

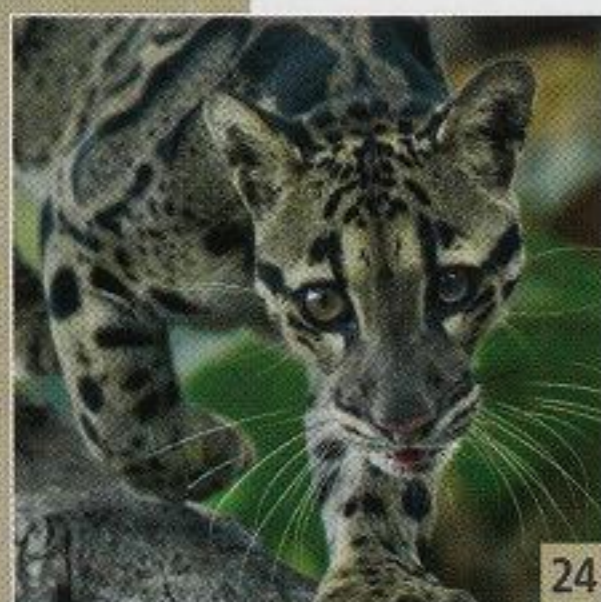
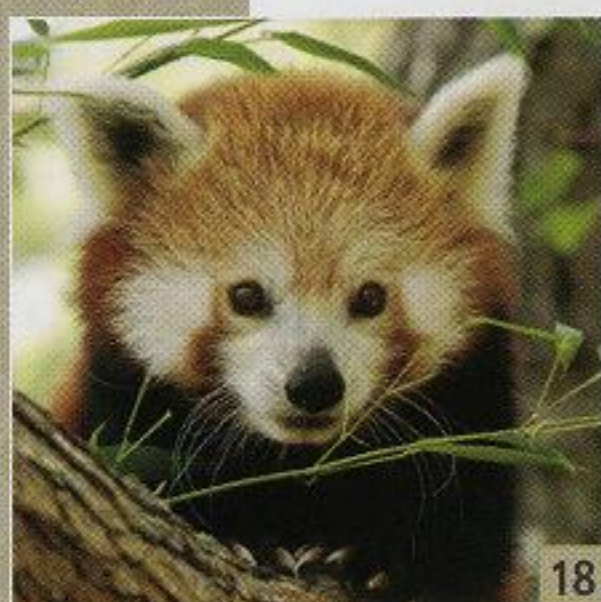
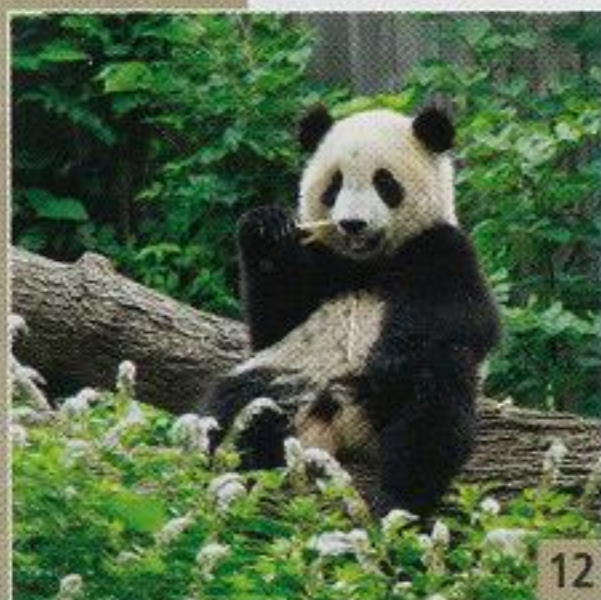
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006

Zoogoer

VOLUME 35, NUMBER 5



Fujifilm Giant Panda Habitat
and Asia Trail Grand Opening



Fujifilm Giant Panda Habitat and Asia Trail

On September 20, the Smithsonian's National Zoo will unveil the new Fujifilm Giant Panda Habitat and Asia Trail. To celebrate the grand opening and help you plan your visit, ZooGoer presents a guided tour of all seven incredible animal habitats.

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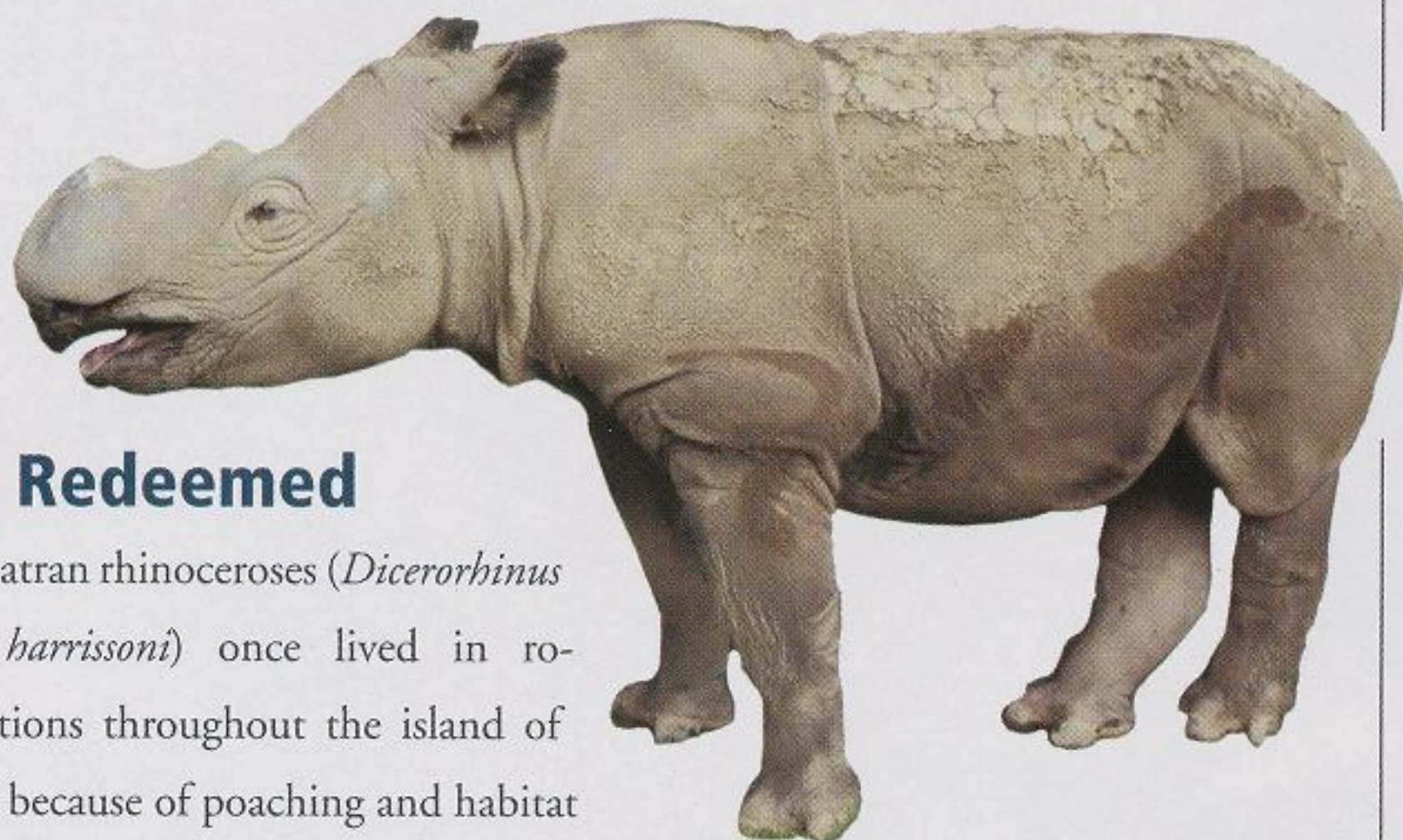
Vietnamese mossy frogs perform a disappearing trick at the Reptile Discovery Center. 🐾 Trick or treat! It's time for Boo at the Zoo. 🐾 Discover something new at the National Zoo's free fall lectures.

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Togetherness may save Bornean rhinos from extinction. 🐾 Are mouse-deer misnamed? 🐾 Orangutans build their own beds. 🐾 Not all bears hibernate. 🐾 India's monsoon season winds down.

BioAlmanac

by Shannon Lyons



Rhinos Redeemed

Borneo Sumatran rhinoceroses (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis harrissoni*) once lived in robust populations throughout the island of Borneo. But because of poaching and habitat fragmentation, they survive only in the northeastern state of Sabah, where the estimated 30 to 70 remaining individuals are so isolated that they have few opportunities to meet and mate. Fortunately, recent discoveries in Sabah suggest that a breeding population of these shy jungle dwellers still exists. Scientists found the tracks of at least 13 of the rhinos in May 2005, and a camera trap set by scientists and conservationists captured the first photograph ever taken of a Borneo Sumatran rhino in the wild in June 2006. If protected from poachers and habitat destruction, this small but seemingly healthy group might help rejuvenate the subspecies.

What's in a Name?



With the legs and hooves of a miniature Bambi and the head of a rodent, the greater Malay mouse-deer (*Tragulus napu*) looks like the victim of a witch's spell gone awry. The male's canine teeth, long and curved like a snake's fangs, complete its mismatched appearance.

The genus name *Tragulus* means "little goat" in Greek, and the French call the six species of mouse-deer that live in Asia and another species that lives in Africa *chevrotains*, or "little goats." While these names describe physical characteristics, they are taxonomically misleading. Mouse-deer are not related to mice and merely belong to the same order—Artiodactyla, or even-toed ungulates—as deer and goats (and hippos and giraffes, too). The Indonesian word for mouse-deer is *kancil*. Several traditional Indonesian fables feature a witty *kancil* who delivers a moral with a self-serving twist; the character is so beloved that the Indonesian car company Perodua named one of its models after him.

The raccoon dog (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) of Siberia, China, North Korea, and Japan is the only member of the canid family (which includes wolves, foxes, and dogs) that hibernates.

Where Do Orangutans Sleep?

Orangutans (*Pongo* spp.) are the only great apes in Asia and they spend about 90 percent of their time in trees. At night, orangutans sleep in treetop nests they make with sticks and leaves. They rarely use a nest more than once, preferring instead to build new ones each evening. Males sleep alone but females share their nests with their offspring, and mothers with small young may build as many as two or three nests per day for napping and resting.



Scientists count these nests to estimate how many orangutans remain in the forests of Borneo and Sumatra despite hunting, habitat loss, and other threats.

Fact or Fiction: All Bears Hibernate

Animals hibernate to survive periods when food is scarce. Bears that live in warm climates with abundant food year-round, such as Southeast Asian sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*), need not hibernate. Cold-climate bears that forgo hibernation include giant pandas (*Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) and male polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*). Those that do hibernate, including grizzlies (*U. arctos horribilis*) and northern black bears (*U. americanus*), retreat to sheltered dens for up to half the year, living off large reserves of fat they gained by gorging on high-energy food in autumn. Bears maintain fairly normal body temperatures and do not eat, drink, urinate, or defecate during hibernation, unlike chipmunks and other "true hibernators" that drastically lower their body temperatures and emerge periodically to feed and eliminate waste.

In Season

In late September or early October, India's southwest monsoon draws to a close and a drier season commences. The southwest monsoon usually starts in June, when moisture-laden winds from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea reach India's southernmost tip. Over the next three or four months the winds travel north toward the Himalayas, drenching some parts of India with more than 30 inches of rain in just one day. Long celebrated for its supposed healing powers and for bringing much-needed water for crops and thirsty villagers, the southwest monsoon can also be deadly: By the first week of July 2006, flooding and lightning strikes caused by the monsoon killed at least 250 people and devastated large tracts of cropland.