

INTERNATIONAL ZOO NEWS

reared chicks experience an environment that is more like that of parent-reared birds, and this seems to be producing better results. We also observe that while young captive birds are intensely curious about their environment and test everything, they become less inquisitive as they mature. At ages five and six, they appear to focus more on what other pairs are doing and begin defending nesting territory. We hope that the released birds will behave in a similar way as they reach maturity, like wild condors of the past. Just as we have had to work through many problems with incubation and captive husbandry, we must be ready to modify the way we manage releases in order to produce condors better suited to life in the wild. While the process to save the California condor seems long, recovery can only unfold at the rate dictated by the species. Step by slow step, we are coming closer to our recovery goals, and within the next few years, we should see condors raising their own young in the wild.

Abridged from Michael Wallace in *CRES Report* (Winter 1999)

White rhinos sent to Australasia

On 18 October 1999, twelve (3.9) southern white rhinoceros were loaded aboard a chartered Boeing 747 freighter in Johannesburg, South Africa, and flown to Singapore, where they were transferred to the regular weekly freighters flying to Australia and New Zealand. In the evening of 19 October the animals were off-loaded at their ports of final destination (Melbourne, Perth and Auckland) and taken to quarantined facilities at Vic-

toria's Open Range Zoo (1.3), Perth Zoo (0.2), Auckland Zoo (1.2) and Hamilton Zoo (1.2). This transfer, under an agreement between the four zoos and South African National Parks, represents one of the largest cooperative animal acquisition projects ever undertaken in the Australasian zoo community. Some five years in planning and execution, the project was conceived under the ARAZPA Perissodactyl TAG, to support the CBSG's Global Captive Action Plan (GCAP) for rhinoceros species. The architect of the GCAP is Tom Foose, who also plays critically important roles in developing and facilitating many of the plan's component projects. The original conception of an Australasian contribution to the GCAP was promoted as early as 1992, when Paul Garland, then director of the Orana Park Wildlife Trust, participated in a key GCAP meeting in London.

The white rhino has staged a remarkable recovery within South Africa from near-extinction at the end of the last century to around 11,000 animals today. This has been largely due to the intensive efforts, particularly in the last three decades, of South African National Parks and the provincial Natal Parks Board. The species remains 'conservation dependent' and the captive populations outside South Africa have never achieved viability either regionally or globally. A key objective of the GCAP is to establish a globally viable zoo population of southern white rhinos as insurance against the sort of catastrophic loss suffered by the black rhinoceros in the wild.

Peter Stroud in *ARAZPA Newsletter* No. 44 (November 1999)

AAZK address change

As from 1 October 1999, the administrative offices of the American Association of Zoo Keepers, Inc. (AAZK), have a new address: 3601 S.W. 29th Street, Suite 133, Topeka, Kansas 66614, U.S.A. (Tel.: ++785-273-1980)

Belfast Zoo, U.K.

Considerable efforts have been made to establish the François's langur (*Trachypithecus f. francoisi*) at the zoo. A number of animals have been imported from breeding groups at Osaka and Nagoya Zoos (Japan) and from Guangzhou and Shanghai Zoos (China) since 1994. In August 1999, two young were born in a group of 1.3 adults at Belfast. The first, a female, was removed for hand-rearing as her inexperienced mother showed no interest in the infant, and was clearly exhausted following the birth. The hand-rearing effort is proceeding well, and the baby is gradually being introduced to the breeding group. The second infant, a male, was born to a female from Osaka. The mother and infant were separated from the main group for ten days following the birth, as both other females in the group took the baby and refused to give it back to the mother. The mother and baby have now been reinstated in the group and the infant is doing well. These births represent a first for this species at Belfast Zoo, and only the second and third births in Europe.

Mark Challis in *EAZA News* No. 28 (October-December 1999)

Brookfield Zoo, Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

Brookfield opened its Salt Creek Wilderness exhibit on 14 August 1999. This outdoor experience provides an enjoyable and dynamic immersion adventure for guests, and also raises awareness about the importance of protecting local species and natural habitats. The exhibit includes the

zoo's existing Indian Lake, a nature trail and a new demonstration wetland exhibit called 'Dragonfly Marsh'. Dragonfly Marsh was planned to provide wildlife habitat, to improve water quality in Indian Lake, and to serve educational and research purposes. It is thought that thousands of years ago the site may have been a natural wetland, but restoring it was far from simple. Scientists and engineers were called in to determine if the hydrology, soils, structure, and plant materials at the site could support the desired functions.

Soil scientists looked for the physical and chemical properties of a wetland's special 'hydric' soils, to find whether this site had the capacity to support wetland plants, and whether the soil would hold water for an adequate period of time and support biological processes. Their initial investigation revealed the presence of these special soils. Other undisturbed soils also indicated past prairie-woodland, which was good news since the outer zones of the wetland also need to support these kinds of plants. However, part of the site had been altered by fill dumped from construction sites around the zoo. Tall ridges and mounds of soil had cut off the natural watershed and probably reduced the movement of groundwater. These soils had to be removed.

Water is the next crucial ingredient in a wetland - how much is available, when it becomes available, and how it moves through the wetland will determine the kinds of plants the wetland will support. At Dragonfly Marsh, investigators discovered that the hydrology was highly disturbed. To compensate, engineers developed a way to artificially move water