

subadults on his shoulders and helped him to reach the top of the fence and escape. When this happened, the hot wire was immediately switched on so that they could no longer reach the top.

In the afternoon of the same day, four younger monkeys jumped into the enclosure without assistance. But in the night the animals began digging and found a weak point in the wire netting. Two subadults managed to escape through a small hole. The next morning, the macaques were given a sedative in their food, but without any effect. The vet wanted to try a stronger sedative the following morning, but in the night nearly all the monkeys jumped back into the enclosure by themselves. Only two females – one with a two-week-old baby – were left outside, but they followed just one day later!

Everyone involved was relieved, and the macaques acclimatized after a few days. At first, some fighting between the adult females was observed, but the situation calmed down quickly. After a few weeks the youngsters were playing more often and all the monkeys were showing good social relationships. The other animals in the zoo were no longer disturbed, and reports from the visitors were positive too. Obviously, a lot of people feel more at ease with the monkeys no longer free in the zoo grounds.

Gisela Bihler

Sarahan Pheasantries, Himachal Pradesh, India

The western tragopan (*Tragopan melanocephalus*) is endemic to the Western Himalaya, and Himachal Pradesh in India is one of the global strongholds for the species. Sarahan Pheasantries is currently the only place in the world where the species is kept in captivity. Breeding is very complex and challenging, and has been achieved by long-term cooperation between WPA and the Himachal Pradesh Wildlife Division.

At Sarahan there are four unrelated pairs of wild origin, including one female who was bred in 2005. The first ever natural breeding took place at Sarahan in June 2007, when two females hatched their eggs and reared their chicks.

Tragopans nest naturally in trees, often using an old nest made by another species. Our birds were given a variety of nesting opportunities at different heights: shallow baskets, deep baskets, shallow plywood boxes and deeper boxes. All were camouflaged using bamboo leaves and grasses. A flock of 22 broody hens was available, although first preference is always given to natural breeding, since the 'wild' knowledge of the parent birds could prove invaluable for the chicks.

It is believed that all the tragopan hens are quite young, so some of the birds might not yet have been sufficiently mature to raise their own young. However, the two-year-old female, bred at the pheasantry in 2005, managed to raise a single chick by herself. A second hen also raised one chick. Observations of wild pheasants seem to indicate that hens breeding for the first time are seldom successful, but that they improve parenting skills as they mature.

A total of seven chicks were raised by three broody hens. All these eggs came from one pair where the female laid on an irregular basis. All the chicks were raised in aviaries where there was a lot of grass and bamboo, which seems very important to the diet of these birds. In addition, they were fed live moths and other insects attracted to light tubes provided in the enclosure, plus wheat and barley grass, finely ground local seeds and seasonal fruits. Soil containing live feed was also imported regularly from the forest.

All nine chicks have survived the winter and are now fully grown, and we look forward to the 2008 breeding season.

Alam Singh Chauhan, Sat Pal Dhiman and Lalit Mohan in *WPA News* (World Pheasant Association) No. 81 (Summer 2008)

Tierpark Berlin, Germany

The keeping and breeding of Indian rhinoceroses is a speciality of Tierpark Berlin. The latest birth took place on 27 April, when Betty, herself born here in 1995, produced her fourth calf, a well-developed female, around lunchtime in the outdoor enclosure. The father is the bull Belur, born here on 1 January 1990. The latest calf is the eighth Indian rhino to be born at the Tierpark.

On 20 May we had to euthanise the white rhinoceros bull Mtandane, who had collapsed the day before and been unable to stand up. During recent months he had been going downhill physically. At the post mortem senile changes to all organs were diagnosed. Mtandane was about 45 years old, which makes him one of the oldest white rhinos ever to have lived in a zoo until now. He was born in the wild, and came to Berlin in 1989 from Dresden Zoo, where he had lived since his arrival in the late 1960s.

Dr Bernhard Blaszkiewicz

Walsrode Birdpark, Germany

During May the breeding season was in full progress and numerous young birds could be seen everywhere in the park; but it was behind the scenes that things were really busy – more than a third of our birds are kept off-exhibit for breeding purposes.

The colony of white-faced whistling-ducks (*Dendrocygna viduata*) had produced more than 60 fertile eggs by the end of May. As it would be a significant problem to place all of these ducks, further breeding was restricted by puncturing a large number of the eggs in the nests.

The single chick produced by the Magellan geese (*Chloephaga picta leucoptera*) was quite enough, as this species is notorious for its aggressive behaviour, as any visitor coming too close to their enclosure will experience firsthand. Placing the offspring can therefore be somewhat of a problem, as they will

invariably try to terrorize any other bird in the same enclosure.

A male African pygmy goose (*Nettion auritus*) died, the third loss in this species over the past few months, putting our breeding population in jeopardy. In recent years our breeding with this species has been rather successful, but only a single male chick was reared this year and we also lost our main breeding female, who had lived here for more than 25 years. We are hoping that a younger female will prove to be just as prolific in the long term.

For the first time all the pairs of cranes exhibited in the park nested simultaneously. Not all were successful in their efforts, but it was interesting for visitors to be able to directly compare the nesting behaviour of nine different crane species. It is part of our management policy to relocate fertile eggs from genetically important birds to be fostered by other pairs that are laying infertile eggs or perhaps are less important for the breeding programmes. This allows us to reduce the need for hand-rearing in cranes quite significantly, though it is unfortunately not possible to avoid it altogether – in some cases chicks must be removed when there is a health problem, and not all the parent birds prove to be perfect parents. The few birds that are hand-reared also allow us to maintain the skills needed for this aspect of breeding. Several cranes are still being artificially inseminated: this is particularly important in birds who are pinioned and therefore not able to mate successfully by themselves.

Predator control is an important aspect of daily management in the park, but what to do when the predator is a protected species? We were both pleased and worried to discover that wild great eagle-owls (*Bubo bubo*) were present in the park. These fantastic owls are making a come-back in the German landscape after being present only in low numbers for decades. The only reason that we are not entirely pleased with this news is that great eagle-owls seem to have a particular liking for waterfowl.