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Highland Wildlife Park, Kingussie, Scotland, U.K.

On 5 November the park welcomed a new arrival, Walker, a 23-month-old male polar bear, who joined the resident female, Mercedes.

Walker, only the second polar bear in a public collection in the U.K., has come from Rhenen Zoo in the Netherlands, where he was born in 2008. Douglas Richardson, the park's Animal Collection Manager, says, 'We were approached by the EEP coordinator for polar bears and Rhenen Zoo. Walker's mother, Huggies, is currently expecting another litter, so he needed to find a new home before she retires to her cubbing den. The EEP coordinates the movement of polar bears around European collections as part of the breeding programme. The decisions for these moves are largely based on the quality of the enclosures, and Highland Wildlife Park, having one of the largest polar bear enclosures in the world, was top of the list for Walker's new home.'

The park's enclosure spans four acres [1.6 ha] and has a natural pool and tundra-like environment. In preparation for Walker's arrival, a specially-designed natural extension has been added to the enclosure, which will allow keepers to initially manage Walker and Mercedes separately. The bears will be gradually introduced to each other with a view to them living together with both having permanent access to the whole facility.

'Although polar bears are generally solitary animals that are happy being alone,' Douglas continued, 'they have an excellent memory. Mercedes has been with other bears before, so we are expecting the introduction to go fairly smoothly. Walker will not reach sexual maturity for at least another three years, so he should present no threat to Mercedes – being a teenager he does have a cheeky

side, but we expect him to see Mercedes as a mother figure, having been recently separated from his own mother. In the future, he will be moved to a new enclosure on the other side of the park and will be our future breeding male.'

Mercedes, for some years the only polar bear in a U.K. zoo, lived at Edinburgh Zoo from 1984 until 2009, when she moved to the park. When she arrived in Edinburgh she was paired with a male, Barney, and they produced two cubs. Barney died 13 years ago, and since then Mercedes has been on her own. She currently has a comprehensive and constantly evolving enrichment programme to stimulate her. She has also been trained by the keepers to allow simple health and weight checks without the need for anaesthesia.

Last year the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) announced plans to keep polar bears at the park for the foreseeable future and, in the long term, to contribute to the conservation and understanding of this increasingly threatened species. It was originally planned that Mercedes would remain on her own until she dies, but the society has reviewed its original intention and timeline following Walker's special case. A new female will be designated for the park in the future and placed in the existing enclosure, but not until Mercedes dies. The two bears will be brought together for the breeding season only, which replicates their natural behaviour in the wild, in the hope that they will produce cubs.

For several years, the polar bear has not figured as a focus species for RZSS, other than ensuring that Mercedes got the best possible level of care. But field biologists affiliated with the IUCN have now suggested that the captive population of polar bears in well-managed zoos may have a key role to play, and that an active partnership between the field and zoo communities could benefit the species.

Highland Wildlife Park press release, 3 November 2010

Johannesburg Zoo, South Africa

The decision to move Phila – a black rhino who survived two attacks by poachers – to the zoo has been criticised as exploitive. The rhino cow, part of a breeding programme in Limpopo, was shot nine times by poachers and was moved to the zoo last month to recover. Michael Swart, founder of the Mission Rhino charity, criticised Phila's owner, saying she was being 'exploited' for financial gain. 'Why would the owner ask the zoo to have Phila moved there,' he wrote, 'when more suitable locations exist? The answer is simple – no medical bills. The zoo has agreed to pay for her keep and medical costs.'

Phila's owner, who asked to be referred to only as 'Allan', said he had no other option if he wanted to keep the rhino safe. 'I had to beg the zoo to take her, because where else can I take her? There is no other secure location,' he said, adding that, though the zoo was not ideal, 'the practicality of her being in a bigger space is not possible.' Swart also accused Allan of wanting to continue breeding with Phila while she recovered at the zoo – 'and, more disturbingly, it now seems the owner is planning to have her artificially inseminated. If it were my rhino, I would be far more concerned about her welfare rather than planning to have her artificially inseminated right now.'

'Well, it's not your rhino,' retorted Phila's owner. 'Artificial insemination was certainly brought up as a possibility, but she has got to get better first.' Brett Gardner, a vet at the zoo, refused to comment on the state of Phila's health.

*Sunday Times (South Africa),
7 November 2010*

Kansas City Zoo, Missouri, U.S.A.

In 2008, the zoo received an SSP recommendation to breed from two Bornean orang-utans. The next year, a female infant named Kalijon was born. Even after months of preparation and a maternal training program, the mother re-

fused to let the baby nurse. Although the standard recommendation is to wait 72 hours before permanently pulling an orang-utan infant for hand-rearing, it was believed that Kalijon's well-being was at stake, and consequently she was removed after 30 hours.

For the following five months she was hand-reared by human caregivers 24 hours a day. As she developed and her needs changed, a program was put in place to encourage her physical and mental development, ensure her health, and maintain her orang-utan identity. During this five-month period Jill, another female at the zoo, was selected as an excellent candidate for surrogacy and was trained to cooperate with staff in Kalijon's continued care once the infant was turned over to her. The introduction was a complete success.

Many factors contributed to this result. Having a birthing plan in place as soon as there was a confirmed pregnancy gave staff time to prepare, and utilizing a staff that understood the importance of raising Kalijon like an orang-utan and not like a human also helped her to associate herself as an orang-utan. Using multiple people to care for her lessened the chance of her imprinting on any one person. By keeping her in the building with multiple orang-utans, she learned the sights, sounds and smells of her species. Surrogate mother Jill's previous maternal experience, training, and intelligence eased the role of keeper involvement once introduced. By never being set deadlines for milestones such as weaning and independence, Kalijon developed at her own pace. Even though both animals were ready to be introduced when she was four months old, the introduction was postponed due to hernia surgery for Kalijon. Still, this introduction is considered to be the earliest of its kind at five months.

Summary of article by Laura Laverick, Courtney Murray and James Sanford in *Animal Keepers' Forum* Vol. 37, No. 11 (2010)