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## COVERS

**Front:** Female green-winged dove *Chalcophaps indica*  
**Inside front:** Pygmy hippopotamus  
*Choeropsis liberiensis*  
**Inside back:** *Alluaudia procera*  
**Back:** White-quilled black bustard *Afrotis afra afraoides*

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# The Covers



R. Van Nostrand



## The Noisy Bustard

When the white-quilled black bustard *Afrotis afra afraoides* opens his mouth wide, out comes a noise like a large, rusty nail being pried from a board. In the wild, the male is often noisy, calling in flight or while standing on a mound or anthill.

The bustard belongs to the diversified order Gruiformes, along with cranes, rails, and others. Fossil forms more than 50 million years old indicate that this is an ancient order, but it appears to be rapidly declining. It includes a higher percentage of recently extinct forms and of living forms on the verge of extinction than any other major order of birds.

Considered game birds, the larger bustards are conspicuous as they stalk about the open savanna and dry scrub of their Old World habitats. Because they usually depend on camouflage and running speed for protection, they are an easy prey for hunters. The great Indian bustard, perhaps heaviest of all living flighted birds, at an average 24 pounds, is nearly gone.

In South Africa the smaller black bustards, or black Korhaans, which include the white-quilled subspecies, are somewhat protected because they are considered beneficial to agriculture. Although bustards eat grains and other vegetable matter, they also eat vast quantities of insects, such as locusts.

The white-quilled black bustard is among the handsomest of the group. The rich, soft black of the neck and body contrasts with the back, which appears draped in a fine herringbone tweed of black and tan. A matching cap tops the flattened, large-eyed head. Only when the bird squats down in the grass and retracts the conspicuous, long, black neck do the matching tweeds of cap and coat converge to blend with the surroundings in perfect camouflage.

E.H.

## LETTERS

As friends and lovers of the S.D. Zoo since 1949, we are sorry to find the November issue and 1981 calendar to be all CATS. As bird lovers we do not want to appear prejudiced but really! A whole twelve months of CATS is TOO much! They may have fascinated many but *please!* Never again. We do not even know anyone who would want it as a gift!

**Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Webber**  
Santa Rosa, California

As always, it was a delight to receive next year's ZOONOOZ calendar. I especially like your innovation of focusing on one animal group for the whole year. As a cat lover, I know I will enjoy looking at the beautiful photographs all year long. Thank you for this early Christmas present.

**Lisa Highberg**  
Mission Viejo, California

This gargoyle with the pineapple-shaped crown is actually an optical illusion formed by a pair of great palm cockatoos.

## INDIAN RHINO WATCH



was unable to see beyond the headlights of the truck as I got out to open the gate to East Africa. Few people had ever been in this exhibit after dark, and I wondered with uneasiness if the black rhino or Cape buffalo were anywhere near the gate. There was no time to stop and identify all the pairs of eyes gleaming in the night. It was nearly midnight and time to relieve the keeper on the Indian rhino watch.

When safely through the gate to the Asian Plains exhibit, I drove up to the boma — now truly a maternity boma since Jaypuri, the adult female Indian rhino *Rhinoceros unicornis* had given birth to Gainda, also a female, in 1978, and now was mother to a 100-pound male calf named Pandu, born on August 8, 1980. Mother and calves are kept in bomas for maximum safety and to assure keepers complete control over the pair. Indian rhinos are endangered in the wild and are rare in captivity, so all precautions are taken for their safety.

Keeper experience with these exotic animals has been limited due to the fact that only about three dozen have ever been born in captivity and only six of these in the western hemisphere. Therefore, with the births of Gainda and Pandu, 24-hour observational watches were enforced to note and record any and all behavior. How exciting to be a part of this new experience and at the same time have confidence that someone would be watching at all times should something untoward occur during the first critical weeks following birth.

Keepers on watch are responsible for recording all significant changes in behavior of either mother or calf. Thoroughness is always essential, as these observations will assist other zoos and animal care centers in the successful reproduction of endangered species.

In this instance, our first concern was discovering whether or not Jaypuri would accept Pandu. This was a minor concern, however, since she had readily accepted Gainda and had cared for her up until five days before Pandu's birth. The next concern was whether Pandu would nurse.

**Under the watchful eye of his mother, 11-day-old Pandu frolics in his pool at the Wild Animal Park.**

Jaypuri did accept Pandu, and the baby responded accordingly. Though the bonds tying Gainda to her mother took more than three weeks to break, once Jaypuri gave birth to the new calf she never again responded to Gainda's cries outside the boma.

Pandu nursed eagerly, and each nursing period was timed and recorded. Special attention was given to make sure the baby was getting enough nourishment to thrive. It was quickly discovered that Pandu had quite an appetite and could be very persistent when hungry, usually nursing three to five minutes every two to three hours. Should his mother be sleeping, Pandu would simply climb over her head and neck until she complied.

Though quite wobbly the first 48 hours, by the third day Pandu was strong enough to run through the three rooms of the inner boma. The creep, a modified inner structure in the boma, allowed Pandu to come in and out, but not his 6,000-pound mother. Three horizontal iron bars block the upper half of the doorway, allowing keepers to enter and care for the baby rhino without interference. Much can be accomplished with the aid of the creep, including administering a special diet if required. Should a real problem occur with an infant rhinoceros, separating the mother and baby can be achieved with minimal confusion.

Recent research has revealed that there is an intense bond which develops between mother rhino and calf. Jaypuri was constantly aware of where Pandu was and what he was doing. Frequent touching and nuzzling was common. When not touching, the mother always stayed within close proximity of her baby, as if to assure his safety. Even in the yard, a wide open area, the baby would frolic and play, but always close to mother.

Looking much like his father, Lasai, an 8,000-pound male, Pandu came into the world with the usual folds of thick armor plating. Upon maturity this animal will appear, and will possibly be, quite forbidding, but within those thick folds of plating his underside will remain baby soft.

Much valuable information has been obtained from observing these two births, but there is much yet to be learned. For example, with no information for comparison, it is difficult to know if some behaviors are typical, such as Pandu waiting one full week to defecate. It is our hope that we can add to the knowledge we have gained, through additional successful rhino births at the Wild Animal Park.



There are future plans for a special exhibit for this magnificent animal, in an area adjacent to the Asian Plains. When Pandu matures he could possibly be the sire of a second family of Indian rhinos.

Pandu will be kept in a separate area with his mother for about one year. Keepers are hesitant to introduce Pandu to his father, Lasai, even though Gainda and Lasai get along well.

For centuries the Indian rhinoceros has been slain for its horn, commonly thought to be a potent aphrodisiac, and for its blood and urine, for the same reason. Sadly, it has even been killed just for sport.

**Top:** Gainda, Jaypuri's 1978 offspring, posed for this photo in October 1980. Although she is almost as large as her mother, she was still being cared for by Jaypuri less than a week before the birth of Pandu.

**Above:** Pandu, who weighed 100 pounds at birth, strolls purposefully around the boma, somewhat resembling a miniature armor-plated tank.

It is estimated that only 1,100 exist in the world today.

Pandu and his family can be seen daily at the Wild Animal Park, and all are easily viewed from the WGASA bushline tour. **Z**