EDITORIAL

It is always a pleasure to see news about animal births in zoos, especially when the species is endangered. In the past few weeks there have been some notable additions:

Akron Zoo, U.S.A. 3 Snow leopards *Panthera uncia*
Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, U.S.A. 3 Clouded leopards *Neofelis nebulosa*
Santa Barbara Zoo, U.S.A. Masai giraffe *Giraffa camelopardalis tippelskirchi*
Taronga Zoo, Australia Feathertail Glider *Acrobates pygmaeus*
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, U.S.A. 3 Siberian tigers *Panthera tigris altaica*
Twycross Zoo, UK Bonobo *Pan paniscus*
Denver Zoo, U.S.A. Western lowland gorilla *Gorilla gorilla gorilla*
Hogle Zoo, U.S.A. 3 African lions *Panthera leo*
Lowry Park Zoo, U.S.A. 2 Clouded leopards *Neofelis nebulosa*
Toronto Zoo, Canada One-horned rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis*

The multiple births are interesting and although they occur in the wild there has been some suggestion that this may be diet or medication related.

At a time when zoos and aquariums have been in the spotlight again, the question of sustainability is ever more important. Several species in captivity certainly look as if they have viable populations, but many are not so fortunate and the likelihood of future importations from some host range countries looks increasingly doubtful.

The recently announced cessation of breeding Orcas by Seaworld will inevitably mean Orcas will cease to be on show anywhere in the United States within a few decades. Although Orca facilities exist elsewhere in the world, the Seaworld move is likely to have global repercussions as the anti-zoo lobby puts pressure on political administrations. Some zoo people fear the newly established link between Seaworld and the Humane Society (HSUS) will lead to dolphins facing a similar fate. Perhaps the days of Manatees and large sharks are also numbered.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) has been aware of the problem with sustainability for some years and has insisted that its members now have a minimum composition in their elephant holdings, potentially reversing a poor breeding record. The importation of 17 African elephants to three zoos from Swaziland was a long time in the planning and adds a much needed genetic input into the Species Survival Program. Should breeding improve, it may require new expensive investment in enlarged holdings or possibly some cooperation with existing sanctuaries, however unpalatable at the moment. Maintaining the hierarchical structure of a breeding herd will certainly keep the coordinators busy during their own lifetime.

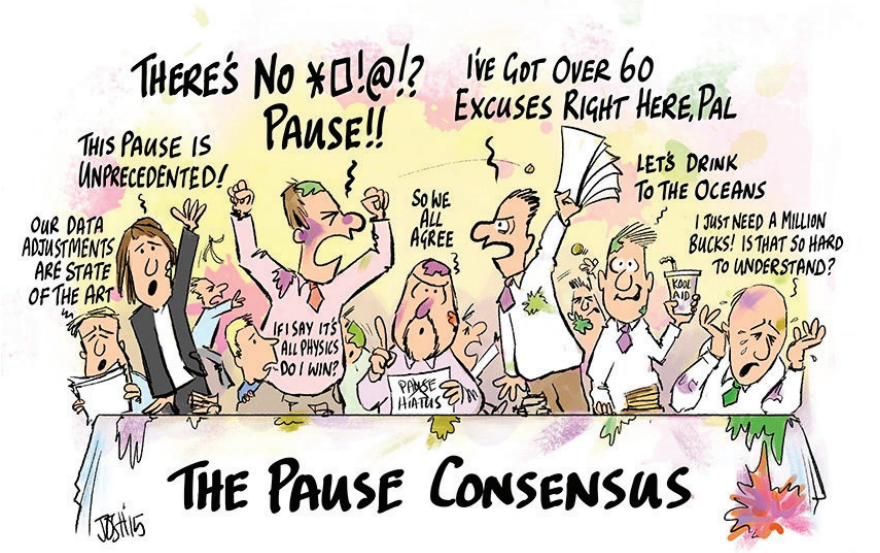
The rhinocerous is increasingly endangered in the wild and one subspecies, Western black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis longipes*, was declared extinct in 2011.

Of the African rhinocerous in captivity, the White rhino *Ceratotherium simum* seems to be faring the best with 594 animals, most of whom belong to the subspecies *Ceratotherium simum simum* and breeding takes place frequently in Europe and the US. The Black rhino *Diceros bicornis* is not as prolific and essentially composed of two subspecies with only 166 animals, *Diceros bicornis michaeli* (58.76) and *Diceros bicornis minor* (21.11) [all data supplied by ISIS]. The situation is complicated by the fact that 17 institutions only have animals of the same sex.

The situation with the One-horned rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* is not much better with a third of the 65 holdings only having one sex.

Unfortunately, being endangered is no criteria for popularity and the rhino is much less of a visitor favourite than the elephant. Several zoos however, see page 150 of this issue, are doing sterling work *in situ* and *ex situ* protecting and publicising them.

One does not have to be too paranoid to wonder which other species may not be on show in zoos in 50 years time. If public concern for biodiversity and animal welfare increases by the same measure as that for combating climate change, we are quite likely to have to say goodbye to several species who will be on a 'no-fly' list. To be cynical however, money talks and corruption in the majority of those countries with endangered species or are rich enough to afford them will probably still make transfers possible in 2100.



One of the advantages of being editor is having the ability to insert the occasional page for personal ends and I hope I will be forgiven for advertising my new book, *Taxonomy of the Genus Casuarius*, on page 146 of this issue.

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