

An Indian Zoo Breeds an African Rhinoceros

By JOHN L. MILLER

MR. C. D. KRISHNE GOWDA, Curator of the Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens in the Indian city of Mysore, recently sent us a series of photographs highlighting the successful captive breeding of a pair of African Black Rhinoceroses.

Although there have now been more than 20 captive births and rearings of this species, such an event is never taken lightly by zoologists and conservationists. It is, without doubt, a noteworthy achievement whenever and wherever it happens—in Frankfort, in Cincinnati, or in Mysore.

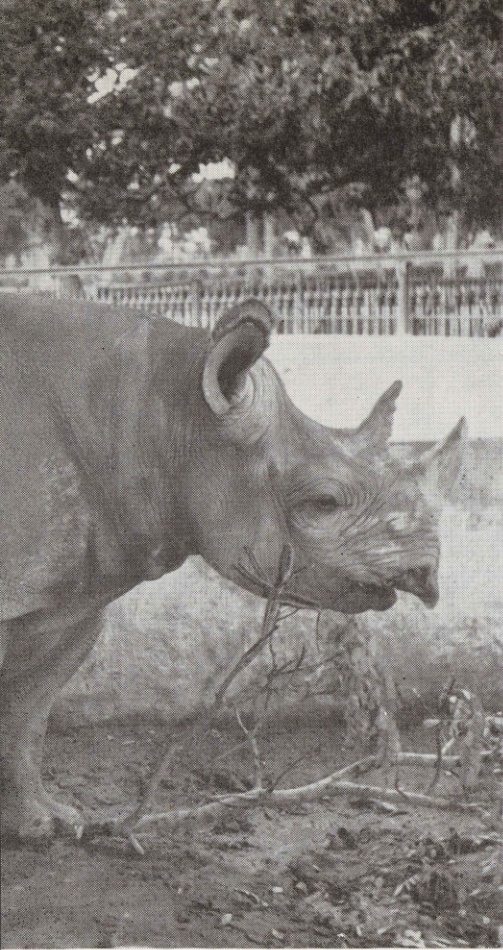
The most numerous species of rhinoceros, *Diceros bicornis* is gone from much of its former range and is now concentrated primarily in Kenya and Tanzania. The true color of the Black Rhino is dark yellowish-brown to dark

brown, or slightly darker than the greatly endangered African White Rhino, *Cerathotherium simum*, which isn't really white at all.

The Mysore calf was born last August 26, a little over 10 and a half years after the arrival of the parents, and the birth is all the more significant because of the determined efforts of Curator Gowda and others on his staff.

These efforts were concentrated into attempting to get the male rhino interested in the female when she came into heat, every 30 to 35 days. Mr. Gowda reports that the male failed to respond until it was given doses of a special hormone called Testoviron in powdered form mixed with its regular diet. The first successful breeding took place more than two years later.

The gestation lasted 458 days. The birth



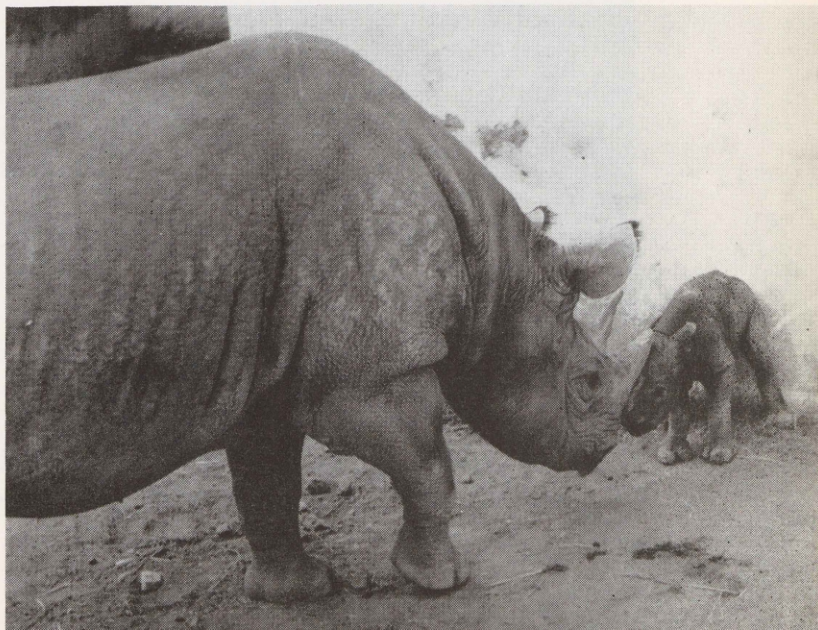
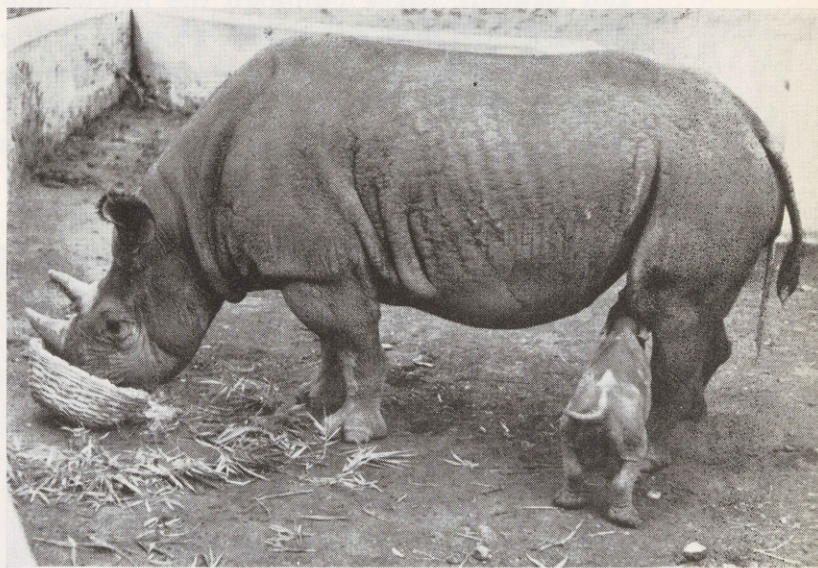
was completed about 20 minutes after the front legs first appeared. Licked immediately by the mother, the calf was about the size of a half-grown pig. Its body was without hair, except on the lining of the ears and the end of the tail. There were two white patches on the horn-growing regions of the head.

According to Mr. Gowda, the birth was completed at 2:15 p.m. Fifteen minutes later it was struggling to get to its feet, which was accomplished in another 30 minutes, at 3 o'clock. By 3:30 the calf was moving toward its mother in search of her teats, and it first began suckling at 4:35.

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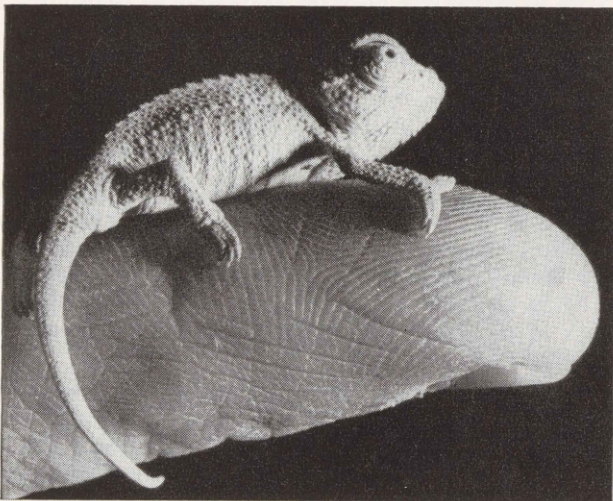
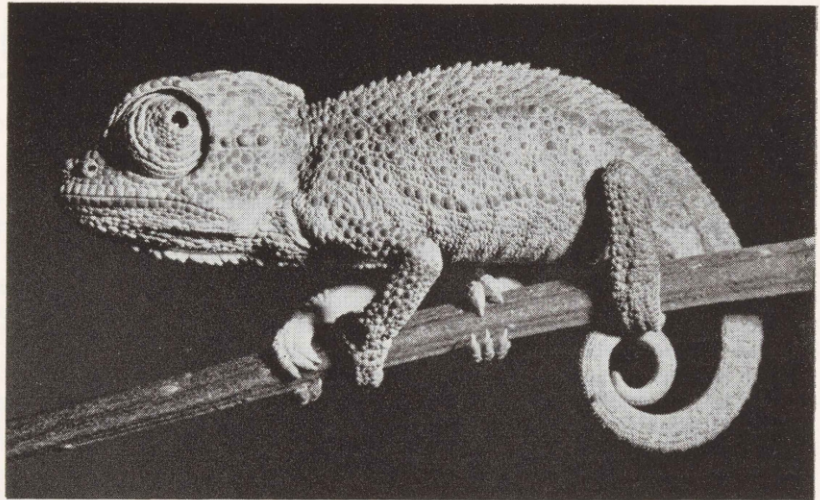
Varying in degree, all species of rhinoceros, two African and three Asian, are either rare or close to extinction in the wild. Largest of the five is the African White or Square-lipped Rhinoceros. Estimates of its surviving

(Continued on page 31)



Clockwise—Upper left—Mysore Zoo's pair of Black Rhinoceroses peering over the wall of their enclosure. The female is on the right. Center—The female late in her pregnancy shortly before she gave birth. Upper right—The baby struggling to stand on the day of his birth. Center right—Double nourishment, mother at her wicker "plate" and calf at her teats. Bottom—Beginning course in ways of self-defense.

This baby African chameleon was one of 16 unexpectedly born to a female adult purchased by a man at a local pet shop. He turned the babies over to the Reptile Department, which is attempting to rear them on a diet of fruit flies and other tiny insects.



ing tube or can be ordered by mail from the Zoo's Publications Department. The poster, which was designed by B. J. Johnson of the Zoo's Department of Exhibition, costs one dollar.

An African Rhinoceros

(Continued from page 27)

number vary, but Walker gives the figure of 600 for the Zululand reserve of South Africa. It has also been reintroduced into Kruger National Park and is found in small numbers in the southern Sudan, Uganda and adjacent parts of the Congo.

Smaller and considerably more aggressive is the African Black Rhino, once quite common in East Africa from Ethiopia south to the Cape and westward to Cameroon and Angola.

Since its first breeding in captivity in 1941 at the Chicago Zoological Park, it has been bred

at the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Detroit Zoos, all in the 1960s. The first Black Rhino calf bred and reared in a European zoo occurred in Frankfurt in 1956.

The Indian or One-horned Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is the largest of the Asian species. It was once widely distributed from Kashmir southeastward into Indochina. Today, those that remain — perhaps a total of 500 — are living in several government reserves in India and in the Kingdom of Nepal.

A smaller one-horned species, the Javan Rhinoceros (*R. sondaicus*) is down to an estimated 30 to 40 specimens in the Ujung Kulon reservation of western Java. It once was found from Burma, Thailand and Indochina south to Sumatra and Java.

Smallest of all living rhinoceroses is the Two-horned (*Didermoceros sumatrensis*), which is broken into two subspecies, the Sumatran Rhinoceros (*D. s. sumatrensis*) and the Hairy-eared (*D. s. lasiotis*). The Sumatran is found in Sumatra and Borneo, while the Hairy-eared with its ear fringes is found in Burma, Thailand and the Malay States.

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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