigs that grow at the top of the trees.

Sumatran rhinos love to wallow in the mud. Often, they completely cover them-

selves with thick mud. They're also expert climbers. They can easily scramble through dense brush up steep hills.

Many of the Sumatran rhinoceros' for-



Photo by K. Kelly

**RARE RHINO** — Barakas is the first Sumatran rhinoceros ever exhibited at the San Diego Zoo. She's red, rare and really cute!

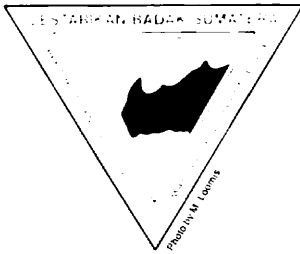
est homes are being cut down for lumber, farms or palm oil plantations. Experts estimate that only 400 of these hairy, red

**RHINO** cont. on page 4



Photo by A. Shima

**CLUMPS OF MUD** cling to Barakas' back! Sumatran rhinos love to wallow in mudholes! At the Zoo, Barakas has her very own mud wallow in her new enclosure.



**RHINO** cont. from page 1

rhinos are left in their jungle habitat. The species is in serious trouble . . . but help is on the way.

The government of Indonesia and several zoos in the United States, including the San Diego Zoo, are trying to rescue the red rhino species. They have planned to put some of the doomed rhinos in zoos so they can start breeding groups and have rhino babies. It's hoped this will ensure that the Sumatran rhinoceros species doesn't become extinct.

By November 1988, three rhinoceroses were captured from areas where the forest had been cut down. They were ready to travel to their new zoo homes. One rhino, Dalu Dalu, would live at the Surabaya Zoo in Sumatra. Another, a female named Barakas, would come to the San Diego Zoo and the third, Mahatu, would spend the winter at the Los Angeles Zoo. Mahatu will be taken to the Cincinnati Zoo in the spring. Eventually, males will be captured for these rhinos.

The San Diego Zoo sent three people to Sumatra to help our rhino, Barakas, make the long trip to San Diego. I was lucky to be one of those people. Mammal keeper Curby Simerson and I kept Barakas company during the trip, and Carmi Penny, curator of mammals, was always a step ahead of us making the travel arrangements.

We were excited as we left San Diego in mid-November for the jungles of Sumatra. After all, we were traveling across the world to help save the rare red rhinoceros! We had only seen pictures of the Sumatran rhino because it had been nearly 100 years since one had been in the United States.

The captured rhinos were living in holding pens built deep in the jungle. Curby and I traveled in jeeps over rugged dirt roads for an entire day to reach them.

The rhinos' temporary home looked very comfortable. They had a covered barn for sleeping, a large dirt pen to play in, and best of all, a deep mud puddle to wallow in.

We were surprised when we first saw the hairy, red rhinos. They were covered



**RHINO ROUNDUP**—After each Sumatran rhino is captured in the forest, it's herded into a sturdy crate. The crate is then rolled out of the forest on specially-built tracks.

with mud and didn't look hairy or red at all! The rhinos greeted us with unusual squeaks, hums and whistles. We never expected those kinds of sounds to come from rhinoceroses!

The rhinos' Indonesian keeper friends showed us how the rhinos enjoyed being fed and liked having their backs and bellies scratched. We gave the rhinos a shower, too. After the shower, we saw that the rhinos were, indeed, very hairy and had pink-red skin, just like we'd seen in the pictures.

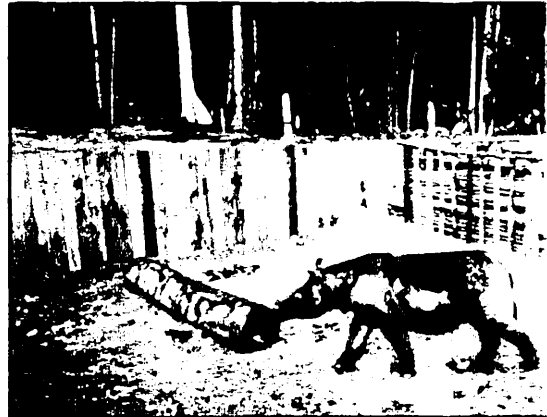
Each rhino was herded into its own large crate for the long journey to the United States. The crates were so big that many people pushed and shoved to get them onto trucks that would drive them out of the jungle. The trucks were supplied with lots of water and the rhinos' favorite foods.

The rhinos liked riding in the trucks. They squeaked, hummed and happily munched on leaves while they traveled over the muddy, bumpy roads.

The next part of our rhinoceros adventure was a two-day boat ride from Dumai, Sumatra, to Singapore. A big crane lifted the rhino crates off the trucks and onto the boat deck.

Curby and I traveled with the rhinos to feed them and make sure they didn't get seasick. We were the only passengers on the boat. The captain and crew soon made friends with the rhinos. They helped us with our chores. The rhinos enjoyed the salty sea air. They rode quietly in their crates, sleeping and eating all day long.

From Singapore, the rhinos would fly on an airplane to America. Before being loaded into a 747 cargo jet, the rhinos and crates were weighed and tagged. A special lift hoisted them up and into the jet. The rhinos weren't afraid at all.



**BARAKAS LIVED** in a pen at the edge of the forest while awaiting her long to roam, posts for scratching herself and a mudwallow.



**RHINO PEEK-A-BOO?** This Indonesian rhino keeper isn't really playing p Army and Curby how she likes to have her back and belly scratched.

The pilot and crew were very nice. It was the first time they ever flew with two rhinoceros passengers. Curby and I were the flight attendants who gave food and water to Barakas and Mahatu. Both rhinos seemed like they had been flying all of their lives because they were so comfortable.

After 26 hours on the jet, we landed at Los Angeles International Airport. Los Angeles Zoo keepers met Mahatu to take her to their zoo, and San Diego Zoo keepers picked us up. A big truck carted Barakas down to San Diego.

It was late at night when we arrived. We unloaded Barakas at the Zoo hospital where she would spend the next couple of months. First, Barakas wouldn't leave her crate. She had spent so much time in it that it was now home to her.

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Photo by C. Simonsen

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Barakas' Indonesian keeper friends told us how the rhinos enjoyed being captured. They liked having their backs and bellies scratched. We gave the rhinos a shower. After the shower, we saw that Barakas was, indeed, very hairy and her skin, just like we'd seen in the

rhino was herded into its own crate for the long journey to San Diego. The crates were so big that they were pushed and shoved to get onto trucks that would drive them to the jungle. The trucks were equipped with jugs of water and the rhinos' supplies.

Barakas liked riding in the trucks. She hummed and happily moved her ears while they traveled along bumpy, bumpy roads.

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Barakas and I traveled with the rhinos to San Diego and make sure they didn't get lost. We were the only passengers on the plane with the captain and crew soon after takeoff with the rhinos. They helped with our chores. The rhinos were used to salty sea air. They rode in their crates, sleeping and eating.

In San Diego, the rhinos would fly to Los Angeles. Before being loaded onto the 747 cargo jet, the rhinos were weighed and tagged. A speeder picked them up and into the jet. Barakas weren't afraid at all.



Photo by M. Loomis

**BARAKAS LIVED** in a pen at the edge of the forest while awaiting her long journey to San Diego. She had plenty of room to roam, posts for scratching herself and a mud wallow.



Photo by A. Shimm

**RHINO PEEK-A-BOO?** This Indonesian rhino keeper isn't really playing peek-a-boo with Barakas. He's trying to show Amy and Curby how she likes to have her back and belly scratched.

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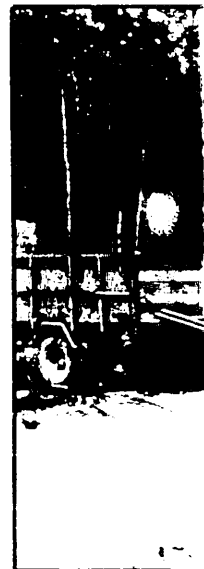
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It was late at night when we arrived. We unloaded Barakas at the Zoo hospital where she would spend the next couple of months. First, Barakas wouldn't leave her crate. She had spent so much time in it that it was now home to her.

Everything else was new and strange. Finally, she backed out of her crate into a nice, warm barn. She squeaked and hummed because she was happy to run around again. She ate lots of fresh green leaves.

At the Zoo hospital, the other Zoo vets and I could watch Barakas to make sure the trip hadn't made her sick. We wanted to make sure she was adapting to American food, too.

While Barakas was at the hospital, a new Zoo home was being built. Now she's on exhibit and has a nice mud puddle for wallowing, trees for shade and a pool to swim in. When you come to see Barakas, you may see her covered in mud, or sleeping, or happily humming, or munching on leaves and hay . . . all the things she loves to do!



**HEAVE HO!**—In the forest, Barakas is loaded onto the bed of a truck. It takes a lot of strength of their might!



**ZOO VETERINARIAN**—When Barakas finally arrived at the Zoo, the keepers had a tough time of it.



**HAPPY HUMMER**—Barakas is finally home. Visitors can see her in her new exhibit.



Photo by M. Loomis

**VED** in a pen at the edge of the forest while awaiting her long journey to San Diego. She had plenty of room for scratching herself and a mudwallow.



Photo by A. Shima

**PEEK-A-BOO?** This Indonesian rhino keeper isn't really playing peek-a-boo with Barakas. He's trying to show her how she likes to have her back and belly scratched.

and crew were very nice. It was the very first time I ever flew with two rhinoceroses. My husband and I were the flight attendants. We carried food and water to Barakas and Mahatu. The flight attendants seemed like they had been flying all day because they were so comfortable.

After several hours on the jet, we landed at Los Angeles International Airport. Los Angeles Zoo and Mahatu took her to their zoo, and the Zoo keepers picked us up. A big truck took Barakas down to San Diego.

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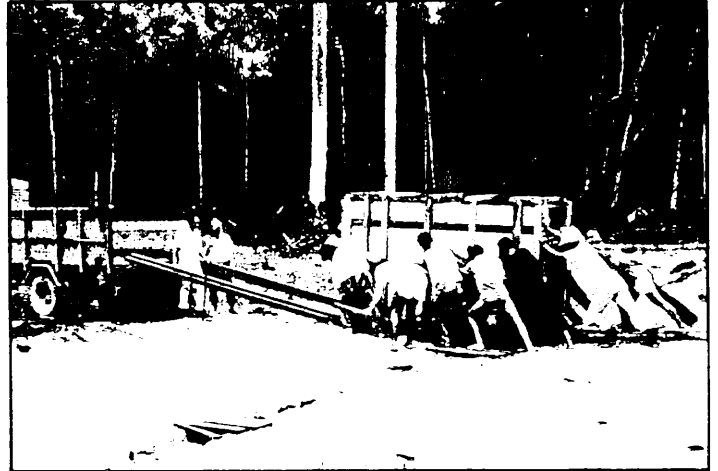


Photo by A. Shima

**HEAVE HO!**—In the forest, it isn't easy loading a crate with 1,600 pounds of Sumatran rhino in it onto the bed of a truck! More than a dozen men surrounded Barakas' crate and pushed with all of their might!



Photo by H. Greenman

**ZOO VETERINARIAN Amy Shima** traveled with Barakas during the entire trip to San Diego. When Barakas finally arrived at the Zoo hospital, she was so used to her crate that Amy and the keepers had a tough time convincing her to enter the hospital barn.



Photo by K. Kelly

**HAPPY HUMMER**—Barakas happily hums, squeaks and whistles in her new San Diego Zoo home. Visitors can see the red, hairy rhino in her enclosure across from the Zoo's elephants.