



This is how rhino are captured. A pit as described in the article is dug in a regular rhino path, then camouflaged with grass, etc. Some four or five pits are prepared at a time, and inspected daily. When a rhino falls, labourers are immediately brought out, and the rhino removed as quickly and humanely as possible. This operation takes about nine hours. In this picture a baby rhino is seen (not actually "Mohini," but the same size and conditions) newly fallen and the labourers are starting to dig out one end of the pit.



Fine bull rhinoceros (the Great Indian One-horned Rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros unicornis*) in a stream in the Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary, Assam and, below, a large bull grazing. There are only about 350 of these animals left in the world.



CATCHING A

BY E. P. GEE

(Photography by the Author)

"MOHINI" ARRIVED recently by air from Assam, and is the first rhinoceros ever to fly. She has come as a bride for "Mohan," the Indian rhino at Whipsnade.

"Mohan" has lived alone for five years. He came to Britain by sea in 1947, after having been specially captured by the Forest Department in the Kaziranga Wild Life Sanctuary of Assam. He has now grown up and is about ten years old, early manhood for an Indian rhino.

Some two years ago Whipsnade made a request to the Assam Government for a female as a mate for "Mohan." The



A cow rhino with her large calf in the sanctuary, with egrets in attendance.

BRIDE FOR "MOHAN"

how the Rhinoceros is trapped and transported in Assam

Assam Forest Department tried to catch one, but caught only males, six of them one after the other. One was sent to Basle, another to Milan, and the rest set free.

The first rhino to be captured this year was "Mohini," a delightful young creature which fell into a carefully prepared pit on 12th February. Several of these pits, about 9 ft. long, 5 ft. wide and 6 ft. deep, had been dug in main rhino paths, so cunningly camouflaged that even the forest ranger himself on elephant-back recently fell into one while on a daily inspection tour.

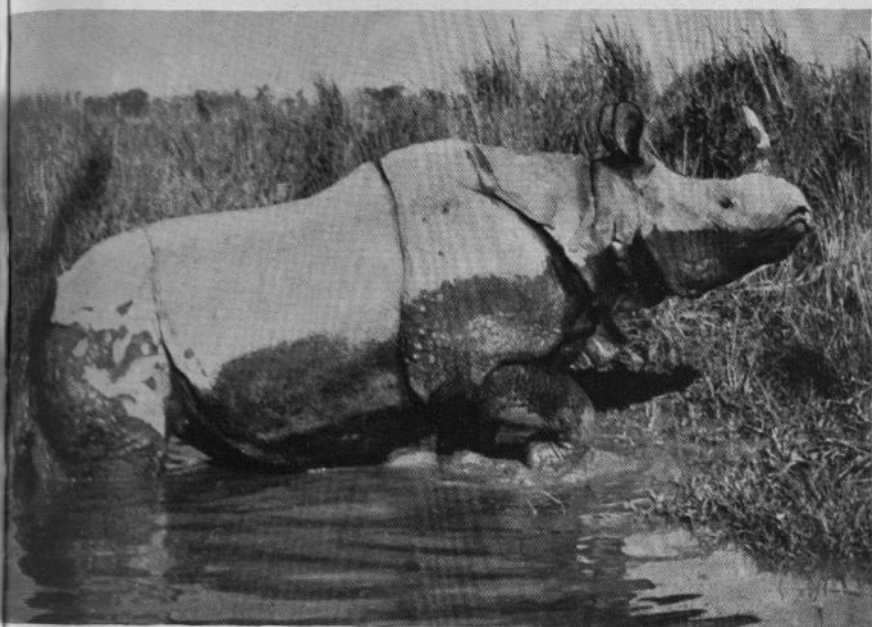
When a rhino falls into a pit, it is removed by digging a slope into one end of the pit and lowering a cage on wheels. When the rhino has been coaxed into the cage, an elephant drags it to a stockade, where the rhino is released, first into a small porch-like enclosure where it cannot damage itself, then into the stockade itself, which is about the size of a tennis court. Within a few days "Mohini" quietened down and took grass from human hands. After a week or so a man could stand on her back to bathe her and rub ointment on her bruises.



"Mohini" herself is seen here in the stockade, after she had been in it for a week. First she was let into the small porch, where she was kept for three days, until quiet enough to be transferred to the larger stockade. Within a few days she quietened and was taking grass from human hands. An Assamese attendant is seen above her, to accustom her to humans, and to attend to her minor bruises with medicated mud.

"Mohini" is only about two and a half years old, about seven years younger than "Mohan," but as rhinos are believed to live to about seventy, this discrepancy will not matter. But it was not certain that "Mohan" would necessarily welcome his future bride with affection and caresses, for "Kashi" and "Kamala," the Indian rhinos which went to the Chicago Zoo

from Assam in 1948, have been put together several times and always there has been a fight. Whether this is normal rhino behaviour and a preliminary to courtship or not, we may have an opportunity of observing within the next few years at Whipsnade, but in his notes on another page Mr. Tong records that "Mohan" already seems interested in his future wife.



Bull rhino emerging from a wallow at Kaziranga, where he was enjoying a rest from the hot midday sun and, below, "Mohan" himself, enjoying the refinements of life at Whipsnade. How trustworthy he has become is demonstrated by this photograph, taken when he was being offered a tit-bit. His horn has not been sawn off—he rubs it down on the bars of his enclosure.

Photo: London Press Photos.

